





People, our core value

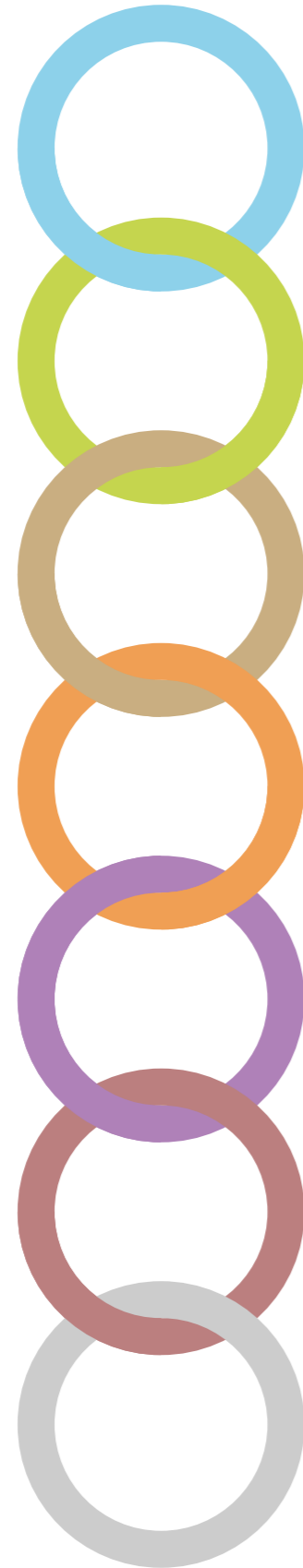
This report reflects some of the University's most significant milestones of the last academic year. Not only is it impossible to include them all, it is also difficult to rank them by importance, because each one has its own meaning and its own purpose. Just a few of the accomplishments I'd like to highlight include the launch of the Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation and the initiation of our internationalisation plan. We also set in motion an ambitious strategic infrastructure plan with an investment of over 17 million euros, and we took steps to further the future relocation of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. We climbed positions in some of the most prestigious rankings, and we approved the revision of our University Statutes, among many other achievements.

But rather than listing milestones – some of which are compiled in this report – I want to turn the spotlight on what lies behind every one of these accomplishments, what has made them possible: people, our University's core value. And it's for this reason that the 2024-25 academic year also focused on supporting and strengthening this human capital. There's still a lot of work to be done, but with a 10% increase in full-time teaching staff (68 places through the María Goyri programme), we're off to a good start – a start that's made even stronger by a clearer route towards promotions for full professors and an improved induction plan for new lecturers.

In addition, new technical, management, administrative and service staff (PTGAS) positions were created, and a plan for the onboarding and training of management staff was implemented. We initiated a strategy to address the generational handover of the PTGAS and we introduced a productivity bonus, in addition to promoting wellness and health programmes for the entire URV community. And the list goes on. Without people, there is no University. Valuing their work and dedication guarantees the University's recognition, prestige and a global impact.

Josep Pallarès Marzal

Rector of Rovira i Virgili University



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Levers for professional development
Dual pathway training, double advantage
Small, medium and large alliances

Training

The 2024-25 academic year saw the start of the development of the URV's Strategic Plan for Teaching, which had been approved the year before. The University consolidated several key initiatives that reinforce leadership in innovative training, knowledge transfer and improved employability. As part of the European strategy for lifelong learning, the URV rolled out a wide range of university micro-credentials, short courses and specialised training programmes that respond to the real needs of the productive sector.

These qualifications are co-designed with local companies and recognised throughout Europe, allowing students acquire specific, transferable skills tailored to flexible training pathways. This positions the URV as a benchmark institution in the implementation of the Microcreds Plan and contributes to the professional certification and labour mobility of the community. In this context, the joint academic programme with PortAventura World is especially noteworthy, as it has enabled 150 park workers to expand their skills in areas such as hotel management, catering and operational leadership. This collaboration exemplifies the model of applied training and knowledge and technology transfer that the URV actively promotes in partnership with the business sector. Another example illustrating the integration of the URV's course catalogue into its socio-economic environment is the launch of the Dual Pathway in the Bachelor's Degree in Labour Relations. This action underscores the URV's leadership in terms of university dual pathway training, which was strengthened in the 2024-25 academic year with structured training for external tutors through the Institute of Education Sciences.

With regard to graduate employability, the Employment Observatory has found that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) lead the way in hiring URV graduates on a permanent basis with a high percentage of permanent contracts. This change in trend reflects both how university studies have adapted to meet market demands and the high quality of the training provided. The revamped 'Fem carrera!' programme was launched during the academic year to further strengthen the professional development of students. The new model offers personalised guidance, practical workshops and spaces for meeting with companies to help students plan solid career paths aligned with the University's values.

Finally, to further advance the transferable skills of our students, the Debate Group was brought back to position the URV as a place for the promotion of critical thinking and skillful argumentation. As participation steadily increases, a team was selected to compete in the final phase of the Vives Network University Debate League, which consolidated the URV's commitment to the comprehensive training of its student community.



Levers for professional development

The URV is developing a new programme of training courses with micro-credentials to provide a flexible response to the demands of the labour market

Lifelong learning and professional development that meets the needs of the labour market has become a key necessity at a time when technological and social transformations are occurring increasingly frequently and professional requirements are under constant review. Rovira i Virgili University has therefore made a firm commitment to developing and offering micro-credential courses: short, flexible, officially recognised training courses designed to respond to the real challenges of the professional world. During the 2024-25 academic year, the University launched a new programme funded under the Micro-credentials Plan of the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, with resources from the European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility.

Micro-credentials are short learning programmes (not exceeding 15 credits) that certify the acquisition of specific knowledge or skills acquired through rigorous, structured training. These courses are open to anyone and can be accessed without a previous university

degree. Although they do not replace bachelor's or master's degrees, they can complement those credentials or offer specific training to people who do not need or cannot follow a complete university pathway. It is, therefore, a very useful formula for both students and active professionals alike, as well as unemployed people

Micro-credentials are short, officially recognised training courses that are aligned with the European Higher Education Area and have a direct impact on the world of work

and those looking for a change in career. Flexibility is one of the most highly valued characteristics of this type of training, which can be pursued independently and which, in some cases, even allows participants to earn credits recognised within the European university system.

'Micro-credentials represent an opportunity: they allow us to

quickly and effectively respond to the changing needs of society and the labour market, and reinforce our commitment to flexible, personalised lifelong learning,' explains Ercilia García Álvarez, Vice-Rector for Knowledge Valorisation, Transfer and Employability.

The current training catalogue is funded mainly by the Microcredits Plan, an initiative of the Ministry of Universities with resources from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF),

which subsidises up to 70% of the direct cost of the programmes. This grant is for people between the ages of 25 and 64. Participants under 25 are eligible for Santander Scholarships, which reduces the cost of enrolment by 300 euros.

The 38 micro-credentials available are based on collaboration with local businesses. 'Training must start with

a demand: First we have to identify needs and co-design training courses with companies,' says Ercilia García Álvarez. This ensures that the new training catalogue is directly connected to the needs of the labour market and results in better employment opportunities. In addition, these programmes are aligned with European policies that have been committed to more open, cumulative and modular training models for years.

One of the key aspects of the model is certification. Unlike other informal courses or workshops, URV micro-credentials are officially accredited with a verifiable digital certificate, which contains detailed information on the content of

the course, the skills acquired, the hours of dedication and, if applicable, the ECTS credits earned. This document is useful for both academic and professional purposes and can be easily incorporated into graduates' CVs, documentation for selection processes or continuous professional development systems within companies. The quality of the content, the expertise of the teaching staff and the rigorous assessment system ensure the real, applicable value of these training courses. Micro-credentials also respond to the concept of lifelong learning, which has been established as a central pillar of education and employment policies. The idea that training does not end with compulsory or university studies

Pioneering experience with PortAventura

The project launched by the URV Foundation's International Center for Lifelong Learning in Tourism (ICLEAT) together with PortAventura World illustrates how URV micro-credentials are orientated towards the world of work. PortAventura is one of the leading companies in the tourism and leisure sector in the region. Over the course of 2024, the agreement allowed a total of 150 theme park

workers to participate in a micro-credential programme designed specifically to improve their skills in areas such as excellence in customer service, communication, diversity management and team leadership. This type of collaboration is the first of its kind in Spain and exemplifies how the University can put its knowledge at the service of the training and certification needs of the productive sector by offering efficient, flexible formats.



The URV offers 38 programmes in key areas such as oenology, engineering, business management, quality control and artificial intelligence applications

but must be kept active throughout one's professional life is especially relevant in this era of digital transformation, ecological transition and market globalisation. In this scenario, being able to access specific, widely recognised training can make the difference between remaining a part of an increasingly competitive world or being left behind.

In addition, the fact that these training courses are supported and coordinated by the URV guarantees their quality and alignment with regional needs. The University not only designs micro-credentials from its various spheres of knowledge, but also collaborates with outside institutions and companies to detect areas for improvement and schedule useful and efficient training. This commitment to working together with stakeholders in the community allows the URV to impart knowledge that actively contributes to improved professional qualifications and regional competitiveness.

Pioneering micro-credential experience through the International Center for Lifelong Learning in Tourism (ICLEAT).

A complete and diverse catalogue

The catalogue of programmes of the FURV's Lifelong Learning Centre covers a wide range of skills and areas of knowledge and was developed in line with a strategic vision. In the area of economy and business, short courses are offered in Diversity and Inclusion Management in Business, Supply Chain Management, Logistics Management and Integrated Logistics and E-Commerce. Those interested in knowing more about oenology can take courses like Introduction to Viticulture, Vine Biology, Biotic and Abiotic Stress (Pests, Diseases and Deficiencies), Pruning and Training Systems and Respectful Pruning Practices. And, in the field of chemistry, the STATLAB micro-credential (Statistics and Quality Control for Analytical Laboratories) is especially worth mentioning. The engineering courses offered include Fundamentals of Cloud Computing, Cloud Developer and Foundations of Artificial Intelligence, while in information technology, various different levels of user interface creation (front web developer) have recently been added. These new additions expand upon the catalogue of other programmes and courses offered, including lifelong learning master's degrees and courses, and specialisation and expert diplomas.



Dual pathway training, double advantage

The URV expanded the availability of dual pathway training with a new Dual Pathway in the Bachelor's Degree in Labour Relations and Employment

After implementing the Dual Pathway in the Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry and in Tourism and Hospitality Management, Rovira i Virgili University has taken a new step to consolidate this training model. In the 2024-25 academic year, a dual pathway was added to the Bachelor's Degree in Labour Relations and Employment, a track that allows students to combine university study with practical immersion in real work environments.

Dual training represents a paradigm shift in the way students

acquire skills. Unlike conventional internships, which tend to have a limited duration and are not necessarily integrated into course curricula, dual-pathway degrees establish a close and sustained link between the university and the company. Students participate throughout the academic year and undertake tasks related to the subjects they are enrolled in. They follow a specific plan that has been jointly developed and coordinated between university teaching staff and company personnel.

These activities do not only have an individual dimension: Students must share what they have put into practice and what they have learned with their peers, so that the experience is actively integrated into the curriculum as a whole. This feedback benefits the whole group, strengthens the connection between theory and practice and promotes the co-construction of knowledge. For students, it is an opportunity to apply classroom knowledge in real contexts and develop professional skills before graduation. For companies, it is an

The Institute of Education Sciences has begun providing training to companies so they can effectively take on the role of active agents in dual-pathway degrees

opportunity train future professionals who are prepared to meet their specific needs. For the University, it is a tool to strengthen ties with the region and offer training that is more

connected to the reality of the world of work.

The implementation of dual-pathway degrees requires, however, extensive work with collaborating companies. For this reason, in 2024-25 the Institute

of Education Sciences launched a training programme specifically designed for organisations that wish to host students within this framework. The goal is to provide them with the knowledge and resources they need to act as training agents and with the capacity to guide student learning and collaborate closely with university teaching staff. This training is key to ensuring the quality and sustainability of the model.

With the introduction of the Dual Pathway in the Bachelor's Degree in Labour Relations and Employment, the URV reaffirms its commitment to being a university deeply rooted in its community – one that actively responds to the needs of both the productive sector and society in general, while also opening new opportunities for student learning.



The URV's Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry, a benchmark of excellence

The launch of the Dual Pathway in the Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry in the 2021-22 academic year paved the way for other bachelor's degrees in chemistry across the country. During the 2024-25 academic year, the dean of the Faculty of Chemistry, Joan Josep Carvajal, presented the URV's experience at a meeting organised by the University of Barcelona to finalise its own Dual Pathway in the Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry, the launch of which was slated for the 2025-26 academic year. He had previously shared the URV's dual pathway experience at the University of Valencia. The Dual Pathway in the Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry has allowed eight students to work and learn at Clariant, Ematsa, Ercros, Elix Polymers, EW Nutrition, IQOXE, Ravago and Repsol.



Record enrolment
16,590 students

+3%
 more bachelor's degree students than in the 2023-24 academic year

6
 disciplines of the URV among the best in the world, according to the QS ranking: nursing, archaeology, chemical engineering, agriculture and forestry, chemistry and medicine

+12%
 more students enrolled in master's degrees (1,430) than in the 2023-24 academic year

49%
 of bachelor's degree students living in the district are enrolled at the URV in the 2023-24 academic year

More than €800,000 for teaching equipment in faculties, schools and departments.

Some 60 students improve their oral communication skills in the Debate Group

The 2024-25 academic year also saw about 60 students from 22 different degree programmes across various faculties enrolled in the revived Debate Group, which had been suspended for some time. This practical course coordinated by Antoni Carreras allows students to work on communication skills and gives 2 credits to students who pass the assessment.

A selection of students from the 2024-25 academic year represented the URV in the Debate League organised by the Vives Network of Universities and held last April at the University of Vic. The team did very well: Ariadna Tarrida, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology, was chosen as the best speaker. Other participants included David Rovira Pallàs (from the Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics), Ziad El-Harbili El-Badaoui (Economics), Aida Ortega Gallén (Psychology) and Alberto Domingo Gómez (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology). The University Debate League is a dialectical competition in which teams of students defend positions for and against a controversial and topical issue. In this edition, the question that the university teams had to discuss was 'Is linguistic diversity in danger?'

Over 200 participants in URV hackathons

About 230 students participated throughout the 2024-25 academic year in various organised hackathons, applying their knowledge to respond to social and technological challenges. At the Robotech Hackathon, electronic engineering students developed robotic solutions for local companies. Other teams designed digital tools to improve the learning experience in primary school and, as part of a knowledge and technology transfer project, devised a prototype geomap that will help protect victims of femicide. About 40 computer engineering students also worked for 24 hours straight during a hackathon on cloud computing. These experiences underscore the practical training received at the URV and its connection with the real needs of society.



Small, medium and large alliances

According to the URV employability report, SMEs account for more than 60% of permanent student contracts and almost half of long-term employment relationships

The latest employability report analyses the working conditions of URV graduates in depth and offers a qualitative overview of graduate employment. One of the most salient conclusions is the significance of small and medium-sized companies

in stable employment: They account for more than 60% of permanent graduate contracts and almost half of long-term employment relationships.

The study, prepared by the Employment Observatory, also

shows that the vast majority of URV students – 87% – have already gained work experience before they graduate through internships or other related jobs, which facilitates their transition into the labour market. However, a clear improvement in working conditions

Only 11% of graduates remain in their first employment contract for more than a year

occurs after graduation, with an increase in permanent contracts, full-time hours and skilled jobs.

Nevertheless, phenomena such as temporary contracts, bias and high turnover persist: More than 70% of contracts are suspended within a year, and only 11% of graduates maintain their first employment contract beyond 12 months. These behaviours are quite common in sectors such as hospitality and retail.

In addition, the report notes substantial differences in employment trends from discipline to discipline. Graduates in engineering and health sciences are more likely to enter skilled jobs with open-ended contracts, while higher degrees of overqualification and job instability were found among graduates in social sciences, law and humanities.

The study also reveals a gender gap: Despite having similar levels of training and education, women are underrepresented in sectors with greater talent retention capacity and in more stable forms of employment.

The report is part of the 'Fem Carrera' project, an initiative of the Employment Observatory established to monitor the professional careers of URV graduates on a long-term, permanent basis. Work is underway to expand this database from the 13,000 graduates with whom the last report was prepared to include 48,000 people. This will make it possible to include the analysis of over 600,000 contracts and nearly 20,000 companies in future reports.

More postgraduate programmes: two new master's degrees and a doctoral programme

The URV's catalogue of postgraduate courses continued to grow with the addition of a new international Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree in Themed Entertainment, a pioneering new course in Europe developed to train professionals capable of designing immersive experiences in theme parks, museums and heritage spaces. The programme, which will be taught entirely in English starting in the 2026-27 academic year, is the product of a collaboration between the URV, PortAventura World and several European universities. The launch of a Master's Degree in Sustainability and Innovation in the Wine and Beer Industry was also approved. This course aims to train professionals capable of addressing current and future challenges in these sectors by promoting more sustainable and efficient practices. In addition, the Master's Degree in Health Data Science was granted the prestigious EIT Health Label, which certifies the programme's excellence as well as its entrepreneurial and international approach.

The URV will also begin offering a new doctoral programme in education in the 2026-27 academic year, which aims to train researchers and lead researchers to navigate and transform the educational landscape in order to, ultimately, improve it. The EUSES (University School of Health and Sport) of Terres de l'Ebre, a URV affiliate, will also offer a Bachelor's Degree in Dentistry. The programme is designed to provide future professionals the solid scientific and technical knowledge they need to prevent, diagnose and treat health problems related to the teeth, jaws, mouth and oral tissues.



Double recognition of quality for the Faculty of Oenology

The Faculty of Oenology has been distinguished with two awards that confirm its leadership in training and research in the world of wine. Firstly, the Faculty was recognised as the best educational centre in the country at the International Wine Challenge Awards, an event with more than three decades of history in the United Kingdom that honours the most outstanding initiatives in the marketing, distribution, training, tourism and promotion of wine. The judges' panel emphasised the fact that the Faculty has become a benchmark institution in the field with a fully established pedagogical and research model. Secondly, the Faculty's internal quality assurance system (IQAS) received a favourable final report from the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya). The report certifies that the quality assurance system has been fully established and implemented in the Faculty, and that it ensures the quality of the degree programmes it offers.



Teaching Quality Awards for two health projects

The Board of Trustees recognised health-focused projects in both categories of the 2025 Teaching Quality Awards. Verònica Luque, from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, won in the individual category for her project 'Incorporació de la simulació en nutrició enteral en el grau en Nutrició Humana i Dietètica' (Incorporating enteral nutrition simulation in the Bachelor's Degree in Human Nutrition and Dietetics). Also, a team from the Faculty of Nursing won the group award for their project, 'Potenciant la formació d'infermeria a través de l'aprenentatge servei (APS): una experiència d'impacte' (Strengthening nursing training through service learning [SL]: an experience with impact).

More tools and more communication with the Student Council

The URV approved measures to improve communication between the Student Council and the groups it represents. Training sessions were held with student delegates to identify problems and share solutions. Specific tools were also provided to the Council to facilitate the undertaking, and support was given for face-to-face meetings. In addition, the Student Office promoted the use of meeting spaces among all the URV's student associations to strengthen the University's student community.

First-ever meeting on training and teaching innovation

In the 2024-25 academic year, the URV hosted the first-ever Meeting of Catalan Institutes of Education Sciences. The meeting brought together more than 70 representatives from institutes of education sciences, professional development institutes, and centres for innovation and educational training from the seven Catalan public universities and the University of Vic-UCC.

The School of Engineering's Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering again awarded the Euro-Inf quality label

The School of Engineering (ETSE) was once again awarded the Euro-Inf international quality label for its Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering. The certificate accredits the school's academic and professional quality standards and adds to its international recognition and potential for international mobility throughout Europe. The award ceremony was held at the headquarters of National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) in Madrid in an event that brought together representatives from university degree programmes with international quality labels. ETSE was represented at the event by its director, Àngel Cid.

David Diestre, the URV's best student

He is the winner of the Santander 360° Excellence Grant for excellence in academic endeavours, entrepreneurship and social commitment and is the recipient of a €12,000 grant

David Diestre Rubio, a third-year bachelor's degree student in Mathematical and Physical Engineering, was chosen as Rovira i Virgili University's best student in the first edition of the Santander 360° Excellence Grant. The grant has a value of €12,000 and rewards students with outstanding academic records who are also active, entrepreneurial and involved in university and community life.

With a grade point average of 9.57 and 15 honours, Diestre was selected from among 15 finalists not only for his excellent academic performance, but also for his background, which includes research, scientific dissemination and entrepreneurship. He is the co-founder of Physics Stars, a startup that gamifies science learning to make it more appealing to young people. The project won at iFest 2024 and has received funding from the URV's Board of Trustees. [Learn more on page 14]

Diestre also stands out for his participation in outreach activities like the European Research Night and for his volunteer work, including serving as a judge in the First Lego League.



David Diestre, winner of the Santander 360° Excellence Grant.

Research

The URV approved the strategic guidelines that will mark the path for University research activity in the coming years. With the slogan 'Recerca col·laborativa i transversal per respondre als reptes de la societat' (Collaborative and multi-disciplinary research to respond to societal challenges), the new Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation is structured around three fundamental pillars: interdisciplinarity as a driver for generating knowledge and responding to emerging challenges; people, infrastructure and resources as structural components of the system; and social impact and international outreach as guiding principles. Each strand of action includes three specific objectives and the Plan provides for 55 concrete measures aimed at strengthening the capacity of the URV to effectively take on today's greatest challenges.

At the same time, four priority areas were identified (sustainability, wellbeing, social cohesion and technological innovation) to which the URV can contribute distinctive research with global impact. A specific call for proposals was launched to promote interdisciplinary groups, endowed with €630,000 from the University's own funds, with the aim of stimulating internal synergies and new lines of shared work.

Within the sphere of local collaborative research, in 2024-25 the URV renewed its framework agreement with the Pere Virgili Health Research Institute (IISPV) and

its programme contract with the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC), thereby strengthening institutional cooperation for greater regional impact.

In addition, in the international arena, the Aurora 2030 Alliance network, which brings together the URV with 13 other European universities, made a significant new commitment to intensifying shared research. In this context, the 'Call for Incentive Research Projects, Thematic Summer Schools and Early-stage Researcher Mobilities' has aroused intense interest among the research community. The initiative seeks to consolidate an ecosystem of shared research based on common values and collaborative practices. Three URV projects were selected in this call for proposals and the University is already working to repeat that success with the goal of strengthening ties between the participating institutions.

Scientific output continued to increase, both in terms of volume and the amount of competitive funding secured. The University remains committed to transparent recruitment practices and to fostering an environment conducive to developing solid research careers. Once again, the data place the URV as the most productive university outside the metropolitan area of Barcelona and, if the proportion of publications in high-impact journals is considered, it tops the ranking of Catalan universities. This leadership is explained by the strategic approach of the research staff, oriented towards excellence and the generation of knowledge with international added value. This position allows the institution to move beyond participating in global scientific discourse to actively leading it.

Attracting and retaining talent
A new impetus for knowledge
The legacy of Rovira i Virgili
Leaders in research
Research with impact
Collaboration that leads the way
Two exemplary careers
Professionals for a clean future



Attracting and retaining talent

The URV rolls out measures to consolidate research staff and attract talent with competitive programmes and improved conditions

The 3rd Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation (PERI) 2024-27 places the recruitment and retention of research talent at its core. Focused on addressing certain identified shortcomings – precariousness, lack of stability, and inadequate infrastructure – the document outlines a comprehensive strategy that seeks to implement improvements at all stages of the scientific career to make it more attractive.

One of the key instruments in this strategy is the call for interdisciplinary groups recently launched by the URV, which promotes collaborative projects between departments and research centres. This line of support, which forms part of the Plan's first strand of action, not only encourages a cross-disciplinary approach to promote knowledge generation, but also contributes to creating dynamic and innovative environments that can become magnets for new researchers.

The Plan's second strand of action is dedicated to people, infrastructure and resources. It encompasses the desire to promote an effective policy to attract and retain talent, and to accompany that policy with specific measures such as stabilising the research staff, strengthening training and leadership, providing support for professional careers and achieving gender equality in research groups. It also provides for the improvement and expansion of research spaces, including planning new research buildings and renovating scientific equipment.

At the same time, the University has issued a call for the remuneration of postdoctoral staff. This measure seeks to improve the working conditions associated with this key stage of the research career. It would provide remuneration to complement the grants obtained in competitive calls (regional, national and international) to ensure fairer working conditions

that are more competitive with other university systems. The aim is to retain talent and help consolidate the research structure of the URV. The PERI also includes measures such as promoting programmes to guide and foster the development of young researchers and strengthening advisory services to help research personnel access programmes of excellence such as ICREA or the European Research Council (ERC). In addition, it proposes establishing a specific programme of grants for newly admitted research staff with recognised careers as well as reviewing technical and administrative support for research to make it more efficient.

Talent recruitment is not limited to young researchers: The Plan aims to increase the number of ICREA researchers and the number of ERC projects by 50% during the period

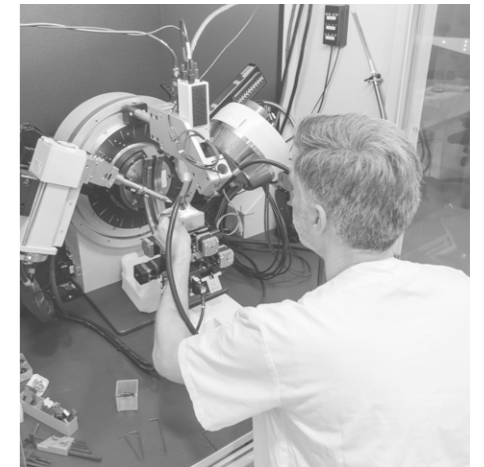
the Plan is in effect. Another goal is to increase the number of new researchers by at least 30% and to promote the consolidation of accredited staff in attracting talent.

The University is committed to stabilising and increasing the value of postdoctoral studies, and creating interdisciplinary groups

The Plan also initiates promotions to the position of full professor. Finally, the University envisages institutional actions such as the renewal of the HR Excellence in Research seal, which certifies the URV's commitment to good practices in the management of human resources in research,

and the accreditation of the departments as sustainable research units, according to the standards established by the Catalan university system. And positive results have already emerged from the implementation of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) code of good practices, which reaffirms the University's commitment to a fairer, more qualitative and socially impactful

approach to research evaluation. As just one example of the results the University has seen since it joined in 2022, 100% of the six-year applications submitted to the ANECA 2023 call for proposals by the URV's teaching and research staff (51 in total: 29 male and 22 female researchers) were approved.



Better tools for science

Having advanced equipment is not only crucial to ensuring the quality of research but also to making the University more competitive in attracting and retaining talent. The 3rd Strategic Research Plan includes different lines of action to renew and improve the University's scientific equipment and infrastructure, including new buildings dedicated to research, such as the Pont building and other spaces.



'I was already familiar with the URV. It's coming back home'

Geographer Agustín Cocola-Gant joins the URV with a senior Serra Húnter contract and a €1.8 million European project

Rovira i Virgili University brought on geographer Agustín Cocola-Gant through the Serra Húnter senior programme, a highly competitive initiative launched by the Government of Catalonia for the purpose of hiring established teaching and research staff from outside Spain. Upon completing their five-year contracts, these senior researchers can be accredited within the Catalan university system to apply for a full professorship. In this edition of the initiative, the URV submitted three applications and only Cocola-Gant was selected by an international panel, in a category that is expected to incorporate 50 top researchers in five years, five of whom will come to the URV.

With a PhD in Human Geography from Cardiff University and in Art History from the University of Barcelona, Cocola-Gant has spent 15 years doing research abroad – in London and Lisbon – and is an international authority in his field. According to Stanford University,

he is among the 2% most cited geography academics in the world. His research has focused on the impact of tourist accommodation on cities, gentrification and the transformation of neighborhoods. In fact, he was one of the first researchers to study the Airbnb phenomenon and its social and urban consequences.

His work combines quantitative and qualitative analyses with a social justice approach, which gives voice to communities affected by residential expulsion. 'Research must be useful to society,' he stresses. He has studied the cases of Lisbon and Barcelona in depth, and has assessed the effectiveness of policies such as the restriction of tourist apartment licenses in the capital of Catalonia. Now, he warns that cities like Tarragona are beginning to show symptoms of the same process, with an increasing number of Airbnb licenses and consequential effects on the rental market. 'There is an ever-increasing number of tourist apartment licenses in Tarragona. The city's historic quarter is starting to show symptoms of saturation.

We have learned lessons from other places that have already been through this, and we still have time to correct it, but the City Council must limit licenses now,' he says.

Cocola-Gant joins the URV as coordinator of the 'The housing-wealth nexus' project, with 1.8 million euros in funding from the Horizon Europe programme and in which 12 international universities and research centres are involved. The aim is to analyse housing as a financial asset, understand the inequalities it generates and develop policies to reduce those disparities, working in partnership with housing groups and organisations.

Born in Argentina, with Andalusian roots and a long international career, Cocola-Gant sees his arrival at the URV as a natural return. 'I was already familiar with the URV. After so many years abroad, it's like coming back home. I'm happy,' he says. He had already collaborated with researchers from the Research Group on Territorial Analysis and Tourism Studies (GRATET) and was aware of the University's ability to work within global networks. Cocola-Gant's appointment represents the University's ongoing commitment to attracting established talent and supporting research with a direct social impact on contemporary urban problems.



'Some trains only pass by once'

Mariona Gil Cortiella has recently joined Rovira i Virgili University as a Ramón y Cajal researcher

This national programme, sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Science, funds five-year contracts for outstanding research staff with the goal of attracting and retaining talent within the scientific system. In Gil's case, this return also reflects a major turning point in her life: After ten years in Chile, she decided to go back to the place where it all began.

A simultaneous graduate in both chemistry and oenology from the URV, she says she was trained 'with passion and enthusiasm'. She grew up in a winemaking family and literally had to walk through the winery to enter her house. After completing her master's and doctoral degrees in oenology at the URV, in 2014 she went to Chile on postdoctoral fellowship with a grant from the Chilean government. 'I don't know if I chose Chile or if Chile chose me,' she says. It was supposed to be a two-year stay, but in the end she spent a decade there building a career in teaching and research.

In Chile, her research focused on the effects of winemaking practices on the physical, chemical and sensory properties of wine. One of the great challenges she addressed is the appearance of calcium precipitation during the transport of wine, a global problem linked to climate change. 'This phenomenon not only causes wine to lose commercial value; it can lead to fines and the loss of customers,' she explains. Her work has focused on proposing solutions, such as the use of polymeric additives that minimise the risk of these defects.



The URV would like to develop a new line of research on the impact of forest fire smoke on wine quality. 'It's a real and urgent problem. It's no longer just California or Australia; we're suffering here too. We need solutions for yesterday, not tomorrow,' she says.

Despite some initial uncertainty, the opportunity was clear, 'I worked at a university without an oenology faculty, and I want to train the oenologists of tomorrow.' She was also looking for stability. The URV was not the only option, but she knew that it was 'now or never'.

She's noticed some major changes after 10 years away – more international doctoral students, more vibrancy. 'It's very enriching. And I recommend spending long periods abroad. It gives you perspective in relation to your research and adds other perspectives,' she concludes.

Livia Motterle joined the URV with a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowship, one of the most prestigious postdoctoral programmes in the European Union. This three-year contract aims to promote excellence in research, international mobility and the advanced training of research staff on a European scale.

With a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Bologna and a PhD in anthropology from the University of Barcelona, Motterle has built a career focusing on the study of social and gender inequalities, with a commitment to societal transformation. Her research is based on fieldwork and proximity to the people who experience the situations she studies. 'Anthropology can help these people improve their circumstances,' she states.

Her doctoral thesis focused on sex work and urban policies in Barcelona's Ciutat Vella district and resulted in the book *I tenia cor*. It opened a line of action research that she has consolidated through postdoctoral stays at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and at the UB itself. During the pandemic in Mexico, she investigated the impact of restrictions on remote sex work, an emerging and growing phenomenon.

The project she is conducting at the URV is the first of its kind in southern Europe and opens up a new line of research on university students engaged in sex work. The study will include fieldwork at universities

'To change things you have to swim against the tide'

Anthropologist Livia Motterle opens up a new line of research at the URV with a Marie Curie fellowship on students and sex work

like the Complutense University of Madrid, the University of Barcelona, the Sapienza University of Rome and the University of Bologna. The aim is to understand the motivations of this population, identify their needs and the stereotypes that affect them, and co-create recommendations with the students themselves through

focus groups. 'My research focuses on a controversial topic for many people, but to change things you have to swim against the tide,' she says.

Motterle is very positive about the new phase beginning at the URV. Her first contact with the University took place in February 2024, when

she joined as a substitute lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, Philosophy and Social Work. 'I felt very welcome. I already knew some people in the department, and the informal bond among us, from sharing offices to enjoying a *calçotada*, has made it much easier for me to settle in.' She also highlights the academic rigour of the department, the presence of renowned authorities like Dolors Comas, and anticipates that 'the project will make it possible to create new research links between the URV and other institutes like the UNAM.'



With a critical, collaborative and transformative gaze, Livia Motterle embodies the URV's commitment to attracting talent within the framework of European programmes of scientific excellence.

A new impetus for knowledge

The URV has hired 84 new lecturers, 68 of whom are part of the new María Goyri programme, as part of a total of 140 positions to strengthen research and teaching

After years of restraint in hiring teaching staff, the University announced 140 new permanent or tenure-track positions for the 2024-25 academic year. This unprecedented effort includes 84 junior lecturer positions – 68 of which are newly created through the María Goyri initiative – and is based on a triple strategic objective: to attract experienced young talent, to strengthen the search for excellence, and to improve the quality of teaching.

This large-scale initiative is part of a government funding and stabilisation plan to renew and internationalise university teaching staff and guarantee teaching quality and excellence in research. The new Organic Law of

the University System (LOSU), approved in 2023, eliminates rigidities in recruitment practices and creates frameworks for different types of teaching contracts, including short-term junior lecturers with temporary employment contracts of up to six years. Meanwhile, the María Goyri programme has made it possible to hire lecturers for new teaching positions, co-financed by the Spanish Government and the Government of Catalonia.

Junior lecturer is the first stage of a university academic career. This is a temporary position intended for people who have recently read their thesis and who already have positive accreditation

from ANECA or the regional quality agency. These novice lecturers sign a full-time employment contract for up to six years in accordance with the

The new lecturer staff bring experience and innovative vision, offering stability for their careers and new opportunities for students

LOSU (previously it was five years, extendable). In this period, the junior lecturer must perform teaching tasks while simultaneously consolidating their own line of research, with the aim of achieving accreditation for a higher

category (senior or tenured lecturer) before the end of their contract is reached.

Affiliated with the Faculty of Nursing since 2016,

Judit Vives Espelta (32) completed her PhD in 2024 with honours and last year began her new role as a junior lecturer. At this stage, her proposal is to establish a line of research focusing on the therapeutic relationship and communication in

nursing. A graduate in nursing (2015) with a specialisation in mental health, she completed a master's degree in Research in Nursing Sciences (2020), a postgraduate degree in University Teacher Training (2022) and a master's degree in Lifelong Learning in Mental Health Nursing (2023).

Now in her new role as a junior lecturer, Vives teaches the subject Therapeutic Relationship and Communication in her second year and participates in various research and teaching innovation projects (Martí i Franquès programme, AGAUR-Inspira). She particularly values the time and security afforded by



Judit Vives

the full-time contract, which allows her to delve deeper into her research with 'greater quality', having previously juggled teaching, clinical work and research under various part-time contracts. According to Vives, this call represents a 'rejuvenation of the teaching and research staff' that will facilitate intergenerational dialogue and contribute to 'a new vision' in the Faculty of Nursing.

She also highly values the stability offered by a six-year contract after working simultaneously in several places since 2016 and the welcome she has received from the University, which has organised training activities to facilitate a shared journey among the new junior lecturers. With enthusiasm and gratitude, she says that she is looking forward to her work and is 'very happy' to have a place within this new academic stage.

Leonor Deis, meanwhile, is an agricultural engineer and doctor of biological sciences with over 20 years of teaching experience and a research career centred on the effects of climate change on vineyards. In 2024 she did a three-month research secondment at the Institute of Grapevine and Wine Sciences (ICVV) in La Rioja and in 2023 she spent six months at the School of Agriculture in Lisbon, where she delved



Leonor Deis



Mariona Genís

into winery and vineyard decision-making models to mitigate thermal and hydric stress on grape varieties. At the URV she teaches second, third

and fourth year subjects and leads projects to introduce varieties that are better adapted to the new climate scenario.

Deis highlights the difference between the large wineries of La Rioja and those of Tarragona, which she characterises as 'smaller and rooted in

tradition', and values the opportunity to understand both models to 'apply and share them' in our region. In addition, her daughter suggested that she finally settle in one place to avoid constant changes in language and school, and she appreciates the stability and warm welcome she received at the URV, 'I have been here a year but it feels like much longer,' she says. For Deis, the University's practical model guarantees high-quality opportunities for students and allows her to bridge the gap between herself and them, 'I come down from the podium to talk and answer questions; it's a way for everyone to learn, including me.'

Mariona Genís Vinyals has devoted 24 years to teaching at institutions such as the University of Vic – BAU Design Centre, where she led the Technology Department and taught courses in Projects and Construction. In 2021, she joined the URV as a temporary part-time lecturer. A doctor of architecture specialising in the restoration and refurbishment of educational spaces, she heads up her own practice and conducts research on designing environments that meet the needs of teachers and learners in order to improve the transmission of knowledge.

Her specific training to be accredited as a senior lecturer includes the completion of a voluntary blended-learning programme. She highlights the value of the face-to-face sessions because they 'foster connections between people that lead to synergies and collaborations' and bring

teaching of Spanish as a foreign language has returned to the URV after three years at the University of Oxford and earlier periods at Aarhus University and Shenzhen Polytechnic University. According to Huete, the new lecturer positions correct a structural 'anomaly' and will lower

At Oxford, he taught bachelor's degree courses in Spanish, broadened his network of international contacts, and learnt that external experience is required to join the university's teaching staff. 'These lecturers come back with lots of ideas and proposals for potential collaborations,' he explains. His background, which combines in-depth knowledge of the URV with experience at Oxford — a world leader in the organisation of tutorials — gives him a unique perspective from which to promote new teaching and research projects.

The commitment to add junior lecturer staff not only marks a step forward

in recruiting and retaining talent, it also encourages new lines of research and teaching practices as well as generational renewal that contribute to the transmission of value to the URV community.

The commitment to add junior lecturer staff encourages new lines of research and teaching practices as well as generational renewal

together perspectives from many different fields.

Driven by a passion to merge her research and professional practice, she explains that she has begun to self-finance research projects in order to apply their findings in her practice, a commitment that she intends to reinforce through her new role as lecturer, combining her experience in restoring historical structures with innovative approaches to design and assessing the learning environments at the URV.

the average age of teachers, 'I myself had to leave because I had no prospects for stability at the URV.'

Ángel Huete Lozano is a doctor of humanistic studies and a specialist in lexicography and the



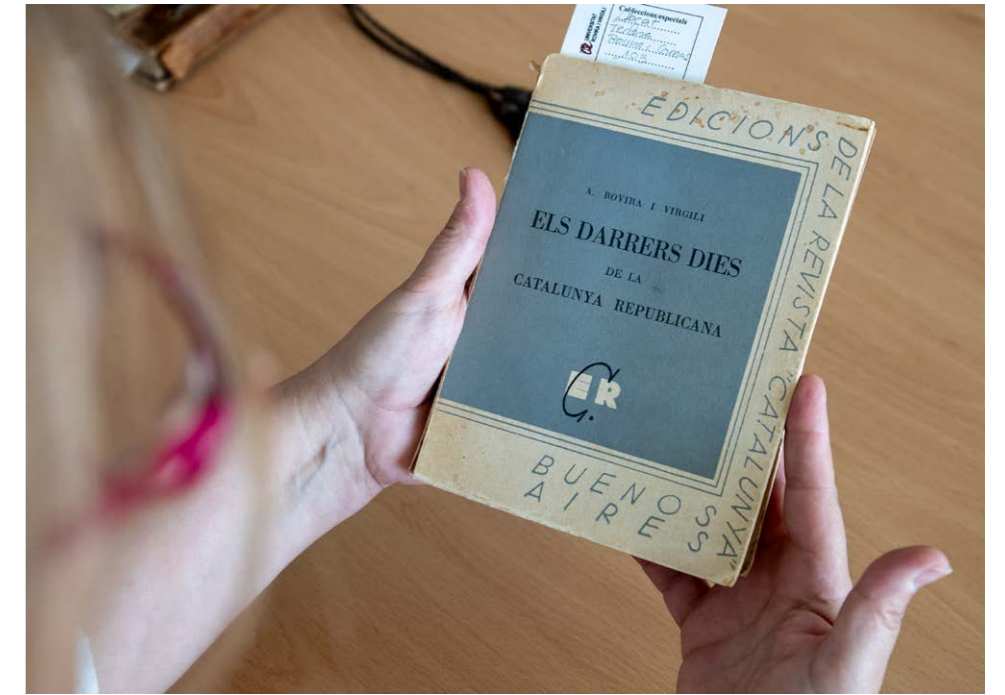
Ángel Huete

The legacy of Rovira i Virgili

The URV has obtained the publishing rights to the works of Antoni Rovira i Virgili with the aim of preserving his thoughts and ideas and disseminating them globally



Maria Calvet, the author's great-granddaughter, with the rector, Josep Pallarès, and the head of URV Publications, Jaume Llambrich.



Rovira i Virgili University and Antoni Rovira i Virgili's descendants have taken a decisive step towards preserving and disseminating the work of this leading figure in 20th-century Catalan culture and politics. Last November, the University signed an agreement with the author's family entrusting the URV with the management of the publishing rights to his entire body of work. The agreement represents an act of trust and generosity on the part of the family, represented by Maria Calvet, the author's great-granddaughter, who signed the document together with the rector of the URV, Josep Pallarès, during an official meeting at the Rector's Offices.

Through this gesture, the URV assumes the responsibility of safeguarding, publishing, and sharing Rovira i Virgili's legacy with new audiences. The agreement grants the rights for the reproduction

and distribution of these works worldwide in any language, which facilitates their translation, publication in multiple formats, and global dissemination.

Through this donation, the University can digitise and share the legacy of the intellectual whose name it bears

Jaume Llambrich, the head of URV Publications, explains that the agreement ensures continuity of the work he began in 2012 with the publication of *In Defense of Democracy*, a key work in the author's legacy. Since then, the University's publishing office has published several titles that reclaim



and highlight both his work as a political thinker and his more literary side. The catalogue includes *L'Estat Català*, *La victòria de Pompeu Fabra*, *Breu resum de la història de Catalunya*, *Els darrers dies de la Catalunya republicana* and *Suite Rovira i Virgili*. The next goal is to reissue a book of stories published in 1902. The transfer of the rights has also given a definitive boost to the project to digitise his work, which is being done in collaboration with the Learning and Research Resource Centre (CRAI). This initiative provides free access to the author's most important works and allows many of the publications, often difficult to find in print, to be accessed online from anywhere in the world.

A significant part of Rovira i Virgili's legacy preserved at the CRAI comes from his personal library, donated by his daughter, the librarian Teresa Rovira. This collection contains more than 200 documents, including books, journals and manuscripts

covering fields such as history, grammar, politics and literature. A selection of 50 of these works, including a copy of the first edition of *Els darrers dies de la Catalunya republicana*, are now available online in the Digital Memory of Catalonia.

A part of the collection was kept for decades in the General Archive of the Spanish Civil War in Salamanca, where the Franco regime stored confiscated documents to repress dissent. After years of appeals, they were returned to the family in 2012. Today these materials are part of the University's documentary and intellectual heritage. With this donation, the URV has become the leading institution dedicated to preserving and disseminating the work of Antoni Rovira i Virgili. 'The family is very grateful to the University, because my grandmother's goal –Teresa Rovira, Rovira i Virgili's eldest daughter – was to keep alive the testimony of those who were forced into exile and build a collective history,' recalled Maria Calvet during the ceremony.

The vision of Antoni Rovira i Virgili

Antoni Rovira i Virgili (Tarragona, 1882 – Perpignan, 1949) was a key figure in republican Catalanism and one of the most influential intellectuals of the 20th century in Catalonia. A journalist, historian and politician, he stood out for his commitment to democracy, culture and national rights. Forced to leave after the Civil War, he presided over the Parliament of Catalonia in exile. His enduring legacy, which is still relevant today, offers a lucid view of identity, freedom and resistance.



University publishing in Catalan is championed at the URV

The URV hosted the first University Publishing Meeting of the Vives Network, which brought together academic publishers from 22 Catalan-speaking universities. The meeting focused on the future of university publications and reaffirming Catalan's place as a language of scholarship and research. Coinciding with 20 years of URV Publications and 30 years of the Vives Network, the meeting reaffirmed a commitment to open access, publishing excellence, and enhancing the visibility of research in Catalan.



Leaders in research

By securing the ERC Synergy Grant, one of the most prestigious grants in Europe, Marta Sales-Pardo strengthens the URV's leadership in cutting-edge scientific research. In addition, ICREA Acadèmia distinctions and ICREA grantees solidify a scientific community of excellence that gives impetus to the institution's research on an international scale



Marta Sales-Pardo

A researcher in the URV's Department of Chemical Engineering and an expert in complex networks, she has been awarded a prestigious ERC Synergy Grant to co-lead the CircuitEvolution project in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and Rockefeller University. Over six years and with a total budget of 12 million euros, she will investigate the evolution of neural circuits in various fly species, using connectomic analysis to understand how differences explain behaviours such as mating rituals and food preferences. Sales-Pardo's team will develop algorithms to reconstruct and compare connectomes and link them with in vivo behavioural data. Her research will result in groundbreaking databases for neuroscience, evolutionary biology, and artificial intelligence.



Jordi Salas-Salvadó

A full professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Biotechnology and an international leader in the field of nutrition, he received the ICREA Acadèmia distinction last December for the second consecutive time. The distinction recognises university teaching staff with exceptional research careers. He directs the URV's Human Nutrition Unit and is a researcher at CIBERO-BN and the Pere Virgili Health Research Institute (IISPV). In addition, he is coordinating the PREDIMED-PLUS project, a clinical trial with almost 7,000 participants evaluating the impact of diet on cardiometabolic health. His research focuses on obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases and has contributed decisively to demonstrating the benefits of the Mediterranean diet. Salas-Salvadó also holds prominent positions in scientific institutions and regional, national and international advisory bodies.

Leaders in research #1

Among the most cited in the world

Josep Lluís Domingo and Àlex Arenas make the Highly Cited Researchers list for the impact and influence of their research

Researchers Josep Lluís Domingo and Àlex Arenas were included in the 2024 Highly Cited Researchers ranking, which identifies the most influential scientists worldwide for the impact of their publications. The ranking recognises scientists whose publications are among the top 1% most cited publications in their respective fields over the past decade.

This year's ranking included 6,886 recognitions for 6,636 researchers from 59 countries in a range of scientific fields. Some 30 of these conduct their research at Catalan research institutions, hospitals and universities, while 14 reported a

primary affiliation with universities in the Catalan system. Among them are Josep Lluís Domingo and Àlex Arenas, who represent the URV.

Josep Lluís Domingo, a full professor in the Department of Basic Medical Sciences, had already been included in the ranking in 2014 and in 2015. He appeared again this year as an outstanding researcher in the category of cross-disciplinary science, which recognises researchers who have had an impact in many fields. Àlex Arenas, meanwhile, a full professor in the Department of Computer Engineering and Mathematics, joined the list for the first time this year in the field of physics.

The United States leads the world ranking with 2,507 scientists, followed by China with 1,405, and the United Kingdom with 563. Spain has 99 recognitions, of which 34 are from Catalonia. The inclusion of Domingo and Arenas on this list confirms the international reach of the research done at the URV and its scientific impact in strategic areas such as health, environmental sciences, complex networks and theoretical physics.

**Leaders in research #2**

Recognition of talent

Ercilia García, Sandra Contreras, Marta Sales-Pardo, Francisco Andrade and José Antonio Moreno have been recognised for their outstanding contributions to research, teaching, and knowledge dissemination and transfer

Five researchers from Rovira i Virgili University were awarded the 2025 Serra Húnter Talent Award. These awards highlight the excellence and contribution of Serra Húnter teaching staff to Catalan public universities. This year's awards recognised 35 teachers and researchers, five of whom are from the URV.

The winners were Ercilia García, awarded for her academic career; Sandra Contreras, for her commitment to scientific outreach; Marta Sales-Pardo, for the impact of her research; Francisco Andrade, for knowledge transfer; and José Antonio Moreno, for excellence in teaching. They are all part of the Serra Húnter programme, which recognises educators whose merits align with international standards, currently with more than 1,100 teaching staff in the Catalan public university system.

The awards ceremony, presided over by Lluís Marsal, academic director of the Serra Húnter Plan, and Núria Montserrat, Minister of Research and Universities, underscored the key role

these educators play in advancing knowledge, enhancing teaching excellence, and fostering societal development. The Serra Húnter programme is a joint initiative of the Government of Catalonia and seven public universities in Catalonia designed to attract top national and international academic talent based on rigorous standards of excellence and leadership.

The plan currently includes 1,134 lecturers affiliated with Catalan public universities in various categories: full professors, senior lecturers and tenure-track lecturers. The recognition of five of these URV professionals underscores the University's leading role in attracting and promoting excellent research and teaching talent.



Research with impact

The Board of Trustees' Joan Pedrerol Awards has recognised six projects with the capacity to transform society

The URV's Board of Trustees has distinguished six research projects in the ninth Joan Pedrerol Gallego Awards, which recognise research carried out at the University with exceptional social impact. The winning proposals address a wide array of challenges such as the ecological transition from an eco-feminist perspective, conflict resolution through mediation, the study of aging, the fight against child abuse, the effects of bisphenol A on liver health and improving brain monitoring in newborns.

The awards are divided into three broad areas: social sciences and humanities; experimental sciences, engineering and architecture; and health and life sciences. Each of these is divided into two categories: *ex ante*, which recognises early-stage projects with anticipated social impact, and *ex post*, which rewards research whose impact has already been demonstrated. This year's

awards were supported by the Tarragona Provincial Council.

In the field of social sciences and humanities, the Territory, Citizenship and Sustainability Group of the Department of Public Law was recognised twice. In the *ex ante* category, the ECOFEM project was selected for its proposal which aims to incorporate an ecofeminist perspective into public policy for a more inclusive ecological transition. In the *ex post* category, the winning project examined the role of citizenship in administrative justice, advocating for the regulation and application of mediation as tool for prevention and resolution from an interdisciplinary perspective and with a gender focus.

The award-winning projects address ecofeminism, mediation, AI, liver health, ageing and neonatal neurology

In the area of science and technology, in the *ex ante* category, the Smart Health-ASCLEPIUS group was recognised for the CAPTAIN project, which uses artificial intelligence to study ageing and safeguard individual privacy. In the *ex post* category,

the Smart Technologies group was recognised for its work on the European HEROES and ALUNA projects, which have developed AI tools to identify childhood sexual abuse materials and human trafficking, thereby strengthening international cooperation and the protection of victims.

Lastly, in the area of health sciences, the GEMMAIR group was recognised in the *ex ante* category for research on the relationship between bisphenol A and liver disease associated with metabolic dysfunction. In the *ex post* category, the NeuroÈpia group developed a novel electrode to monitor brain activity in newborns, eliminating artefacts produced by current devices and improving the diagnosis and neurological treatment of at-risk infants.

The Joan Pedrerol Gallego Awards highlight the URV's commitment to research rooted in real-world relevance that can generate knowledge and achieve a tangible social impact.



Three Marie Curie fellowships for postdoctoral projects

For the first time, the URV has won three Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action (MSCA) grants in the same Horizon Europe call for proposals. The three projects selected for funding span a range of fields, from information sciences and engineering to the life sciences, social sciences and humanities.

Studying birds' beaks for wildlife conservation

Under the leadership of Case Vincent Miller and the supervision of Jordi Marcé-Nogué, a researcher in the Department of Mechanical Engineering's *Bite ecology from avian kinematics and shape* project aims to answer a fundamental question: What factors drive the convergence of bird beak form and function? The project uses methods from computational biomechanics, including geometric morphometry and finite element analysis, to predict how bird beaks will evolve in response to climate change and to identify key species for conservation.

Robots to improve rehabilitation therapies

Victoria Oguntosin, under the supervision of Domènec Puig, a researcher in the Department of Computer Engineering and Mathematics, is developing a new-generation rehabilitation system for the upper limbs. The objective of the *Adaptive control of soft robots for personalised upper-limb rehabilitation with machine learning* project is to harness adaptive control of soft robots and machine learning to offer therapy tailored to the needs of each patient and to overcome the limitations of current therapies.

Preventing discrimination against sex workers in the academic environment

The project *The cost of stigma: tackling and responding to discrimination against students in the sex industry within Spanish and Italian universities*, by researcher with Livia Motterle and supervised Jordi Roca Girona, a researcher in the Department of Anthropology, Philosophy and Social Work, aims to promote equitable responses to the needs of students working in the sex industry in Spanish and Italian universities. [Learn more on page 14]



Collaboration that leads the way

A time for networking between companies and doctoral students.

The URV put on a conference to bring doctoral students together with companies interested in the research they are doing

The Connecta el teu Talent conference, an initiative promoted by the Doctoral School with the support of the Tarragona Provincial Council, was put on with the aim of building connections between research and the productive sector. The event brought a dozen companies from different sectors together with doctoral students from

the URV, who had the opportunity to present their research projects and actively engage with the business world.

Unlike other events that connect companies and researchers, it was the doctoral students themselves who took the initiative and presented their projects through posters. This innovative

approach encourages companies to identify

The doctoral projects were presented to local companies to foster collaborations and promote knowledge transfer

lines of research that can lead to collaboration, knowledge transfer and practical applications in different fields.

A very diverse range of projects was presented.

One was entitled 'Formació docent en educació maker:

una nova perspectiva' (Teacher training in maker education: a new perspective), which proposed an educational model focused on developing practical skills in construction

and repair. The project, carried out by a team of doctoral students, exemplifies how research can bring transformative ideas to sectors such as education. In addition to making their own presentations, the project team and others were able to gather insights and establish useful professional contacts.

The URV Foundation's Research Valorisation Unit, which promotes university knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship, also took part in the event to identify potential common interests between the projects on display and the companies in attendance.

Connecta el teu Talent reflects the URV's commitment to research that is useful, open and closely connected to the local community, underscoring the University's role as a knowledge generator with a transformative mission.

First thesis in the world on the training of doctoral supervisors

The URV hosted the defence of the world's first doctoral thesis to analyse the training of thesis supervisors. The author of the thesis, Génesis Guarimata Salinas, studied the role of supervisors, the impact of training programmes and the institutional context that conditions them. Her research concluded that despite a global trend towards professionalisation of thesis supervision, training models vary by country. Led by members of the URV's Group for the Professionalisation of Doctoral Studies, the study received the highest distinction, reinforcing the University's leadership in this field.



Two exemplary careers

The URV recognises María Jesús Montoro for her contributions to environmental law and Mark Jensen for his work on chronic pain



Rovira i Virgili University conferred honorary doctorates upon two prominent authorities in the fields of public law and the treatment of chronic pain: María Jesús Montoro and Mark Philip Jensen. Both represent a combination of scientific excellence and commitment to society, and have maintained close links with URV research groups and initiatives.

María Jesús Montoro, a full professor of Administrative Law at the University of Barcelona until her retirement, was recognised for her pioneering career in environmental law and for being one of the first women to hold a senior position in the university legal sphere. She approached research with an interdisciplinary and humanistic perspective, focusing especially on issues such as regulatory technique, public service, administrative justice and, above all, environmental law. Her ongoing work with the Tarragona Centre for Environmental Law Studies (CEDAT) and other research groups of the Department of Public Law was invaluable for advancing this field at the URV.

Mark P. Jensen, meanwhile, was recognised for his international impact in chronic pain research, particularly for children and young people. As a full professor at the University of Washington and author of more than 700 scientific articles, he has contributed decisively to the understanding of chronic pain as a biopsychosocial experience and to the development of non-pharmacological treatments such as

clinical hypnosis and meditation. His over 20 years of collaboration with the URV's Chair in Paediatric Pain-Grünenthal Foundation and the Algos Research Group has allowed him to validate pain assessment tools and advance therapeutic programmes already in use, such as the one used at Sant Joan University Hospital. These two distinctions, added to

Both awards are testimony to the commitment of research to society and the potential impact of scientific collaborations

the URV's 50 honorary degrees, underscore values such as rigour, care, interdisciplinarity and the importance of promoting a university that combines strong territorial roots and an international outlook.

This same dual perspective is reflected both in Montoro's dialogue with global legal debates and in the impact of Jensen's research on different continents. Lucía Casado, who nominated María Jesús Montoro, emphasised the depth and academic quality of her work and the fact that she has always tried to 'apply the filter of reason with the understanding that the law must be adapted to the social reality.'

Jordi Miró, the sponsor of Mark P. Jensen, stressed the importance of Jensen's contributions to pain assessment. 'Chronic pain is a subjective experience and difficult

to measure accurately. So, having valid, reliable tools that are sensitive to change is critical for assessing the effectiveness of treatments and developing new ones that are more effective,' he said.

These two nominations reaffirm the URV's commitment to transformative research. Montoro's and Jensen's

trajectories in their fields are a testament to how science can have a tangible impact when it is based on collaboration, curiosity and a willingness to serve.



Jordi Salas-Salvadó, honorary doctorate at La Plata

The National University of La Plata awarded URV professor Jordi Salas-Salvadó an honorary doctorate for his outstanding contribution to human nutrition. The Argentine institution honoured him for his research on the Mediterranean diet, his ability to influence international public health guidelines, and his role in introducing omics sciences to nutritional epidemiology. The award also highlighted his key role in integrating nutrition into health science curricula and his international scientific leadership.

Professionals for a clean future

The URV creates a pioneering new master's degree to tackle the energy transition from a multidisciplinary, global perspective

The University has focused on the needs emerging from the energy transition, and one of its strands of action in this area is the creation of new degrees designed to address the challenges of the future. Starting in the academic year 2025-26, the catalogue of courses will include the Lifelong Learning Master's Degree in Industrial and Social Decarbonisation Management, the first degree of its kind in Spain that responds to an urgent demand: trained professionals capable of understanding and managing decarbonisation from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Unlike other training programmes focusing exclusively on the technical aspects of the field, this master's degree combines scientific and technological knowledge with tools for economic, legal, social and communicative analysis. The goal of the course is to provide multidisciplinary, practical training to people from diverse backgrounds – from engineering and environmental sciences to economics, law and communication – so that they can find efficient and sustainable solutions to the enormous industrial and social challenges posed by decarbonisation. The training is based on active learning and includes face-to-face and virtual classes, collaborations

with companies and institutions and teamwork. Throughout the course, students learn from real cases facilitated by collaborating companies and work to address specific problems in the sector. This practical approach is complemented by seminars, conferences and technical visits, and will culminate in a master's degree final project established in collaboration with these organisations.

This new master's degree builds upon the URV's catalogue of

degrees related to decarbonisation and sustainability, such as the university Master's Degrees in Environmental Engineering and Energy Sustainability, in Energy Conversion Systems and in Hydrogen Technologies. This course consolidates the URV's position as a leading university in the training of professionals for a climate-neutral future.

Decarbonisation, a strategic challenge

The URV considers decarbonisation a strategic priority and tackles it from an interdisciplinary perspective that combines experimental sciences, engineering and social sciences. Over 100 researchers work in 15 research groups and two spin-off companies, with 41 funded competitive projects and 20 contracts with companies in the 2022-25 period. In addition, the University supports pilot plants for the capture and use of CO₂ in collaboration with the Institute of Chemical Research of Catalonia (ICIQ) and Eurecat, and participates in climate-related networks. It also promotes knowledge and technology transfer, dissemination and awareness-raising activities, such as the URV-Repsol Foundation Chair on Energy Transition, and training activities for professionals and citizens.



New web portal to track projects

The URV has launched the researcher portal, an intuitive and practical web platform that gathers all the projects and grants in which the research community participates in one place, including both team members and project managers. The portal allows users to consult the budget execution status of the projects, the expenses paid, the people hired and other relevant information in real time. In addition, it facilitates access to data from research groups and projects, and presents clear advantages in terms of financial and administrative monitoring.



New measures to promote work-life balance among teaching and research staff

The URV is promoting a research intensification programme for teaching and research staff who rejoin after a leave of absence. This measure reinforces the University's commitment to ensuring work-life balance and co-responsibility, and expands upon other initiatives such as the breastfeeding room on the Catalunya Campus, which was inaugurated two years ago and very well received. In fact, its success has encouraged the University to look into extending the initiative to include other campuses.



More than 4 million for a new Clinical Research Unit in Reus

In 2026, the Tarragona region will have new facilities for conducting clinical trials at all stages. It will be located at Sant Joan University Hospital and will receive 4.3 million euros in government funding. The project is sponsored by the Pere Virgili Health Research Institute and the Sant Joan Hospital, with the collaboration of the URV and other health and local institutions. The new unit will provide local patients access to innovative therapies and improve clinical research opportunities.

The URV in the rankings



- One in ten permanent researchers** among the most influential in the world (Stanford University ranking)
- researchers** appear in the ranking of female scientists in Spain (CSIC ranking)
- Seventh best university in Spain** (CYD ranking)
- 62 researchers** among the most influential in the world (Best Scientists by Discipline ranking)
- Fifth Catalan university in sustainability** (QS ranking)
One hundred

Transfer



[The Foundation celebrates 25 years](#)
[Education with impact](#)
[The tourism of the future](#)
[Living in times of change](#)
[Board of Trustees Awards for three entrepreneurship projects](#)
[Half a million to sow knowledge](#)

In commemoration of its 25th anniversary, the URV Foundation celebrates a consolidated track record marked by regional impact, social cohesion and the promotion of an open and pluralistic innovation ecosystem. This accumulated experience gives way to a new strategic phase with the approval of the business plan, which positions the FURV as the URV's key vehicle for moving towards a more professionalised, efficient and globally oriented model of knowledge transfer.

With this new vision, the URV strengthens its capacity to offer knowledge-based solutions to businesses, institutions and citizens, while multiplying its social impact through an interdisciplinary, open and international approach. In this scenario, the University reaffirms its role as a driver of regional innovation and actively contributes to improving competitiveness and wellbeing in southern Catalonia.

The promotion of entrepreneurship continues to be a central component of the URV's knowledge and technology transfer strategy. Beyond the constant impetus for new initiatives, the maturity of the entrepreneurial ecosystem is reflected in the consolidation, growth and internationalisation of science and technology-based spin-offs and start-ups, which not only generate highly skilled employment, but also become drivers of transformation to retain talent and boost innovation in the region. This confirms the role of the University as a platform for socio-economic transformation, in which knowledge is activated as a force for progress.

At the same time, the URV is promoting the creation and reorientation of university-business chairs in key areas such as energy transition and sustainability in anticipation of emerging challenges, while the renewal of groups with the TECNIO seal has consolidated the URV's technological capacity and increased its visibility and competitiveness in the Catalan R&D&I ecosystem.

Knowledge transfer initiatives demonstrate the University's commitment to remaining deeply rooted in the region and contributing to generating wellbeing, wealth and transformation through knowledge. The combination of talent, strategic vision and partnerships has firmly established the URV as a key player in building a sustainable, competitive and knowledge-based future.

The Foundation celebrates 25 years

It has become a solid and essential link connecting the University with the region through research, training and innovation

Since its creation 25 years ago, the URV Foundation has witnessed and driven an evolution that has allowed the University to strengthen its involvement with the region and expand its social and economic impact. With a firmly established structure, a broad portfolio of services and a team committed to quality and continuous improvement, the Foundation has become an essential vehicle for putting knowledge at the service of people and the region.

The URV Foundation, established at the beginning of the millennium, marked a turning point in the University's desire to extend its commitment beyond classrooms and laboratories, and to do so in the most flexible and effective way possible. In a context of institutional growth and research consolidation, it was created as a strategic commitment to strengthen ties with the social and economic environment,

promote knowledge transfer, and streamline and effectively channel collaborations with companies, institutions, and professionals. That step opened the door to a new way of understanding the university: more open, more useful and more involved with development.

Since January 2000, when it was officially founded, the URV Foundation has been expanding its

In a quarter of a century, the FURV has consolidated the structure and intensified the relationship between university and society

scope and has established itself as an essential agent within the university ecosystem. Over these 25 years, it has developed its own structure with identity and operational capacity, but still closely aligned

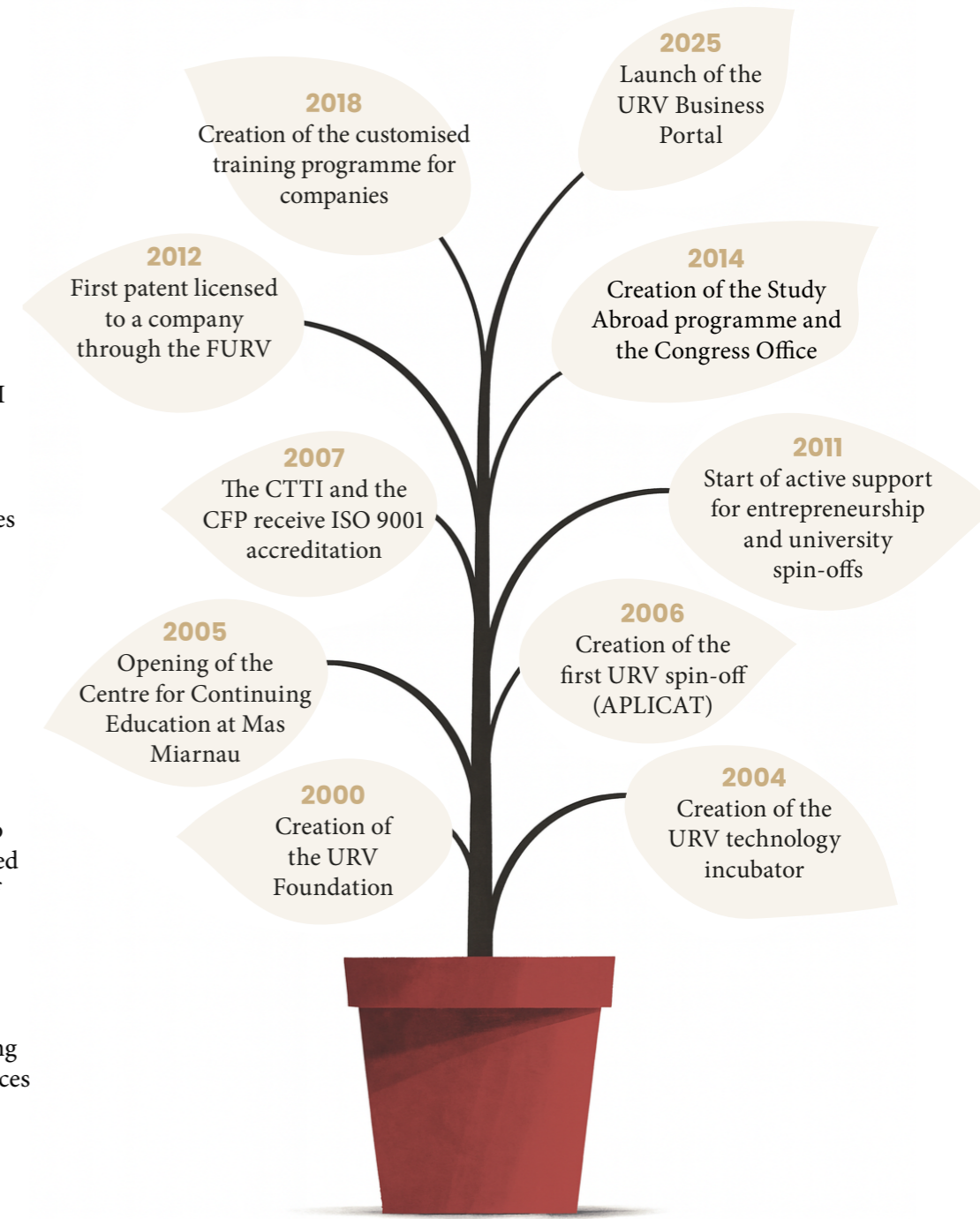
with the strategic objectives of the URV. It operates around two major areas of activity: the Technology Transfer and Innovation Centre (CTTI) and the Lifelong Learning Centre (CFP). Through these two units, it promotes services and programmes aimed at bringing university knowledge and resources to the entire economic, institutional and civic fabric of the region.

The Technology Transfer and Innovation Centre has played a leading role in the development of stable partnerships between the University and the productive sector. It acts as the URV's Valorisation Unit and provides support for

the management of R&D&I projects, the protection of research results, the creation of spin-off companies and the transfer of knowledge through grants such as Research to Business. With more than 140

research groups involved, the CTTI has established itself as a platform for connecting the University's scientific capacity with the innovation needs of local companies and institutions. In addition, it promotes entrepreneurship among the university community (URV Emprèn) and manages research and consultancy contracts and agreements with third parties.

The Lifelong Learning Centre has been instrumental in promoting lifelong learning and responding to labour market demands for qualified staff. It coordinates a wide range of master's degrees and postgraduate courses, specialisation courses, micro-credentials and tailor-made training for companies, with face-to-face, blended and virtual learning formats. It also offers support services to students and professionals, such as a job bank, various scholarships and training grants, as well as the rental of spaces and facilities,





Knowledge transfer and innovation



€480,000 in fees for licensed technologies



142 priority patents applied for



41 licensed technologies since 2006



631 knowledge and technology transfer projects with foreign companies



534 URV researchers leaders in knowledge and technology transfer projects



32 spin-offs created (14 active)



Investment and collaboration



6,090 knowledge and technology transfer projects worth €92.5 million



1,732 companies that have contracted projects (from 135 different sectors)



90 projects funded by Research to Business (€0.92 million)



811 grants managed by CTTI+CFP (€33.1 million)



Training and studies



1,213 people hired by the FURV



3,195 lifelong learning courses



59,810 students enrolled in training activities



9,903 postgraduate diplomas awarded



€146,730 in grants and scholarships for students



707 tailor-made courses for companies

and logistical and organisational support for conferences, seminars and workshops.

To mark its 25th anniversary, the URV Foundation wishes to highlight the progress made so far and the role it has played in the mutually beneficial relationship between the university and society. This stocktaking coincides with a time of profound challenges and transformations, in which knowledge transfer and lifelong learning take centre stage in the university agenda.

The Lifelong Learning Centre and the Technology and Innovation Transfer Centre are the driving forces behind knowledge transfer in the region

The FURV's new business plan, with a budget of €630,000, aims to transform it into a business-oriented unit

From the FURV to the market #1

From the laboratory to the incubator

A technology created at the URV to monitor the brain activity of newborns is moving towards the market backed by awards and competitive funding

The early detection of abnormalities in the brain activity of babies admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) can change the trajectory of their lives. This is the motivation that pushed Albert Fabregat, a researcher from the URV's Mechanical Engineering Department, to develop the aCUP-E, a neonatal electrode designed to improve amplitude integrated electroencephalography (aEEG) recordings. The medical device is a clinically validated innovation that promises success in the market, thanks to over five years of competitive grants and awards for research impact.

The aCUP-E responds to a need detected by neonatologist Vicenç Pascual in his clinical practice:

conventional electrodes for aEEG often generate artefacts that hinder medical interpretation. The new device, designed specifically for babies, offers better adhesion, simple application and superior signal quality, three factors that can improve clinical decisions and reduce serious neurological consequences.

Since 2020, this project by the Clinical and Epidemiological Neuroscience Group (NeuroEpi) has been highly lauded, receiving awards such as the i4KIDS, the Gresol Awards and the Joan Pedrerol Awards from the URV's Board of Trustees. It was selected by The Collider programme of Mobile World Capital and funded by entities such as the "la Caixa" Foundation, the Tarragona Provincial Council, and more recently, the Agency for the Management of University and Research Grants (AGAUR).

The Catalan Agency for Management of University and Research Grants awarded a €150,000 Product grant to develop a prototype and evaluate and transfer the research

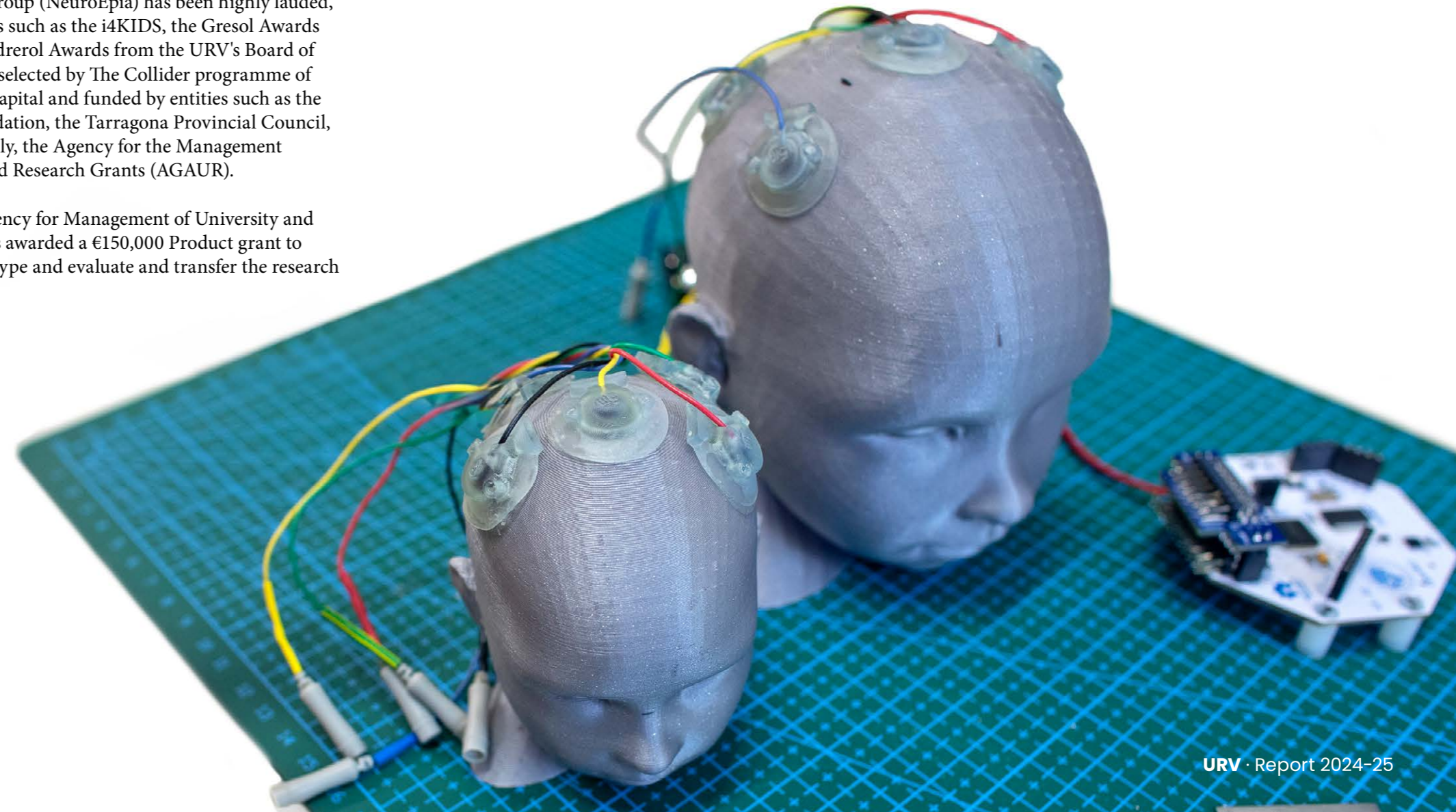
results as well as an €84,000 Innovators grant to advance the market access strategy through activities like price analyses, clinical pilots and distribution agreements.

The path of aCUP-E towards clinical use also includes complementary technology for guided electrode

positioning, which will facilitate its application in hospital settings. With a competitive price, superior performance and a lower environmental impact, this device represents a paradigmatic example of knowledge transfer with substantial social and economic return.



Albert Fabregat.



From the **FURV** to the market #2

A yeast with a designation of origin



A microorganism spontaneously generated in Priorat wineries and isolated by URV researchers has become a benchmark for producing high-end red wines around the world. Specifically, the product is B-29 yeast, marketed under the name Lalvin Clos by the company Lallemand, a Canadian multinational specialising in oenological products. Its origins lie in a research project carried out by the Oenological Biotechnology Group at Rovira i Virgili University, which began in the late 1990s and culminated in 2002 with the doctoral thesis of researcher Maria Jesús Torija.

The objective was to study the microbial biodiversity of the Priorat and Terra Alta wine regions and identify yeasts adapted to the extreme fermentation conditions that characterise the wines of these designations of origin. From 66 different isolated strains, the URV researchers selected five, which underwent fermentation tests under real conditions. In the end, the B-29 yeast prevailed due to its minerality, capacity for fermentation, resistance to alcohol, and ability to preserve the wine's distinctive characteristics.

The URV established a licensing agreement with Lallemand in 2008, which was renewed in 2018.

Thanks to this agreement, the URV Foundation has received €226,375 in accumulated fees as of 2025. Lalvin Clos is distributed in wineries in about fifteen countries



Maria Jesús Torija.

Lalvin Clos, a yeast from Priorat wine that was isolated in a URV research project, is sold all over the world and has contributed more than €220,000 in royalties to the University

in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Oceania, and is part of the catalogue of oenological yeasts produced under the Lallemand's YSEO label. 'We are proud that a yeast isolated at the URV is used internationally to produce high-end wines,' said Maria Jesús Torija, head of the Oenological Biotechnology Group. The success of this yeast highlights the potential of applied research and knowledge transfer promoted by the URV.

From the FURV to the market #3

Towards more sustainable fashion

The first URV patent to emerge from an industrial doctorate offers a more environmentally friendly alternative for textile and synthetic leather fixatives

The URV's first patent to emerge from an industrial doctorate proposes a sustainable alternative to traditional fixatives for fabrics. The product is the EGEL TH90 pigment fixative, marketed by the company Cromogenia Units and used in printing processes on fabrics and synthetic leather. This technology, formulated from compounds derived from renewable sources, was registered and recognised with the BASF-ICIQ award for the best patent in innovation and entrepreneurship.

The research was conducted as part of an industrial doctorate with the collaboration of the URV Research Group on Sustainable Polymers and Cromogenia Units' R&D team. This is the first time that a University patent

has arisen from a collaboration with a private company. The fixative offers a more biodegradable and environmentally friendly alternative to traditional fixatives, which contain compounds from fossil fuels. The aim of the research was to replace one of these potentially harmful compounds with one derived from renewable sources.

This technology not only improves the sustainability of textile processes but also maintains – or even improves, in some cases – technical efficiency and compatibility with existing production systems. This makes it easier for the industry to use and represents a step towards more responsible fashion.

The collaboration between the URV and Cromogenia Units paves the way for generating innovative solutions that can be transferred to the market and have a direct impact through patents. It also demonstrates the potential of industrial doctorates to respond to global environmental challenges through concrete, useful and applicable solutions.



Tour of the project 'Veus de dona a Tarragona' (Voices of women in Tarragona).

Education with impact

Bridging Grants are awarded for educational projects that address gender violence, digital inclusion, women's literature and English phonetics

The URV Board of Trustees and the Institute of Education Sciences have awarded Bridging Grants to four innovative educational projects that combine university research with teaching practice in primary and secondary schools across the region. These grants, which are supported by the Tarragona Provincial Council, promote the transfer of knowledge and collaboration between URV teaching staff and compulsory education teachers.

One of the winning projects is 'Obrim espais segurs' (We open safe spaces), sponsored by the Sant Sebastià de Nulles School and linked to the URV's Femminor research project. The aim is to prevent gender violence through workshops on emotional education, children's rights and gender equality for upper primary school students. With the support of the University's research staff, the aim is to foster empathy and solidarity towards children in vulnerable situations.

'Educa en digital: recursos per a una aula inclusiva' (Digital education: resources for an inclusive classroom) was also selected, coordinated by the Torreforta School with the participation of other schools in Reus and Torredembarra, and the teaching staff of the URV's Dual Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood and Primary Education. The project proposes strategies to ensure digital inclusion in the

classroom and train teachers to adapt to the different socio-economic circumstances of their students.

Another grant was awarded for 'Veus de dona a Tarragona' (Voices of women in Tarragona), an initiative undertaken by the Constantí secondary school that gives visibility to women writers in the area. The project, which has been active for five years with the collaboration of the URV's Department of Catalan Philology, combines technology, literary routes and teaching resources. Progress made over the course of the 2024-25 academic year includes the validation of the RuTIC app, the creation of new materials and the possibility of expanding the route with actions like a poetic garden in the Francolí.

The fourth award-winning project is led by the César August School in Tarragona, in collaboration with the URV's Experimental Phonics Research Group of the Speech Analysis Unit. The initiative aims to improve oral expression in English through teacher training with tools based on university research, including technologies such as ultrasounds to observe pronunciation. Teaching units will eventually be designed for teachers at different educational levels.

The tourism of the future

The Salou-Costa Dorada Chair of Tourism Innovation and Research promotes a more sustainable, inclusive and innovative sector based on science and regional commitment



ICLEAT: training to transform

The International Centre for Lifelong Learning in Tourism (ICLEAT) is a strategic training brand of the URV Foundation managed by the Lifelong Learning Centre and based at the URV's Faculty of Tourism and Geography. It offers creative learning experiences to sharpen the professional skills of workers in the tourism sector through the use of an innovative and flexible approach that is accessible to everyone. Its objectives include identifying required skills, developing up-to-date training programmes, promoting labour innovation to improve employability and competitiveness, and establishing collaborations with leading local, national and international organisations.



Presentation of the Chair of Tourism Innovation in Salou.

It serves as a meeting point for universities, institutions and the tourism sector to transform the model through applied research and collaboration

With the goal of promoting a new tourism culture based on sustainability, inclusion, and innovation, Rovira i Virgili University has created the Salou-Costa Dorada Chair of Tourism Innovation and Research, which has received support from the Salou Tourist Board and the Tarragona Provincial Council. It is led by Professor Marta Nel-lo and was created for the purpose of putting scientific knowledge at the service of the region and the tourism sector in order to both respond to current challenges and anticipate future ones.

Made up of a multidisciplinary team of researchers, mainly from the Departments of Geography, Business, History and Art History, the Chair works to generate knowledge that can be used in effective decision-making, identify emerging trends, promote good practices and contribute to rethinking the tourism model from a critical and constructive perspective.

Up to now, research has been conducted into various aspects, including artisanship as a differentiating factor in tourism,

environmental sustainability in hotels and campsites, communication of good environmental practices, and accessibility and inclusivity of tourism services and products. The Chair has also had a prominent presence at national and international congresses and sponsored a table at the prestigious International Sun and Blue Congress, which took place in November 2024 in Almeria.

It currently implements specific initiatives in collaboration with the sector to design accessible blue

tourism experiences with a clear orientation to applied innovation. It also works in partnership with leading organisations such as Impulsa Igualdad and the International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO), which allows it to broaden the scope and impact of its actions and engage the region in international debates on inclusive and socially responsible tourism.

To mark the beginning of this new stage, the 360° Tourism:

Innovation and Partnerships for the Future of the Sector conference was held at the Blaumar Hotel in Salou, which brought together more than 80 professionals from academic, institutional and business worlds. The event included two round tables: one on accessibility and social sustainability and another on the potential of water-related tourism. There was also a presentation by Antonio López de Ávila (UN Tourism), a collaborative workshop to generate transformative proposals,

and a final discussion with heads of various university chairs.

With this initiative, the URV reaffirms its commitment to sustainable regional development and offers a strategic tool for rethinking tourism with rigour, responsibility and a dedication to public service.

Living in a time of changes

The URV and the Pro-Penedès Foundation promote a pioneering chair to study the climate impact on vineyards and wine

The effect of climate change on vineyards is no longer a prediction but a proven fact: higher temperatures, longer droughts, accelerated ripening, alterations in the growing cycle, new pests and imbalances in grape quality are some of the factors that directly threaten the viability of viticulture as we know it. To tackle this increasingly concerning issue, Rovira i Virgili University and the Pro-Penedès Foundation, chaired by the mayor of Vilafranca del Penedès, have created the Chair on Vineyards and Climate Change, the first of its kind in Catalonia.

The initiative was created to analyse the effects of climate change on vineyards and wine, promote new lines of research and put scientific knowledge at the service of the wine

sector. It has a clear commitment to serving the region and the sector as a whole, and is based on the desire to establish strong links between the academic world,

It is the first university chair in Catalonia to focus on vineyards and climate change with a dedication to serving the region

government administrations, and economic and social stakeholders. The Chair is led by the Dean of the Faculty of Oenology, Manuel Suárez, and a researcher from the Department of Geography, Òscar Saladié. It combines an



interdisciplinary approach with scientific research, knowledge transfer and dissemination in order to bring about tangible change in the region. Areas of action include crop sustainability, variety adaptation, water and

soil management, carbon footprint reduction, the territorial impact of climate change, and improvements in wine production and processing.

Applied research is one of the fundamental pillars of this new

chair, which will work on analysing the impacts of climate change and seeking mitigation and adaptation strategies applicable across Catalonia. It will also provide training activities such as seminars, workshops and specialised courses for professionals and for academic programmes, including bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and lifelong learning courses.

For Vilafranca, a city closely linked to vineyards and wine, the creation of this chair strengthens its status as a winemaking capital and underscores its dedication to

leading strategic actions to ensure the resilience of the sector. For the URV, it represents a further step in the transfer of knowledge and in the commitment to research applied to real-world problems, taking a local approach but with global scope.



Jordi Duch, new director of the Knowledge Region Chair

Jordi Duch-Gavaldà, a doctor in emerging information and communications technologies and head of the Department of Computer Engineering and Mathematics, joined as director of the Knowledge Region Chair, which aims to promote regional development and specialisation through knowledge. Duch replaces Manel Vallès Rasquera in the role.

A decade promoting access to housing

The URV'S UNESCO Housing Chair celebrates 10 years of promoting public policy and applied research

The UNESCO Chair in Housing at Rovira i Virgili University celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2024 and has established itself as an international benchmark in the study, training and transfer of knowledge on the right to housing. In this time, the Chair has promoted the drafting of six laws, has participated in 31 national and international competitive research projects, and has advised numerous public and private entities. It has a team of 18 researchers and has trained over 10,000 professionals on housing issues.

Since 2013, the Chair has published 200 papers in 15 countries and given 356 lectures in 32 different countries. Led by Professor Sergio Nasarre, the Chair has put scientific knowledge at the service of public policy through an interdisciplinary approach and with a focus on real impact. On this 10th anniversary, UNESCO extended the agreement with the Chair until 31 December 2028 in recognition of its excellence as a platform for research and innovation.



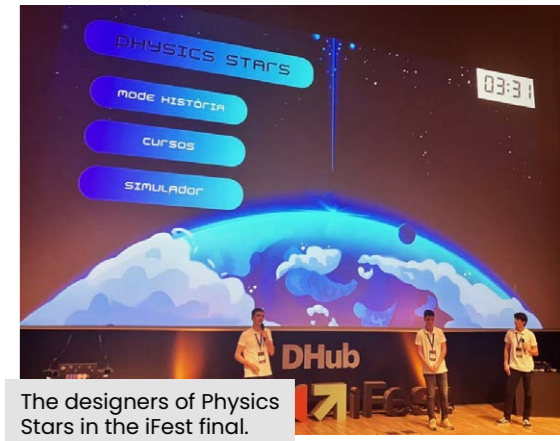
Board of Trustees Awards for three entrepreneurship projects

Awarded innovative initiatives in the field of science dissemination, renewable energies and sustainable beverages

The URV Board of Trustees awarded prizes to three entrepreneurial initiatives with a high degree of innovation, social engagement and connection to the region. The awards, each worth €4,000, recognise proposals led by students and graduates of the University that may eventually become start-ups with tangible impact.

One of the winning ideas was Physics Stars, an interactive platform created by students Joan Roset and David Diestre from the Bachelor's Degree in Engineering Mathematics and Physics. The project uses the language of video games to foster curiosity and critical thinking among young people and showcases science as a passionate and fun adventure. The aim is to awaken scientific interest and demonstrate that learning can be an engaging and motivating experience.

The second winning project was Vermouth Spritz de Reus, promoted by Raquel Mestre and Roger Juanpere, graduates in oenology, who proposed a healthier spritz-type vermouth



The designers of Physics Stars in the iFest final.

made with natural ingredients and without added sugars. Packaged in cans, the product seeks to position Reus vermouth on the domestic market for premium sustainable beverages, while drawing connections between innovation, the region, and responsible consumption habits.

The third prize went to Boya Undimotriz Universal, an ecological proposal from the students on the Master's Degree in Industrial Engineering, Valeria Lizet Landa, Karla Andreina Vergel and Juan Felipe Gil. Their buoy made from recycled materials takes advantage of the movement of the waves to generate electricity and reduce emissions from the maritime sector. In addition to the product's positive environmental impact, it offers financial advantages for transport and fishing companies, and can contribute to the energy transition in ports and marine environments.



Half a million to sow knowledge

Three URV projects receive €504,000 from AGAUR to advance research towards the market and achieve real social impact

Rovira i Virgili University was awarded a total of €504,000 in the Government of Catalonia's last call for proposals for Knowledge Industry grants, managed by the AGAUR. The grants, in the Seed and Product categories, promote innovative projects that pursue the transfer of knowledge and its practical application.

Of particular note are the two grants awarded to researcher Albert Fabregat, from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, to develop and market the aCUP-E electrode, designed to monitor

the brain activity of newborns in neonatal intensive care units. [\[Learn more on page 29\]](#)

Seed and Product Grants support projects in the fields of health and the environment with the potential to replace and improve existing technology

With a Product grant of €150,000 and a Seed grant of €84,000, the project will be able to move forward with clinical validation and define market strategies and partnerships with hospitals.

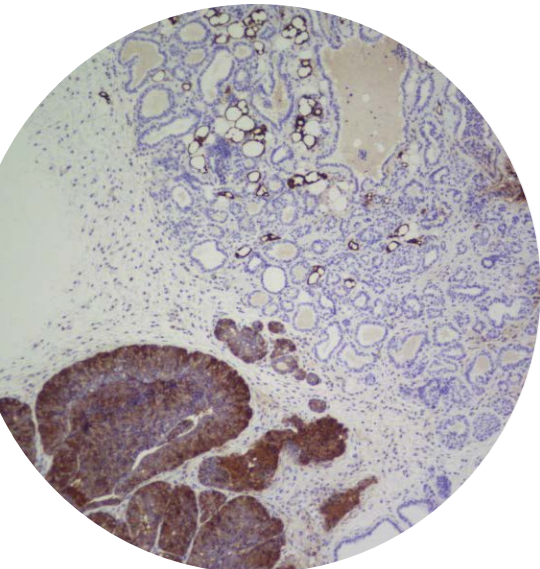
In the field of artificial intelligence, a team from the Department of Computer Engineering and Mathematics is leading the BREASTCARE project, which has received €120,000 to bring to market an AI platform that helps diagnose and personalise breast cancer treatment. The system analyses medical images and classifies tumours according to their molecular subtype, key information

for choosing the most effective therapy. It also incorporates explainability tools that make the system more confidence-inspiring to medical professionals.

The μ PlasTIC project also received funding. Led by Joan Josep Carvajal, a researcher with

the Department of Physical and Inorganic Chemistry, the project received €150,000 to develop a real-time microplastic detection system. The technology makes it possible to measure the properties of microplastics in situ and is aligned with the EU's objectives to reduce their environmental impact.

All of these projects are managed through the URV Foundation and have been supported by the University's Valorisation Unit.



TECNATOX and AMICO renew their TECNIO quality certification

TECNATOX and AMIC, two of the URV's innovation centres, renewed their TECNIO certification during the 2024-25 academic year. The certification, which is valid until 2026, is granted by ACTION to accredit the developers of differential technology in Catalonia. The distinction recognises the ability of these centres to transfer knowledge and technology to companies and drive innovation. TECNATOX works in toxicology and environmental health and AMIGO focuses on smart coatings and new materials.



The Wine Technology Centre (VITEC) joins IRTA

In 2025, the Wine Technology Center (Vitec) will become a part of the Institute of Agri-Food Research and Technology (IRTA) at the request of the Catalan Ministry of Agriculture to ensure its continued viability. The IRTA-VITEC brand, its headquarters in Falset and its ongoing activity will remain in place and a joint research unit will be created with the URV to strengthen innovation and knowledge transfer to the wine sector.



Science on hospital tablecloths

Through its tablecloths, the URV Science Communication and Outreach Unit's Aperitius de ciència (Science appetisers) project continues to find new ways to engage with citizens. The tablecloths, which have scientific messages and QR codes for additional content, have been introduced in the dining rooms of the hospitals Joan 23 in Tarragona, Sant Joan in Reus, Verge de la Cinta in Tortosa and Móra d'Ebre.



Two URV initiatives awarded for innovation

Scandraw and Melius Organics, two companies originating from the URV, have been awarded second and third prize at the BBVA Business Innovation Awards. Scandraw, a spin-off specialising in digitalising historic buildings, and Melius Organics, dedicated to drug discovery, were recognised for their impacts on sustainability and health. The awards recognise innovative initiatives that align with the Sustainable Development Goals. The Tarragona Provincial Council's Emprèn Awards also recognised Scandraw.

Internationalisation

Most indicators for the 2024–25 academic year showed an upward trend, with undergraduate student mobility increasing to 512 incoming and 549 outgoing students. Never in the history of the URV have so many students taken part in mobility programmes.

There was also a small increase in international mobility students in master's and doctoral degree programmes. Of the latter, 47% come from 95 different countries, positioning the URV as a leader within the Catalan public system, which averages 44% (data from the Catalan Association of Public Universities).

The Aurora Alliance made significant progress this year in outlining and regulating how blended intensive programmes (BIP) and collaborative online international learning (COIL) initiatives are implemented. A BIP workshop on internationalisation was also offered.

The URV is involved in all community-building activities, summer courses and mobility programmes for young researchers. It leads two projects awarded to promote research and participates in three of the four summer schools and four researcher mobility programmes. The URV's dedication is evident, as its Office of the Vice-Rector for Science Policy and Interdisciplinary Projects leads Aurora's research strategy group.

The experience of two doctoral students
A year in Hiroshima
To the URV from the USA
Sustainable solutions in Iceland
Internationalisation with equity
Diversity in teaching
Training with a passport
Improving doctorates in Africa
More prominence in Aurora





'There's a great atmosphere in my group. We help each other and stick together.'

JIAQI NI

Doctoral student in the Nutrition and Metabolism programme (China)

FOOD, NUTRITION, DEVELOPMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH GROUP (ANUT-DSM)

Studies the relationship between the environmental and dietary factors of people with chronic disease and the deterioration of cognitive function.



'Having feedback on what we're doing is important so we don't feel like we're doing it all on our own.'

SELENA DE LA CARIDAD DÍAZ

Doctoral student in the Chemical Science and Technology programme (Cuba)

SUSTAINABLE POLYMERS RESEARCH GROUP

Focuses on developing new hydrogels with more efficient lignin units for use in detecting contaminants in water and water purification.

'The URV is a small university with international standing.'

Coming from distant and different cultures, doctoral students Jiaqi Ni (Nutrition and Metabolism) and Selena de la Caridad Díaz Rodríguez (Chemical Science and Technology) have found at the URV the conditions and challenges they need to complete their theses and definitively advance their academic careers. In this conversation, they share their experiences

What made you decide to do your thesis at the URV?

[Jiaqi] I'm basically here because of Jordi Salas-Salvadó, who's one of the people supervising my thesis at the URV. When I was completing my Bachelor's Degree in Human Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of Valencia, he gave a talk and we learned about Predimed Plus, which he runs. For me, it's the best lifestyle intervention study to prevent diseases that's been done. Later I did a master's degree at the UB. I got in touch with him and now I'm here.

[Selena] I graduated with a degree in chemistry in Havana and later did a master's at UNAM in Mexico City. There I started working with the sustainable polymers unit. Looking at lines of research, I realised there was one very similar to the one I was working on at the URV. I also saw that, although the URV is a small university, it is recognised internationally as a campus of excellence, particularly in chemistry, and people I know spoke very highly of it.

How did you find the transition?

[Jiaqi] I moved to Tarragona in September 2020, right in the middle of the pandemic. It was strange at first. We were shut in. But as soon as we were able to go out, I found I quite liked the city and surrounding area where we lived. Valencia, the city I lived in for four years, is much larger. Everything is closer here. Taking the train or bus, you're at the Faculty of Medicine in Reus in no time.

[Selena] I arrived in winter. It was cold and I found a place in Vila-seca, which compared to Mexico City, where I came from, is a very quiet place. What shocked me the most was the timing of things. In Cuba we have lunch at 12.30. Here it's much later and I wasn't used to it.

What's it like doing your thesis at the URV?

[Jiaqi] I have to say my group is phenomenal. A lot of them come from other places, like me. They've become my family here. I get along quite well with my three thesis supervisors. There's a great atmosphere. We all help each other and stick together. I used to be a bit of a loner, so this really means a lot to me now. Thanks to Jordi's connections, I was also able to spend a few months at Harvard. It was a great experience.

[Selena] I'm also meeting the expectations I had set for myself. I wanted to continue the same line of research that I had started in Mexico and I'm doing that. Since I arrived, everything's new. I'm still adapting, but the group meetings

and the meetings with advisors are very valuable. My thesis supervisors give me guidance, point me in the right direction, make suggestions and always support me. Having feedback on what you're doing is very important so you don't feel like you're working on your thesis alone.

How are you getting on with your colleagues?

[Jiaqi] There are over 20 of us in my group. We're always making plans to do things outside of work. We have barbecues and at least one official *calçotada* every year with a sauce made by Jordi Salas' partner that's amazing. But you quickly realise that the food is just an excuse. The atmosphere is very relaxed and we have a great time. There's a great vibe. We don't talk about work, and we laugh a lot, which is the most important thing. Even though I don't like to dance, they got me dancing and everything.

[Selena] My group also had a *calçotada*. It was shocking to see everyone getting their hands dirty because it's not something we do at the table. I liked the *calçots*, yes, but the sauce is the best part. I totally agree. The truth is my groupmates are quieter than Jiaqi's from what I can see, but that's also okay. The way they work is very relaxed and I can concentrate.

What plans do you have for when you've got your PhD?

[Selena] I want to continue pursuing my career internationally. Earning

a degree in the EU will open the borders of other countries to me. I'd also like to explore the private sector and industry.

[Jiaqi] I'm certain I will continue to work with the group and my thesis supervisors, but I also recognise the importance of continuing to explore and gaining experience in other countries and other research groups. I want to see other ways of doing things and approaching processes, and also other subjects that might be related to what I'm interested in.

What do you tell your family and friends about the URV?

[Selena] That the academic quality is high. I'd also emphasise the practical and experimental parts of chemistry. When I left Cuba, my knowledge was purely theoretical, but we didn't have a lot of equipment so it was less focused on the experimental aspect. That perspective changed when I was in Mexico and now at the URV. Having this balance means my colleagues are very well prepared.

[Jiaqi] I say people here know how to combine work and private life. I was in the United States and it was completely different. There's a lot of pressure on researchers, and it's true they do reach high levels of efficiency. But burnout is more common. I think you can also get good results in the medium term without so much pressure, and the proof of this is my research group.

[Selena] I agree. I spent two years in Mexico under a lot of stress. I had to skip lunch a lot and that didn't go well. Here we stick to the schedules because finding a minimal balance between your work and free time is key for growing personally and professionally.

How would you respond if someone you know asks for recommendations about coming to the URV?

[Selena] I've only been here for six months. Beyond the balance of personal and professional life we discussed, at least in chemistry, I think it's a

good university to come to for a master's or a doctorate. They're knowledgeable, well-organised and have a multidisciplinary approach. Those are good conditions for academic growth.

[Jiaqi] In China, we look a lot at international rankings to choose the schools to pursue our academic careers. But the rankings are based on averages and results from different departments, so they don't tell the whole story or go into detail. You have

to make the right choice based on the interests of each individual. It was clear to me that the URV's chemistry department is one of the best in Europe, and my group is a leader in the subject that interests me most.

An expression in Catalan.

[Jiaqi] Som-hi!

[Selena] Molt bé!





'The moon is very beautiful tonight.'

Juan Carlos Martos returns from a year of study abroad in Hiroshima with a new outlook on culture, effort and his own identity

'It's very pretty tonight.' For Juan Carlos Martos, this expression is more than just a poetic reflection; it encapsulates a year of cultural discovery in Japan. The phrase, imbued with figurative meaning and emotional subtlety, symbolises everything he discovered in a culture where indirect and implicit communication reveal a profoundly different world. 'It's a poetic and indirect way of saying "I love you". In Japan, communication goes far beyond mere words,' he explains. Aside from his studies, in the land of the rising sun, Martos learned to read between the lines, to grasp the meaning of silences, and to understand that words do not always express all that is felt.

This student pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in English in Tarragona just

returned from a long-term mobility exchange at Hiroshima University. At the age of 29, he was the only foreign student at the Faculty of Arts and was able to fully immerse himself in Japanese culture for an entire year. 'Most of them are there for six months. I was lucky to be there for a whole year. It meant I was able to immerse myself in a culture very different from our own. I feel like I've grown as a person,' he says.

A resident of Tarragona with a background in classical and contemporary dance, Martos completed a Baccalaureate in Performing Arts at the Institut Martí i Franquès before relocating to London, where he worked as a flight attendant at Gatwick Airport. During the pandemic, confined to his home and with the

world on pause, he began studying Japanese on his own. 'I had already studied Russian, English, German and French. But Japanese was a personal decision. I wanted to understand what was behind all the manga and anime we saw as kids on TV3. And, above all, I wanted to know what life is really like in Japan,' he explains.

The challenge was huge. I studied American literature, English grammar and Shakespeare, but all in Japanese. 'It's not easy, but I've been managing. They helped me a lot, especially the teachers who had also studied abroad and understood what it means to be an international student,' he says. He was the only foreign student

'You are the one who sets limits for yourself. This experience isn't for everyone.'

Day-to-day life on the other side of the world was a profound cultural shock. The way people interacted, the reverential respect for teachers and the passivity in class contrasted radically with everything that Juan Carlos knew. Since I'm accustomed to being involved, I asked questions in class. In the end, many of the teachers thanked me. They told me that feedback helped everyone learn,' says Martos.

at the Faculty of Arts. All in all, he felt a little out of place. 'But it also helped me grow,' he admits.

Communication was a constant challenge. 'Japanese is very complicated. Now I can muddle through and get by. When I can't, Google Translate works miracles. But nobody's saying it's easy,' he says. It takes a lot of motivation and hard work. And Japan is on the other side of the world from Catalonia. The

time difference makes you feel you are very far away from your family. Looking back, 'getting out of my comfort zone is one of the most valuable decisions I've ever made,' he says.

Martos wants to be a language teacher. He'd like to do a Master's Degree in Training for Teachers at the URV and perhaps teach Japanese one day. 'My multicultural background is sure to

help me understand and guide students from all over the world. Because having that experience also teaches you to be empathetic,' he says.

'In Japan I learned to understand beyond mere beyond words. Nothing is as literal as it seems.

Another unexpected lesson was being uprooted. 'With all this linguistic and cultural baggage

along with my experiences from my stays abroad, I've started feeling that I am not from anywhere, but from everywhere. It's enriching, but it also makes

you question your identity,' he says. This feeling was offset by Hiroshima University's willingness to welcome international students and build rapport with them. 'They have a very powerful culture. It can be intimidating, but they organise a lot of social activities to keep you from closing yourself off. I had a great time,' he explains.

In fact, Juan Carlos returned with a wealth of relational experiences

he is eager to share with the URV International Center, which organises reception activities for incoming students.

Although his suitcases are only half unpacked, his immediate future lies in Tarragona. The experience was so intense he feels he needs grounding. 'It was amazing. This year will be with me forever. There's a before and after,' Juan Carlos explains. He wholeheartedly recommends the experience to other students. 'You are the one who sets limits for yourself. It's not easy and it's not for everyone. But if you have a positive attitude and a desire to grow, Japan offers much more than you imagine,' he concludes. And perhaps one day, visitors will discover that the expression 'the moon is very beautiful tonight' can mean many more things than it seems, just as he did.



Students in international mobility programmes



512

Incoming students



549

Outgoing students

Internationalisation in figures



242 international students registered for the Welcome Days (2023-24)

225 international students have had URV mentors (2003-24)

76% of people staying at the URV are from the EU (2023-24)

47% of doctoral students come from outside Spain

95 different nationalities

98% international students in the Master's Degree in Transitions and Innovations in Wine Tourism (Wintour)

MCKEENA WEBER
Mobility student at Nebraska Wesleyan University (USA)

'There are a lot of things I wouldn't have learned anywhere but at the URV.'

'We'd only been in Tarragona for a month and it was the Santa Tecla festivities. In the midst of the chaos of the *diablos* and fire beasts spectacle in front of the Cathedral, I made one of the best friendships of my time here.' McKeena Weber, a political science student at Nebraska Wesleyan University, made the most of every moment of her 10 months studying at the URV. She combined subjects from different degrees, immersed herself in the country's culture and language and had a genuine experience that, like other mobility students, she will remember for a lifetime

Why did you choose the URV?

My university offers an study abroad programme for the same price as a semester there through ISEP Exchange. I already knew I wanted to study in Spain to further my language studies and to spend a year in a country that I hadn't explored on my own. What attracted me to the URV were the subjects relevant to my studies in the US, some of which I couldn't get into at my university. I also wanted a programme that was outside the big cities. I found Tarragona to be beautiful, quiet and with a great connections to the surrounding region and the rest of the country.

What did you know about the University or Tarragona before you came?

I had only been on short trips to Barcelona. I really wanted to learn

about the region and the city. Before I came I did some research so I would be prepared, although I learned a lot more after I arrived.

So, what did you study?

As a mobility student, I had more flexibility. I chose subjects in political science and languages, enrolled in bachelor's degree classes in Hispanic studies and law, and took advantage of the Language Service to improve my Catalan and French.

What's your view of the URV after your experience here?

I would definitely recommend it. In fact, I recommended it to a classmate from my university who came to Tarragona in her second semester. I had great experiences with the teaching staff, the activities and the quality of the classes. I really enjoyed my time in Tarragona.

What did you think of the academic quality?

I didn't find it any easier or harder than at my university, just different. There was less interaction and discussion, but I learned a lot. The assessment and difficulty of the exams were comparable.

Did you feel welcomed by the University?

Yes. The International Centre and the mobility coordinators provided us with the information we needed and organised welcome events. The language reception programme put on events to learn about Catalan culture and practise the language that were very much worthwhile.

How did you get on with your classmates?

I connected more with other mobility students and second

semester students. In the Bachelor's Degree in Hispanic Language and Literature and in a group project in law, I found more open communities and felt a greater sense of belonging. Making friends was a bit complicated because I enrolled in subjects from different bachelor's degrees.

What did you like most about the area?

How Spanish and Catalan people live together harmoniously and being able to see how they live side by side in everyday life. I also really enjoyed Tarragona's cultural heritage and events like Tarraco Viva.

And in general?

The experience of everyday life in a different country, going shopping, paying my rent, walking to class... Staying longer gives you a more complex view of the city and day-to-day life.

Did it meet your expectations?

A lot of the things I learned during my stay I wouldn't have been able to learn anywhere else. I improved my Spanish and Catalan, I gained confidence and I learned a lot from my classes that I can use in my future studies.



What advice would you give a student from your country who wants to study at the URV?

Explore the city and area, not just other countries or cities. Follow the University's and the city council's social media to stay informed. And learn Catalan. It opens a lot of doors and connects you with the local people and culture.

Sustainable solutions in Iceland

Four URV students took part in co-creating social impact projects at Spark Social, part of the Aurora network



From left to right during their visit to Reykjavík: Natalia Rodríguez, Laia Daura, Mireia Mei, and Ruth Prats.

Reykjavík was the meeting point for European students committed to the future of the planet. Among them were four students from the URV who took part in the latest Spark Social, a social entrepreneurship programme hosted by the University of Iceland and aligned with the Aurora network, which brings together European universities with a shared commitment to social transformation. The initiative, structured as a blended intensive programme (BIP), invites final-year bachelor's and master's degree students to co-create projects aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The students selected to represent the URV were Mireia Mei (Inter-university Master's Degree in Health Data Science), Ruth Prats (Bachelor's Degree in Advertising and Public Relations), Laia Daura (Bachelor's Degree in Psychology) and Natalia Rodríguez (Bachelor's Degree in Audiovisual Communication and Bachelor's Degree in Advertising and Public

Relations). After a series of virtual working sessions between January and April, they travelled to Reykjavik to participate a five-day intensive in-

The teams applied a design thinking approach to find answers to global challenges such as the water footprint

person visit. Once there, they joined international and interdisciplinary teams that used design thinking and transitional thinking approaches to devise innovative solutions to specific global challenges and made prototypes of the solutions.

One of the resulting projects was GEN NEXT from Natalia Rodríguez and Ruth Prats. Their initiative aims to promote critical thinking among adolescents between the ages of 12 and 15 and empower them as agents of change in their communities. Using a card game called A Can of Worms, they can

address issues such as the environment, health or urban culture, and propose measures to improve the city they live in. The game is complemented by

field research activities, observing the environment and direct participation in processes such as municipal participatory budgeting. The aim of these initiatives is to help cultivate more conscious, active and committed younger citizens.

Mireia Mei and Laia Daura also worked together on the Aqua.ai project, which zoomed in on an often-ignored aspect of the digital revolution, our water footprint. The project focused on hidden water consumption from artificial intelligence processes, such as large language modelling and big data management.

Their initiative includes a browser extension to measure the water footprint of routine internet searches and a set of educational materials and awareness-raising tools for governments, schools and institutions. The objective is twofold: to increase public awareness and to promote changes to public policy to ensure truly sustainable technological innovation.

Spark Social was an immersive experience in co-creating transformative solutions in an intercultural and collaborative setting for the students from the URV. The programme demonstrates that dialogue between disciplines, institutions and cultures is a powerful way of meeting the defining challenges of the 21st century with responsibility, creativity and social purpose.

Internationalisation with equity

The Inclusive Comprehensive Internationalisation (ICI) project has defined frameworks, guidelines and training to promote equal opportunity in international learning

The international project Inclusive Comprehensive Internationalisation (ICI), led by Rovira i Virgili University, culminated in a final conference at the Catalunya Campus after almost three years of work. The initiative was co-financed by the European Union and aimed to promote educational internationalisation that is truly accessible to all students, regardless of their origin, ability or socio-economic circumstances.

With the participation of five European universities and a specialist consultancy, the project has developed a set of key resources to make inclusion a central pillar of internationalisation strategies. The project's most noteworthy results include the drafting of a framework for the self-assessment of inclusive

international learning and a practical guide for applying it, as well as specific training for university staff and a manual to guarantee its quality and continuity. Roadmaps and good practices have also been designed to ensure that institutions can effectively implement these approaches.

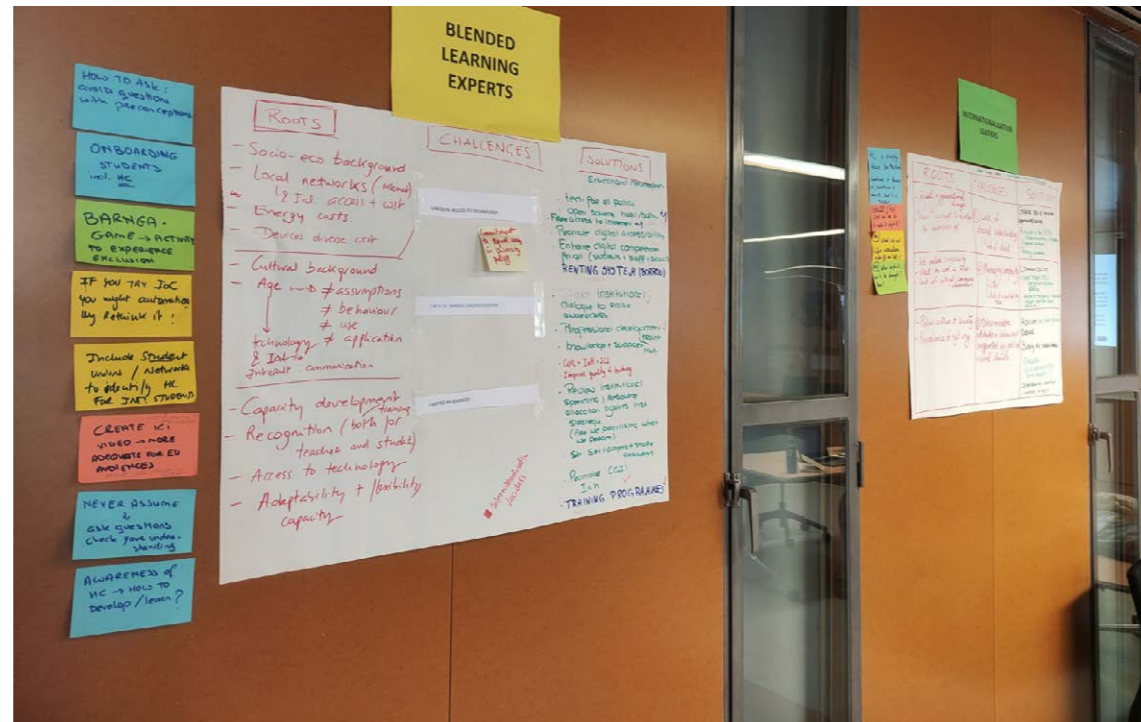
The URV, through its central team – made up of members of the teaching staff, the technical and administrative staff and the student body – coordinated the project and has played a key role in its international dissemination. Marina Vives, coordinator of the project at the University, highlighted the impact and its positive reception: 'It's been an intense and very enriching job.

We're sure it will continue producing results.'

Two editions of the training course in BIP format have already been scheduled for the staff of European universities, and an online version

has been created for the Latin American audience. In addition, the URV plans to offer this training on a regular basis. The experience has been shared at international conferences and forums such as the

European Association for International Education (EAIE), which has consolidated the ICI project as a leader in the effort to move towards fairer, more diverse and more sustainable internationalisation.



Diversity in teaching

The URV successfully completed the European DITE project, advancing teacher education with a global and inclusive perspective

Rovira i Virgili University has successfully completed its participation in the European Diverse Internationalisation of Teacher Education (DITE) project. The initiative, co-financed by the European Union, aimed to rethink teacher training using internationalisation and diversity as twin guiding perspectives. Through the International Center and with the active support of the teaching staff of the Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology, the University played a key role in executing the project.

One of the highlights of the project took place last October with the Internationalisation and Diversity in Teacher Training seminar, organised by the International Center at the Sescelades Campus. The event received support from Tarragona's Office of Education and Vocational Training, which is part of the Catalan Department of Education. The URV's Commissioner for Relations with the Department of Education, Carme Garcia, and the Director of Territorial Services, Joan Manel Audi, kicked

off the seminar, which served as a meeting point between university and school teachers in the region.

The event included a round table, moderated by Luis Marqués, a URV lecturer associated with the project, at which several teachers from primary and secondary schools presented their experiences with internationalisation and shared good practices and challenges. Professionals from schools such as Joan Ardèvol secondary school in Cambrils, Sant Bernat Calvó primary school in Vila-seca and Santa Marina primary school in Pratdip and others took part in the event. Montserrat Montagut, representative of the Foreign and Native Language Service of the Department of Education, also spoke at the event, presenting the strategic lines of action for internationalising teacher training. Joan Miquel Canals, Commissioner for International Networks at the URV, concluded the seminar.

The URV also took part in the final conference of

Tomás, director of the International Center, repre-

ences. The DITE network has served as a laboratory for ideas and practices that have left a lasting mark on the educational community and spurred new collaborations among stakeholders shaping the education of the future.

The URV contributed training and experiences to the project, with sessions in Tarragona and at the final conference in Paris

the DITE project, which was held at CY Cergy Paris University. At the event, co-organized by the European network SGroup, of which the URV is a member, project results were shared and a sample of training materials presented. Ana Espada, a former URV lecturer, described the training given to students, and Rebeca

sented the University at an institutional round table.

Through its participation in the event, the URV has reaffirmed its commitment to more diverse and cooperative education that is connected with the world, and to continuing advancing teacher training through international alliances and shared experi-



Training with a passport

Study Abroad courses brought students and teaching staff from universities in the US, Canada and Uzbekistan to URV campuses

The URV Foundation's Study Abroad programmes have reopened the University's doors to international students and teaching staff. Groups from three institutions, Northeastern University (United

States), Western University (Canada) and the University of Tashkent (Uzbekistan) participated in intensive courses at the URV in 2025. The goal is clear: to combine academic training, regional knowledge and intercultural understanding.

One of the most well-established programmes was jointly developed between the URV and Northeastern University. During the month of July, more than 20 members of the Northeastern community took part in the Process Safety and Chemical Engineering Abroad course, with sessions given by experts from their university and visits to facilities such as the Ascó nuclear power plant and the Repsol and Clariant plants. Participants valued the combination of theory and practice and the contribution of a new perspective on engineering applied to different contexts.

These programmes, jointly designed with the visiting institutions, combine academic training and regional experiences

States), Western University (Canada) and the University of Tashkent (Uzbekistan) participated in intensive courses at the URV in 2025. The goal is clear: to combine academic training, regional knowledge and intercultural understanding.

In May, Western University participated in the Engineering in Global Context course offered at the URV's School of Chemical Engineering.

The students worked on general skills, found out about local companies and infrastructures and held workshops at the URV's experimental winery. There was also time to discover the region's cultural heritage during outings to the Poblet Monastery, Reus, and Tarragona.

In addition, teaching staff and the Dean of Tourism at the University of Tashkent delved into good practices in tourism management with the support of the Faculty of Tourism and Geography. The programme included academic sessions, the opportunity to exchange experiences with URV lecturers and outings in the region.

Improving doctoral education in Africa



Representatives from three African countries visit the URV to learn about the Doctoral School's evaluation and quality model

In the 2024-25 academic year, the URV received representatives from universities and quality agencies in Senegal, Guinea Conakry and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for an institutional visit focusing on the exchange of experiences in doctoral training and research evaluation. The meeting took place on the Catalunya Campus and was part of the international QADoc project, funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme.

The goal was to strengthen the capacity of high-quality university research

in these three African countries through training and advice on institutional quality policies. The URV and

The goal was to strengthen the capacity of quality research in African countries

the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya) participated as European partners, contributing their expertise in research evaluation processes and the operation of doctoral schools.

The project is led by the Cheikh-Anta-Diop University, which accounts for more than 70% of all students and teaching and research staff in Senegal, and involves the Ministries of Higher Education,

quality agencies and two universities in each country. The ultimate goal is for these university systems to develop research agendas that are aligned with the social and economic challenges of each region.

In addition to the URV and AQU, the European consortium also includes the University of Liège, the University of Montpellier and the Portuguese agency A3ES. The visit to Tarragona allowed delegates to gain a solid understanding the Doctoral School's evaluation and organisational model and to establish bridges of collaboration in order to implement improvements in African higher education systems.



Yonathan Borden, the URV's new UNICAT ambassador

A doctoral student in educational technology, Yonathan Borden, has been chosen as Rovira i Virgili University's new UNICAT ambassador. As such, he will represent the students of Catalan universities before the European Commission and is tasked with disseminating the employment and internship opportunities offered by the EU. Borden will participate in trainings in Brussels and meetings with the other ambassadors to share communication strategies.



The URV trains professionals in AI use in doctoral programmes

Some 70 higher education professionals from more than 15 countries participated in two Erasmus+ BIP training courses at the URV on artificial intelligence applied to doctoral-level teaching and professionalisation. The activities combined virtual and face-to-face sessions for the purpose of promoting the exchange of good practices and the development of professional networks. With this initiative, the URV reinforces its leadership in innovative and international higher education, promoted by the Aurora alliance and the SGroup network. A doctoral education BIP was also organised in which doctoral students from 15 universities participated to gain a comprehensive understanding of what doctoral studies entail and how to successfully complete them.

Enhanced presence in Aurora

The University reinforces its commitment to the European alliance by participating in seven research projects selected in the second call for proposals, almost twice as many as in the first

The URV has strengthened its influence and commitment to the Aurora 2030 alliance. In the second Call for Incentive Research Collaboration 2024-25, seven projects linked to the University were selected to receive funding in the three planned lines of action: collaborative projects (KA1), thematic schools (KA2) and short-term research secondments (KA3). The University's presence in this call is significantly broader than in the first edition, in which it had only participated in four research secondments. The result consolidates its role within an international alliance that seeks to transform European research by making it more open, more participative and with greater social impact.

The seven selected projects align with Aurora's strategic values and objectives: social impact, sustainability, digital literacy and inclusion. In total, the call received 51 proposals, 24 of which were ultimately

approved. This quantitative and qualitative leap of the URV reflects the hard work and commitment of the research community to take advantage of the opportunities offered by European collaboration.

Three of the awarded projects are led by research staff. In the field of collaborative projects (KA1), Anna Ardèvol from the Department of Biochemistry and Biotechnology coordinates BLOOM-DIGEST, a research project into the role of bioactive compounds in intestinal health. Also within the KA1 strand, Salvador Anton Clavé from the Department of Geography heads EUROPARKS, which analyses theme parks as European cultural and economic laboratories.

In the field of thematic schools (KA2), Professor Víctor Merino from the Department of Public Law directs FASSV-JUSTICE, a training initiative on structural

violence against vulnerable groups, which will be attended by students from several Aurora universities.

In addition to the initiatives led by the URV, the University is also involved as a participant in other projects in the call. Eduard Mir Neira from the Department of Romance Studies is part of the ENLACE project, dedicated to natural language processing. Lluís Torres-Hugas with the support of Sergio Gómez and Jordi Duch from the Department of Computer Engineering and Mathematics contributes to the SANDS project, which studies dynamic network systems and global citizenship.

In addition, within the research secondment (KA3) strand, the URV will host two young researchers from other Aurora universities, who will work with research groups based at the University. These activities, funded directly by the URV Aurora Office, support the exchange of knowledge and the strengthening of links between institutions.

Aurora is a European alliance of research-intensive universities committed to social impact and the Sustainable Development Goals. It brings together nine universities from countries such as Iceland, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, France, Austria, Denmark, Czechia and Spain, with the URV as an active member. The alliance promotes collaborative research, teaching innovation, inclusion and sustainability, and promotes mobility and co-creation between institutions.

In this context, the URV also participates in initiatives that expand the resources available to research and technical staff. In the academic year 2025-26, the alliance will promote training in open science and citizen science, aimed at both

The URV is one of Aurora's most active members in research, with its own projects, participation in international initiatives and the recruitment of research talent

researchers and project managers. At the same time, Aurora universities will consolidate access to the European OpenAIRE repository,

which facilitates the transparency and reuse of scientific knowledge financed with public funds.

These actions complement the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Aurora's research vice-rectors during the annual conference that was held at Palacky University in Olomouc (Czech Republic) in 2023. The document lays the groundwork for sustained

research collaboration and a shared commitment to promoting access to scientific infrastructure and equipment.

Chair of the Aurora Group

The role of the URV in the process of strengthening the alliance is illustrated by the appointment of the Vice-Rector for Research and Scientific Planning, Urbano Lorenzo Seva, as the future chair of the Aurora Vice-Rectors for Research Group for the 2025-26 academic year. From this position of institutional leadership, he will promote the joint strategy in research and innovation of the member universities.

Commitment



Greater equality, greater social engagement
 High marks for the Service Learning Programme
 Sustainability through pedal power
 The URV makes strides in energy self-reliance
 Technology for cooperation
 Biodiversity on the banks of the Ebro
 The Extended Campus arrives in Terra Alta
 Music to remember
 The world behind the camera

The URV made great strides in the 2024-25 academic year in strengthening its role in social and cultural matters, both within the University itself and through regional outreach initiatives.

The former Office of Social Engagement was remodeled and renamed the Office of Equality and Social Engagement. It is now home to the Diversity Service and the Wellbeing Service. The Diversity Service, which is run by URV staff, has begun the process of updating guides and documents for requesting adaptations to the curriculum. In addition, an event was organised to present the Diversities Support Service (SAD), digital accessibility and Inclusive CRAI. From the Health and Wellbeing Area, a programme of wellness activities for teaching and research staff and technical, management, administrative and service staff was resumed and two nature walks were organised, in addition to seminars on drugs, healthy sexualities and gender.

In addition, the summer camp for the children of URV staff was offered for the first time since 2020.

The Equality Unit approved a new protocol for prevention and action against gender-based violence and harassment, and the 'Et sents segura al teu campus' (Do you feel safe on your campus?) campaign was expanded to the Catalunya Campus (it had previously been run on the Bellissens and Vila-seca Campuses).

The University's commitment to society is reflected in many aspects, but it is perhaps most clearly illustrated by its actions in cooperation and volunteering. In this regard, it is worth highlighting the increase in funding granted to international cooperation projects led by members of the University community and carried out

in countries with a medium/low development index. The fair trade initiative promoted by the Office and the international volunteer programme 'Col labora' is also important, as are the various reception, shelter and humanitarian aid actions in which the University community is involved and which make a real impact on refugees from countries in conflict.

The Service Learning Programme was revised and updated during the 2024-25 academic year to introduce improvements that would strengthen the continuity of the URV's leadership in this teaching approach and in its commitment to society. The URV also participates in a working group with other Catalan universities that is developing a 'Guide to service learning and cooperation projects'.

The URV's commitment to culture and the region was reinforced through the inauguration of the main offices of the Terra Alta Extended Campus. Meanwhile, the cultural groups have been very active: the Film Group was renamed the Film and Audiovisual Arts Group. It is also important to mention the Seniors Groups, which have grown considerably both in terms of their physical spaces and in the number of participants, and the Iubilo programme, which was also very successful.

Progress in sustainability and the environment include expanding green areas with the aim of promoting biodiversity on the campuses and in university spaces and continued efforts to promote a culture of environmental awareness through workshops, courses, and conferences. A new bicycle loan program was also launched to promote sustainable mobility, and a mobility survey was conducted to collect up-to-date data on how members of the university community get around on URV campuses to guide future improvements.

Greater equality, greater social commitment

Rovira i Virgili University has strengthened its Office of Equality and Social Engagement through a new structure and more resources to respond to the university community's challenges in equality, diversity and wellbeing. The Governing Council approved the restructuring of the office, which now has distinct units and key roles to improve its effectiveness and its provision of services. The new momentum will serve to strengthen management of the Counselling Service and the Diversities Support Service and improve coordination in the wellbeing Service



A more pluralistic university #1

Breaking down barriers to diversity

The URV is launching a new Diversities Support Service to promote inclusive policies and ensure equal opportunities

Most fundamental laws and regulations reflect the principle that people are equal. But effectively applying this precept is often conditioned by very persistent social, economic and structural inequalities. The URV's new Diversities Support Service (SAD) offers students with special requirements more structured support, such as curricular adaptations to meet their specific needs.

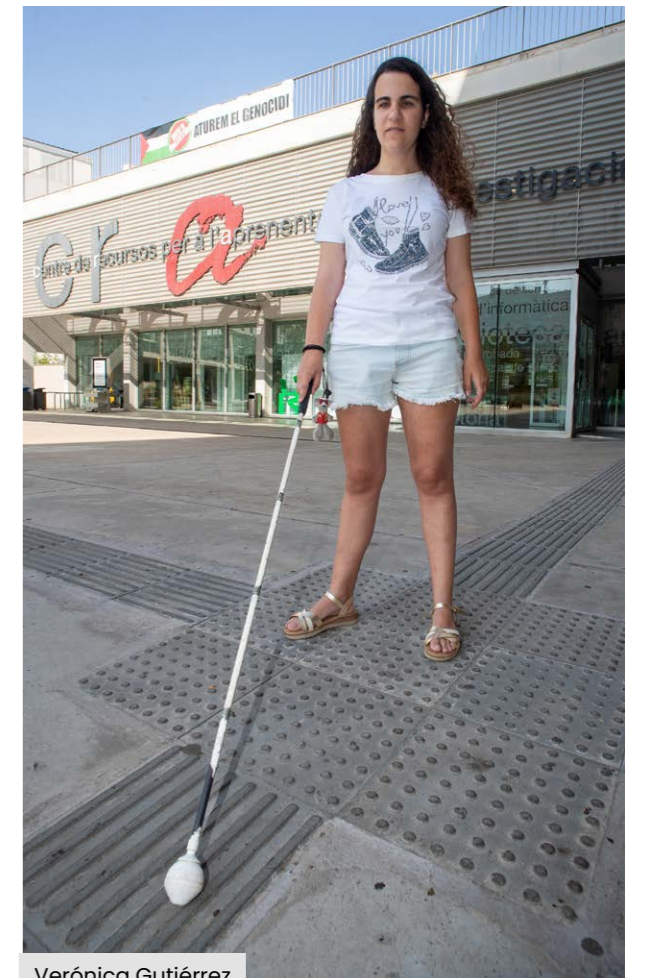
The new Organic Law of the University System (LOU) obliges all universities to have special disability care services and to implement active inclusion policies. More and more students with disabilities, both officially recognised and unrecognised, are enrolling in the University. This year alone, the SAD provided services to 96 students, twice as many as three years ago. Of these, 22 had a degree of disability equal to or greater than 33%, but most had other diagnoses that affect their academic life such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorders, mental health problems, neurological or physical disabilities, etc.

Any student requiring accommodation can request it on

SAD's webpage. The process is simple but thorough. When a request is received, the service analyses the documentation and issues a report with the specific recommendations for each case. The document is shared with the academic coordination office, which sends it to the teaching staff of the subjects involved. 'We want to ensure equity in the learning and assessment processes, but without changing the essential curriculum competences,' a representative of the service explains.

Broadly speaking, accommodations can include measures related to facilities and infrastructure, a reduction in the minimum number of credits a student must enroll in, or curricular adaptations within subjects, such as changes in methods, assessment approaches, or the resources available.

The practical application of these measures differs in each case according to the need, ranging from providing extra time to take exams or oral evaluation, modifying submission deadlines or providing support for time management. For example, for students with dyslexia, less importance should be placed on spelling in assessments, and for students with ADHD, advance notice of tests can be given or they can be allowed to sit in the front rows. Specific environmental conditions for people with autism



Verónica Gutiérrez

spectrum disorder might include ear plugs to reduce noise or repeating exam instructions verbally.

In addition to curricular accommodations, the service also provides supports in other areas such as adapting facilities in coordination with the Infrastructure Service, facilitating part-time enrolment and providing access to digital and library media. Students with an officially recognised degree of disability may apply to enroll for a minimum of 18 credits. Those without official recognition can do this via a report from the SAD and authorisation of the vice-rectorate.

The level of diversity services provided is reflected in figures for the 2024-25 academic year: 1.69% of URV students have an officially recognised degree of disability, but of these, only a small part request accommodation. The service also increasingly provides support to students without an official certificate, but with diagnoses that warrant special measures.

The most common diagnoses are dyslexia (24%), ADHD (27%) and autism spectrum disorders (12%).

The distribution by gender is also of note this year: 75% of the people served by SAD were women, a trend that has intensified in recent years. The greatest demand for support came from the Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology, the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, although support was requested by all faculties and technical schools.

The establishment of SAD has marked a turning point for students



Eva Morcelle

with diverse needs. Beyond safeguarding rights, the service seeks to contribute to creating a more humane university that recognises the diversity of its members. This universal approach must permeate all university policies as provided in the Organic Law of the University System, from the design of degrees to pedagogical, psychological and professional support services.

The Inter-University Council of Catalonia's Plan for Inclusion and Diversity in Catalan Universities (PIDUC) sets the course for inclusive policies. According to Víctor Merino,

the URV's Commissioner for Equality and Diversity, 'We must act, decide on accommodation measures, but also prioritise communicating and raising awareness throughout the university community. This includes training the teaching staff.' Therefore, the URV is working to ensure that all SAD documentation is accessible and easy to read and that support services reach the entire community.

One of the students who has experienced this process is Verónica Gutiérrez from the Social Work Programme, who is completely blind. She clearly recalls the beginning, 'I



Jade Campos

was very apprehensive on the first day. I was accompanied several times to the Catalunya Campus so I could get to know it, but it's quite large and I lacked points of reference to know where I was. That continued throughout my first year.' After meeting with the bachelor's degree coordinator and SAD, tactile paving was installed on campus to help with orientation. 'The ones we have now help me and anyone else. It is an important step forward. The Diversities Support Service does a good job and the people there are very attentive. But from my perspective things move very

slowly, much too slowly,' she explains. Veronica also points out some things that could be improved, such as the enrollment process and the Virtual Campus, 'There is a time limit and, like Moodle, it's not adapted for the applications blind people use.'

Eva Morcelle, a third-year medical student who wants to become a paediatrician, was diagnosed with ADHD. She scored a 13 in her entrance exams, a sign of her effort and perseverance. 'I'm really hyperactive. My brain goes a thousand miles an hour. It's hard for me to concentrate. I feel good with

my medication, but it's not enough to keep up with my studies,' she explains. She finds it hard to read, so she makes her own special notes. The learning accommodations I have are 25 more minutes for exams and texts are supposed to use larger fonts and have more spacing, but my teachers don't always remember the second part.' Eva thinks a measure that would help a lot would be for teachers to share their teaching notes in PDF format or with slides. She also stresses that teachers should be made aware of people's needs when the semester starts and that awareness should reach more people, 'The university does its job and I have people, friends, and classmates around me who understand and support me, but awareness needs to reach more people.'

Another example is Jade Campos, who has profound bilateral deafness (an officially recognized disability of 46%) and just completed her second year in the School of Nursing in Vilafranca. She can follow her classes thanks to her cochlear implants. Her teachers use microphones and her implants are synchronised via Bluetooth.

Like Veronica and Eva, Jade has faced many difficulties since childhood in overcoming all kinds of day-to-day challenges. Her outlook on life has allowed her to achieve major milestones like playing the flute in the Graeme Clark Youth Orchestra along with others with cochlear implants.

This year she had to take on another big challenge, this time at the URV. In her practical classes she realised she could

not use the stethoscope, a tool needed for auscultation and an essential instrument in day-to-day nursing.

'I was stunned. I didn't expect it. I didn't see it coming. It didn't work. I couldn't hear anything,' she explains. Jade spoke to Rosa Raventós, the degree coordinator, about the situation and her case was transferred to the Diversities Support Service. The Digital Accessibility Service of the Educational Resources Service provided a digital stethoscope, which converts sounds into electronic signals and can be analysed and shared via a mobile application that Jade was able to listen to directly through her implants. 'It was exciting to try it for the first time. I was able to catch up to the rest of my classmates,' she explains, satisfied.

By empowering SAD, the URV has taken a decisive step towards real inclusion with the view that diversity is something to be recognised and valued rather than a challenge to be overcome.



Advancing towards a new culture of diversity

Víctor Merino, Commissioner for Equality and Diversity, explains that 'All universities face the challenge of setting a criterion on what diversity is and what obligations it entails.' For Merino, diversity means much more than just adapting curricula, 'A new university culture is called for' that knows how to recognise and support the various forms of diversity that coexist in the classroom, including those of a cultural, religious or ethnic nature.

How to request learning accommodations and support at the URV



1. Contact the Diversities Support Service (SAD)

Submit the request before the start of the academic year along with medical documentation. SAD will review your application and create a confidential report with recommended measures.



2. Notify your degree coordinator

This is the person who manages the degree and who will pass the report on to the teaching staff. Contact the degree coordinator if you have any questions or if the measures adopted need to be reviewed.



3. Ask for tutoring with teachers

Speak with your teachers to specify how the measures will be applied in each subject. You are under no obligation to explain your personal status.



4. Contact the Educational Resources Service (if necessary)

They offer digital access support and adapt Virtual Campus materials.

A more pluralistic university #2

A violence-free university

The URV has approved a new protocol to combat gender-based violence and harassment with the aim of safeguarding and providing support to the entire university community

Rovira i Virgili University is launching a new protocol to prevent and combat gender-based violence and harassment, unifying and expanding upon existing mechanisms to cover the entire

Until now, the URV has maintained two different protocols: one aimed at students in cases of gender-based violence and against the LGBTI community, and another for workplace,

support and remedying damage done. The entire university community is called upon to act diligently to prevent and avoid these situations, with the University committing to implementing training programmes, incorporating specific content into curricula and strengthening the Equality Unit with more resources. It will also ensure that there are purple points and multi-coloured points at university events.

of the Equality Service, one from the Legal Office, and an external expert, can then be implemented and provisional measures proposed to the rector, such as changing groups or workplace. Symbolic and tangible reparations are also foreseen, and, if necessary, the initiation of disciplinary proceedings.

Special importance is also placed on following up and evaluating the measures taken by means of a committee comprised of URV and trade union representatives. With the protocol, the URV commits to a comprehensive approach that goes beyond mere penalties and aims to foster a change of culture towards a violence-free university with a feminist and egalitarian perspective.

The new protocol covers everything from prevention to remedying damages, and reinforces support and follow-up actions

university community. The document, which has been approved by the Governing Council, sets out a comprehensive approach to prevent, identify, intervene in and remedy incidents of violence or sexual harassment related to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

sexual or psychological harassment of staff members. The new text integrates both protocols and broadens the focus to ensure coherent and effective action involving the entire University.

The text sets out measures that range from raising awareness to providing

When an incident is identified, the protocol goes immediately into effect, triggering support measures for the affected individual, including psychological counselling and legal advice. Measures such as the creation of an inquiry committee, consisting of a member

Leading by transforming

The URV will lead the Network of Universities for Diversity, which promotes genuine strategies for inclusion, intersectionality and social justice

Rovira i Virgili University will lead the Network of Universities for Diversity (RUD) for the next two years, together with the universities of Cadiz, Vigo and the Basque Country. The handover was made official at the sixth meeting of the RUD, which was held at the UOC on 13 and 14 May and attended by representatives from 46 universities. With the slogan 'Think, Transform, Act', the meeting emphasised the need to promote more

inclusive and representative university policies for students as well as for teaching, research, technical, management, administrative and services staff.

The new coordination team aims to prioritise establishing a dialogue with ANECA, the Ministry of Universities and educational authorities in autonomous regions to demand the effective application of Law 4/2023. The law mandates the inclusion of content on gender diversity in the curricula, but mechanisms to make this possible are not yet being developed.

The work of the RUD is conceived as a constant feedback process, the topics discussed are transferred to universities and enriched insights are received in return. The next meeting, to be held at Fernando Pessoa University in the Canary Islands, will underscore this commitment.

Number one university in Spain in gender equality, according to the THE impact ranking, and 44th in the world



It's never too late to learn



1,700 people enrolled in Senior Groups in 24 municipalities



21 students over 65 years of age are pursuing bachelor's degrees in the URV's Ciutadana programme



The URV is also a place for people over 65

Twenty people over 65 years old are pursuing official bachelor's degrees, and some 40 are enrolled in one of the 150 subjects of the URV Ciutadana programme, which allows students to attend classes without exams or qualifications. For most people, university begins around the age of 18, at a time in life when they start taking their first steps into the adult world and choosing their first personal goals.



URV Senior Groups continue to grow

The 24 municipalities in the district that are taking part in the project put on some 500 conferences during the 2024-25 academic year. The URV University Extension Courses for Older Adults continues to grow stronger as a flagship project for older people with a desire to learn and socialise. The Montblanc, Roda de Berà and la Ràpita groups were added to the programme this academic year. These courses are part of an initiative launched 20 years ago with the aim of bringing the University's knowledge to people over 65, in a demographic context with a growing proportion of elderly people.

High marks for the Service Learning Programme

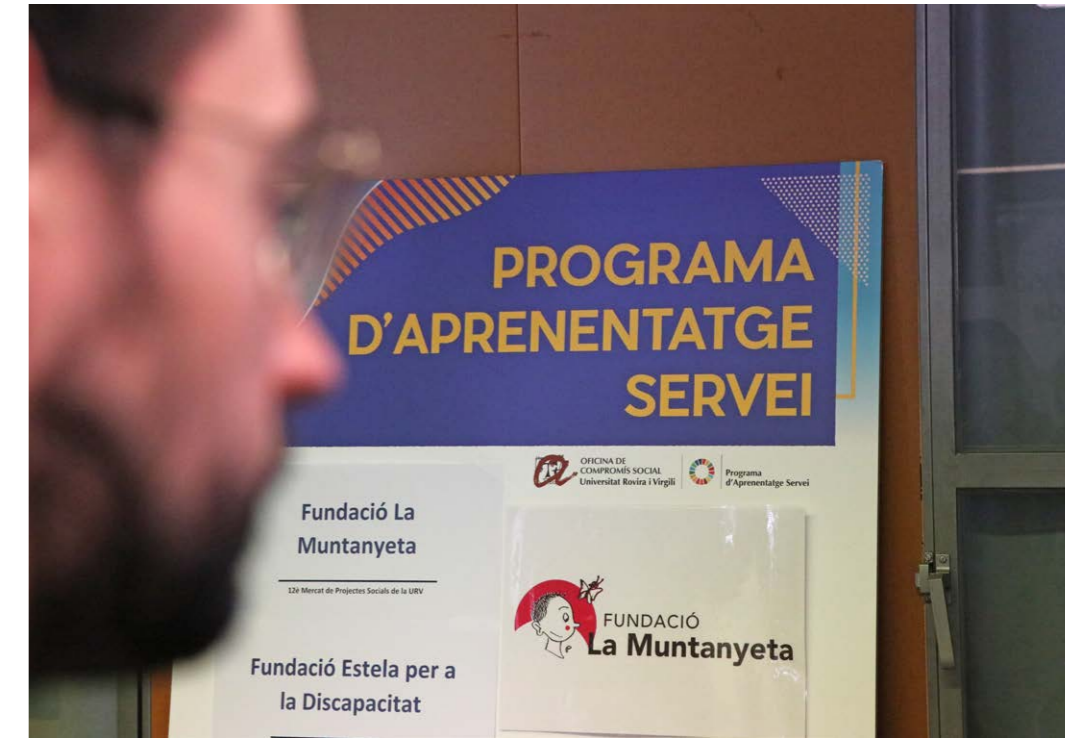
The URV stands out as a pioneer and a leader in an educational initiative that combines academic learning with service to the community through social organisations

The Service Learning Programme (SL), a project in which students combine training with internships at local social organisations, is a pioneering and benchmark URV project that passed its first internal evaluation in 2025 with excellent results. The objective of the report is to update the SL action plan and ensure that aligns with current challenges of teaching, research and university social responsibility.

The results of the process, based on a systematic method based on international benchmarks, notably the 2007 South African Higher Education Quality Council manual, demonstrate an overall positive assessment of the programme. Special emphasis is placed on indicators that measure collaboration with external entities, results, and impact, all of which clearly confirm the effectiveness of SL. Institutional leadership also features prominently, reflecting a well-established management structure as well as political and organisational support for the programme.

However, room for improvement remains in areas such as resourcing, evaluation, and dissemination. The report recommends reinforcing the resources allocated, systematising periodic evaluation and promoting the visibility of the programme to improve its impact.

The Service Learning Programme is an educational initiative that the URV, the first university in Spain to implement it, has been running since 2012. The objective



is to comprehensively educate socially responsible professionals. Alongside acquiring the knowledge and competences of each degree, students also develop a strong civic and social commitment through internships and bachelor's and master's degree final projects and doctoral theses that examine the

organisations to undertake projects with tangible social benefits.

Since its creation, more than 500 social entities and 6,000 students have taken part in the Service Learning Programme in over 1,000 projects.

Over 6,000 students have carried out projects for 500 entities in this programme

real needs of the social organisations participating in the programme. This allows students to develop valuable skills and the social



Sustainability through pedal power

Twelve students from the Tarragona campuses have launched the programme 'Mou-te en verd' (Get around in green), a commitment to bicycle mobility

Twelve folding bicycles are already circulating through the streets of Tarragona with the clear mission of making students' daily lives easier while reducing the university community's carbon footprint. The new 'Mou-te en verd' (Get around in green) programme, an initiative from the Office of Equality and Social Engagement, introduced a bicycle loan system this September for students living in Tarragona and studying at the Catalunya or Sescelades Campuses.

If the pilot test is successful, the URV plans to strengthen and expand service to other campuses with the aim of reducing emissions and promoting healthy habits

The project, conceived as a pilot test, responds to the University's goal of promoting more sustainable, affordable and healthy forms of mobility. 'Mobility is a fundamental aspect in students' quality of life. With this measure, we aim to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions,' said Toni de la Torre, an environmental and sustainability specialist at the URV.



To select users, a registration period was opened to all bachelor's, master's and doctoral students. Bikes were assigned using criteria like the distance between the user's home and the campus and the existence of suitable routes to make the journey by bicycle. Students are responsible for the maintenance and safety of the vehicle, which they will keep at home at night. To access the service, students paid a deposit of €75 as a security for possible damage or theft.

The bicycles chosen are collapsible, for easy storage at home, and are equipped with lights, reflective panels, bells and other essential safety features for riding around the city. They also have adjustable seats and handlebars to accommodate different users.

'Mou-te en verd' was created as a limited-time experience, but with a view to continuing in the future. If the experience is positive, the URV intends to consolidate the programme and extend it to other campuses and municipalities in which the University has a presence. The long-term goal is to reduce the environmental impact of university mobility and promote healthy lifestyles among students. This action further demonstrates the University's commitment to sustainability and the wellbeing of the university community.

The URV makes strides in energy self-reliance

Rovira i Virgili University continues to make progress in its energy transition strategy with the installation of new photovoltaic plants in its buildings. The latest work completed on the Vila-seca Campus and in the ETSE and ETSEQ laboratory buildings on the Sescelades Campus has significantly increased the University's capacity to produce its own electricity. Specifically, these new facilities produce more than 500,000 kWh per year, in addition to the over 900,000 kWh already generated by existing plants. All together, the URV can now cover about 10% of its total energy consumption.

The last phase also included the installation of solar panels on

the buildings of the Faculties of Chemistry and Oenology. At the same time, work is already underway on planning the next stage of the project, which will be rolled out in 2026 and involves installing photovoltaic panels on the roofs of buildings such as the Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology and the Mas dels Frares experimental winery. The energy upgrade at the winery will be combined with other renovation work.

When all the planned phases are operational in 2027, the URV expects to cover 20% of its total consumption with energy generated at its own facilities. It represents a qualitative leap forward that adds to other energy saving and efficiency

New solar panel systems increase the energy generated by the URV's own means to 10%, with the aim of reaching 20% by 2027

measures that the University has been implementing on an ongoing basis. For two decades, the URV has managed to reduce the electricity consumption per square metre in its buildings by more than 40%.

The ultimate goal is even more ambitious. By 2030, the institution aims to reduce electricity consumption by 50% per square metre and completely eliminate the consumption of natural gas and other fossil fuels. To do so, it has planned to progressively replace gas boilers with more sustainable and efficient heat generation systems.

Since 2018, all the electricity consumed at the University has been of certified renewable origin, but its commitment to self-reliance allows the institution to go a step further with a more direct and responsible management of resources. Expanding the installation of solar panels to most of the buildings on the Catalunya, Bellissens, Terres de l'Ebre, Sescelades and Vila-seca Campuses firmly establishes the URV as a leader in the application of university environmental policies.

Temperature on campus

Sensors installed on the Sescelades Campus to assess the impact of hard soil and vegetation on summer temperatures

This summer, the Sescelades Campus was turned into an open-air laboratory to study variations in environmental temperature for different soil surface types. Four measuring stations were installed to collect data continuously for over 100 days. The objective is to collect evidence on how concrete and vegetation cover influence the thermal comfort of outdoor spaces to support sustainable campus planning in the context of climate change.

The project is aligned with the URV's 2030 Sustainability Plan, which is dedicated to climate action and training professionals with a commitment to sustainability. The four stations were placed in representative areas of the campus. Each collects data at three points: at ground level, 1 metre above the ground and 1.8 metres above the ground. This configuration allows for comparisons of temperature variations based on height and surface type.

The sensors started by transmitting data via radio. After completing the test and synchronisation phases, the database collecting all the information was activated. Monitoring continued until the end of September, ensuring continuous



data collection throughout the hottest part of the year. This should permit a rigorous examination of the perception that some places on campus are warmer and less hospitable, especially places with hard pavement exposed to direct sunlight.

The data will serve as a guide for future environmental measures and make open spaces more hospitable in extreme heat

Rather than planning for urban measures in the immediate future, the project seeks to provide actionable knowledge to design more sustainable and livable university environments in response to the current reality of higher temperatures.



Technology for cooperation

URV Solidària is implementing seven solidarity projects using applied research to improve life in disadvantaged areas of the planet

Seven international cooperation projects led by members of the URV community aim to bring technology, education and basic resources to vulnerable communities in Africa, India and Latin America. Funded by URV Solidària, these initiatives leverage university research to generate tangible improvements in the development and living conditions in these areas.

The projects chosen have received grants with values ranging from €12,350 to €3,990, which will cover a significant part of their budgets. They include cooperative initiatives in India, Tanzania, the Gambia, Kenya, Mauritania, Peru and Mozambique, involving

a very wide range of university departments, from engineering, to medical sciences, to law and philology. The goal is the same for all: to put research at the service of social advancement.

One of the most interesting projects is Leukocheck, a mobile application for the early detection of retinoblastoma, a type of eye cancer that affects children under the age of 6 that can cause blindness or even death if not diagnosed in time. The project is led by Carme Julià, a lecturer in the Department of Computer Engineering and Mathematics and the chair of the La Nineta dels Ulls Foundation, carried out jointly

with the ASCLEPIUS research group.

The app uses the mobile phone's camera to capture images of the eyes to look for leukocoria, white reflections in the pupil that can be one of the first

An app to detect childhood retinoblastoma, a reading programme, and a drip irrigation for farmers in Mauritania are among the projects funded

signs of retinoblastoma. Using artificial intelligence algorithms, the system analyses the images and alerts the user if it detects suspicious patterns. No

sophisticated equipment is required. Any mobile phone can be used. The app will be distributed free of charge so it is accessible to everyone, especially those in countries with fragile healthcare systems.

The project has completed the first phase of trial implementation with pilot tests in Prades, Barcelona, El Vendrell and Maputo, Mozambique. The pilot



tests are intended to expand the database to train the algorithm and improve its reliability in detecting retinoblastoma as well as other ocular pathologies, such as congenital cataracts and Coats' disease.

Other initiatives receiving funding include installing a drip irrigation system in the Toungouene Women's Cooperative in Mauritania; an educational and community programme in Tanzania; a literacy project for women in India; emotional education

for children in a foster home in Peru; empowering women to combat food insecurity in the Gambia; and another mobile application for reading and teacher training in Kenya.


All these projects share the same philosophy: to bring the benefits of knowledge to those who need it most. Through URV Solidària, the University deepens its commitment to public service and offers the expertise of its community in support of social justice and sustainable development.

Biodiversity on the banks of the Ebro

The Assut de Tivenys archaeological site is home to more than just historical research. Since 2024, environmental initiatives have also been underway to support biodiversity and restore declining habitats in this place of natural beauty and cultural heritage. This was explained by Toni de la Torre, an environmental and sustainability specialist from the Office of Social Engagement, who emphasised the commitment to ensuring that archaeological actions align with ecological restoration efforts in their immediate surroundings.

Outside the excavation area, seeds selected to attract pollinating insects such as bees, beetles, syrups and butterflies have been sown. One area was planted with flowers from the genus *Biscutella* with the specific objective of attracting sooty orange tip butterflies (*Zegris eupheme*), an endangered species that inhabits the banks of the Ebro River. Nest boxes were also set up to encourage nesting by scops owls and European rollers, as well as shelters for bats, in order to provide safe spaces for insectivorous wildlife and improve the area's ecological balance.

The l'Assut archaeological site, owned by the URV, is located at a strategic point in the Ebro region, at the southern end of the Barrufemes Gorge, between the Cardó Mountains and the Ports de Tortosa-Beseit massif, an area rich in natural, historical and environmental heritage that the University is committed to preserving.



Archaeological research at Assut de Tivenys compatible with environmental measures to restore declining wildlife

The Extended Campus arrives in Terra Alta

The URV's new campus reaffirms its commitment to the region

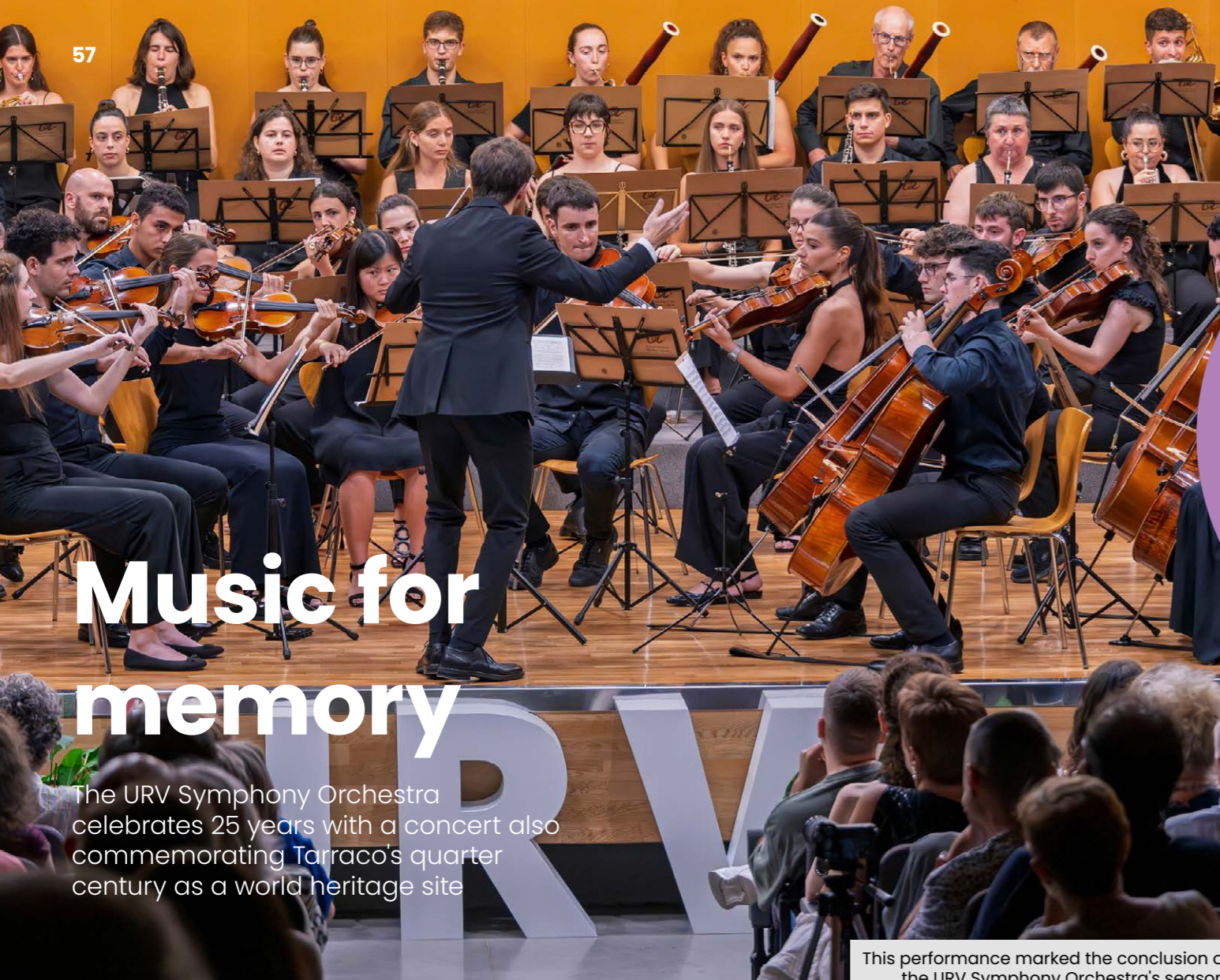
Rovira i Virgili University opens a new Extended Campus in Terra Alta. The official presentation was held at the Església Vella in Corbera d'Ebre, with an institutional event presided over by the rector, Josep Pallarès, culminating with the a concert entitled *Veus per la pau* (Voices for peace) performed by the URV choir under the direction of Montserrat Rios. This project, the result of collaboration with the Regional Council, aims to strengthen the University's connection to municipalities in the region and make University resources and activities more accessible to them.

The new site is the 17th Extended Campus and the second with a county-level scope. Managed by the Terra Alta Regional Council, it was created through a collaboration

agreement with the University, which allows the activities on offer to be tailored to local needs. Its objective is twofold: to bring University knowledge and resources to the populace and to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the region.

With this new addition, the Extended Campus is now present in all of the counties in the province. The project, which has been underway since 2007 with the support of the Tarragona Provincial Council and the Ramon Muntaner Institute, aims to provide access to the public university across the region and to build long-lasting ties with local communities. The new campus in Terra Alta represents another step forward on the path of promoting close ties, dialogue and shared transformation.





Music for memory

The URV Symphony Orchestra celebrates 25 years with a concert also commemorating Tarraco's quarter century as a world heritage site

A full house, a top-tier orchestra and two milestones to celebrate. The URV Symphony Orchestra's season finale marked two cultural and memorial milestones: celebrating the orchestra's 25th year and a quarter century since Tarraco was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The main lecture hall on the Catalunya Campus

had a full house for the performance of a symphonic programme entitled *El nostre Imperi Romà / Tarraco, la inspiració* (Our Roman Empire/Tarraco, inspiration). Among the works performed were *The Planets*, by Gustav Holst, a powerful and evocative suite. The concert also showcased the 25-year trajectory

of the orchestra, which has grown in quality, number of performers and ambition, to become one of the top university orchestras in Spain.

Founded in 1999-2000 with the name Orchestra XVI-XXI, the orchestra was initially directed by Markus Schikora. Later, with Tomàs Grau at the helm, it adopted the

symphonic format and focused on repertoires from the 19th and 20th centuries. The arrival of Marcel Ortega, who added more musicians and expanded the scope of the orchestra's repertoire, marked a turning point. Miquel Massana has served as its conductor since the 2018-19 season. It is now presented as the URV Symphony

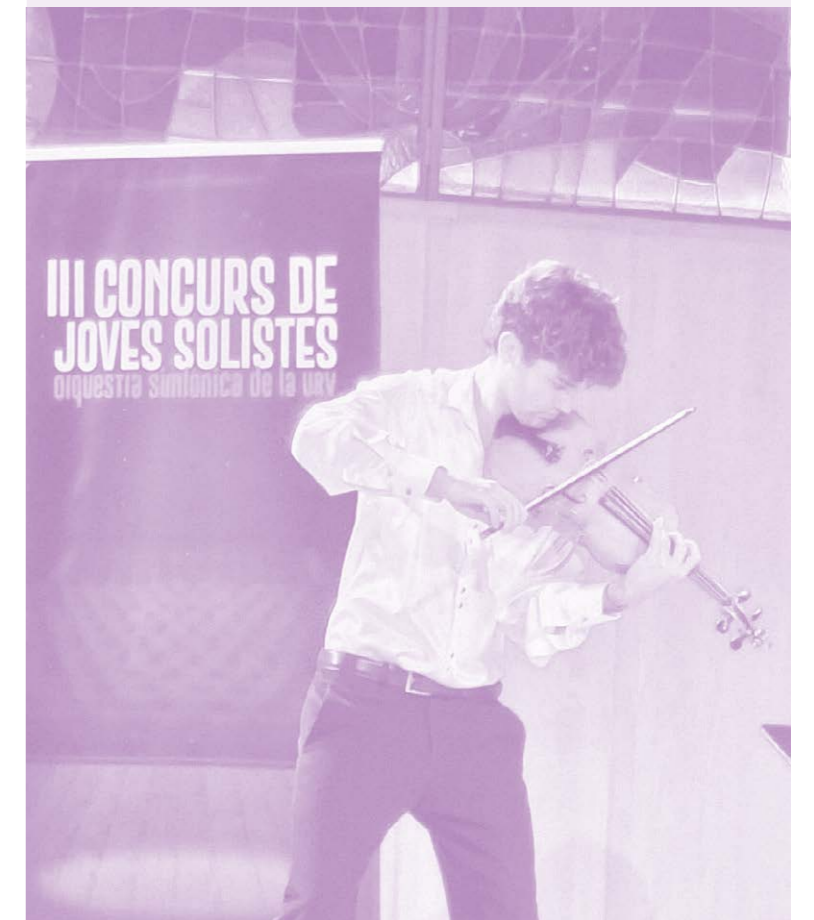
With 60 musicians and a regular performance schedule, it is a leading university ensemble in Spain

Orchestra and has some 60 musicians, who are mostly URV students.

The orchestra's maturity is reflected in its regular schedule of performances, its commitment to a varied repertoire and its numerous collaborations which have enriched the public as well as members of the programme. These synergies have been key to elevating the URV's profile in music and reaffirming the value of artistic experiences in higher education.

Violinist Miquel Muñiz wins the Young Soloists Competition

Miquel Muñiz Galdón took first prize in the third URV Symphony Orchestra's Young Soloists Competition held at the Pau Casals Auditorium in El Vendrell. As the winner, he will perform Sibelius' violin concerto with the orchestra next season at the Josep Carreras Auditorium in Vila-seca. He also received the audience award. Second prize went to pianist Daniel Bertomeu. The ensemble of finalists also included Sergio Ferrer (clarinet), Pablo Noda (marimba) and Sara Òdena (cello).



The world behind the camera

A new stage with more collaborative projects, a wide array of formats and socially relevant themes

The URV Film and Audiovisual Arts Group has entered a new phase. More than just a film forum or a film archive, it now acts as a dynamic hub where audiovisual culture, research, critical reflection and social impact converge. With activities ranging from training to dissemination, production and cultural activism, the Group has established itself as a dynamic, collaborative project in constant dialogue with the URV community.

One of the proposals for the 2024-25 academic year was Audiovisual Tuesdays, a joint initiative with the Faculty of Nursing that combines cinema and health to explore issues like ageism, functional diversity, symbolic violence and the representation of non-normative bodies. Monthly screenings and discussions with experts pose uncomfortable questions, while providing a forum for critical

thinking, dialogue, and questioning prejudices. 'Movies are an excuse to rethink everything,' explains Vanina Hofman, director of the Group.

Cinema as an active space to reflect, create and transform through dialogue, research and the dissemination of audiovisual materials

This academic year also saw the celebration of First International Video Creation Competition 'Parlant poshumanament' (Speaking posthumously), a joint project between the Mèdol Centre for Contemporary Arts in Tarragona, the Art and Media Platform (PAM) and the Media Arts Biennial of Santiago, Chile. The competition invites creators from around the world to explore artificial intelligence

through short pieces on topics such as the human-animal relationship, technologies used in care, and the fictions of identity. In addition to the international award, a special prize has been planned for URV students.

The Group's new approach does not only focus on scheduling activities, but also on promoting research and creating content. Examples include the *De col·leccionista*

a col·leccionista (From collector to collector) podcast, the Media Archaeology Research Group, which explores audiovisual practices from pre-cinema to the digital age, and the traveling exhibition *'Heroismos. Historia d'un nitrat'*, (Heroism: the story of a nitrate film)

about recovering a silent film shot in Tarragona in 1922.

The Film and Audiovisual Arts Group is well-established as a forum for experimenting and transmitting culture that welcomes all viewpoints and fields and is committed to cinema as a tool for promoting cross-disciplinary knowledge and participation.



Three research projects with a feminist perspective awarded by the URV

The URV's Equality Unit presented the Maria Helena Maseras awards to Berta Pla, Juan Manuel Romero and Marta Gort, who were recognised for their work on impressionist painter Berthe Morisot, education in sexual and gender diversity in teaching studies, and contemporary reinterpretations of the myth of Galatea. The prizes, named after the first woman in Spain to enroll in university, were awarded at the Vila-seca Campus, her home town.



Recognition in research with social engagement

The Immaculada Sastre Miró Social Engagement Awards distinguished three works by URV students that contribute to inclusion and social improvement. The Board of Trustees awarded doctoral student Judit Queral for her thesis on participatory research in health, master's student Sílvia Alcoverro for her study on work-integrated learning for young people with disabilities, and Pau Solé for his thesis on a smart home system to promote autonomy in the home. The theses were done in collaboration with social organisations such as Caritas, APRODISCA and the URV Foundation.



Uni-diversity Day with sports activities as a tool for inclusion

Over 100 functionally and intellectually diverse students took part in Uni-diversity Day held at the Anella Mediterrània. Organised as part of the Catalan University Championships, the event brought together universities from throughout the Catalan Countries to promote inclusion through adapted sport activities. Participants played sports such as boccia, goalball, basketball and sitting volleyball. International adapted basketball player Xavier Vendrell also spoke, underscoring the social value of physical activity.



AI Digital Inclusion Award

The DiLoFácil (Say it simply) team, made up of students and teachers from Inerlab and the URV's Bachelor's Degree in Telecommunications, won the Berri UP Award at the OdiseIA4Good international hackathon. Their project, an application to help people with cognitive difficulties understand information, was recognised for its social impact and ethical responsibility regarding artificial intelligence.



The URV and the Escola de Pràctiques bring back summer school

With the URV's support, Tarragona's Escola de Pràctiques brought back its summer camp in the 2024-25 academic year. From 25 June to 26 July, children from the first to the sixth class of primary school were able to enjoy musical or sports activities suitable for their age. The camp offered childcare and dining services, targeting families from the school and university community.



Trade unionist Teresa Fortuny, winner of the Maria Antònia Ferrer i Bosch award

Tarragona trade unionist Teresa Fortuny received the Maria Antònia Ferrer i Bosch award from the URV for her work in defense of women's rights. The event, held on the Catalunya Campus in observation of International Women's Day, brought together numerous attendees and included a presentation by Mercè Civit. The distinction, which is awarded annually by the Equality Unit, recognises individuals and groups that have contributed to eliminating gender inequalities.



ObertaMent (open mind) workshops and seminars to combat stigma

As part of the project 'ObertaMent, parlem dels moments més foscos' (Open mind, let's talk about the darkest moments), the URV has promoted seminars and workshops to combat the stigma surrounding suicide and promote the emotional wellbeing of students, teaching and research staff, and technical, management, administrative and services staff. The event's closing ceremony was held on 16 May with the 2nd Conference on Suicide Prevention in the Educational Context, which featured experts and personal testimonials to reflect on the importance of talking about this often silenced reality with empathy and assertiveness.



The URV Theatre Group debuts the play *La ruleta d'un casino*

The performance is based on a simple and ingenious script written by the Group itself and served to kick off the Mostra de Teatre Jove. The URV Theatre Group debuted its own play *La ruleta d'un casino* at the Teatre Tarragona. On an empty stage, with no supporting sets and with props limited to a suitcase, chairs, coins and brooms, the young actors naturally and ingeniously conveyed the message of the play.

Live the URV

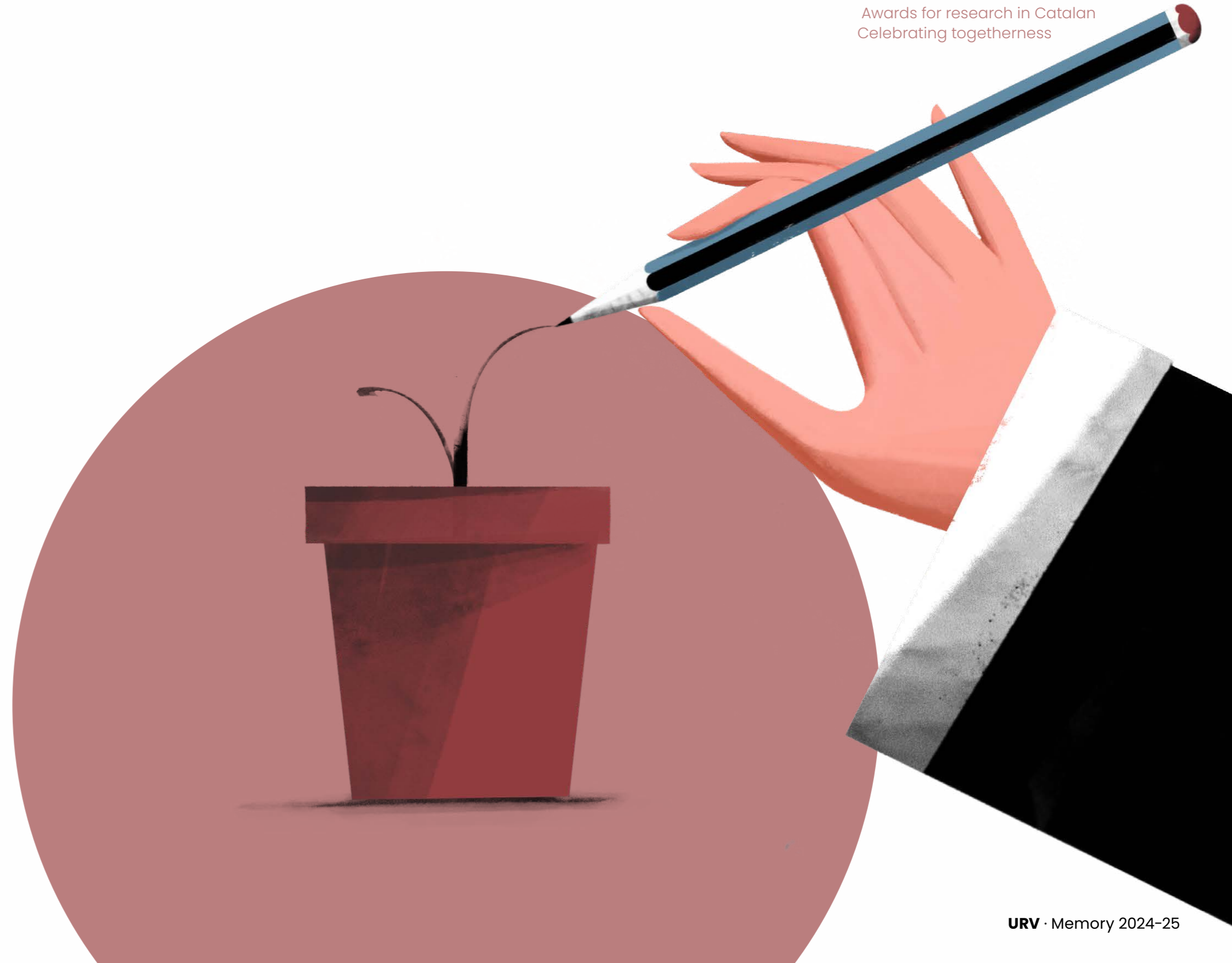
The University continues to be immersed in a process of constant transformation and improvement. In 2024-25, future-oriented initiatives were launched and consolidated with the aim of creating more modern, sustainable and inclusive campuses, while promoting the wellbeing and cohesion of the university community.

Renovation work was a major focus throughout the year, from the initiation of the comprehensive remodelling work at the Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology to improvements on the Catalunya Campus, to the offices of the Baix Penedès Campus and at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. The upgrades include sustainable climate control systems, expanded green areas and spaces adapted for research and comfortable teaching.

It was also a year marked by the vitality of university life. Tarragona earned the title of capital of university sport with the Catalan University Championships, which broke participation records and in which inclusion played a central role. And although only in its third year, the Festa Major, held in the Parc del Francolí, has already become an unmissable event that strengthens ties between students, teaching and research staff, and technical, management, administrative and services staff and has established itself as the community's annual gathering.

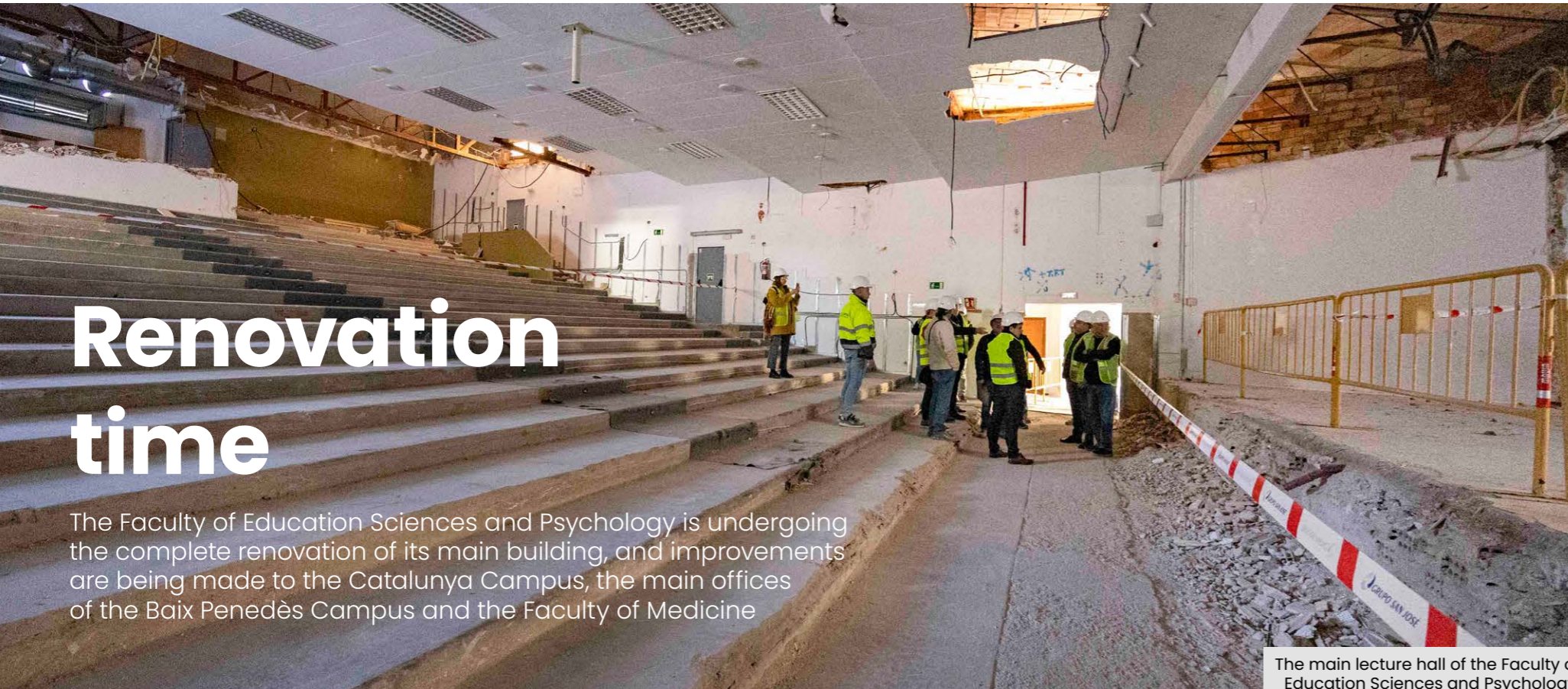
At the same time, initiatives were rolled out during the academic year that put people at the centre: a new training programme for technical, management, administrative and services staff, the reinstatement of the productivity bonus linked to skills, and a reorganisation of services to make management more efficient. In relation to language at the URV, the first Language Rights Point was launched, adding to the celebrations for the 30th anniversary of the Language Service and the 20th anniversary of URV Publications. All this happened during an academic year in which the University approved a new Statute aligned with current and future challenges.

Renovation time
A championship University
People at the helm
In defense of language rights
A Statute for the future
Awards for research in Catalan
Celebrating togetherness



Renovation time

The Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology is undergoing the complete renovation of its main building, and improvements are being made to the Catalunya Campus, the main offices of the Baix Penedès Campus and the Faculty of Medicine



The main lecture hall of the Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology.

The 2024-25 academic year was marked by renovation work on many of the URV's buildings and spaces. The Faculty of Education Sciences

The main lecture hall of the Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology is being updated and will be opened to the public

and Psychology, the main offices of the Baix Penedès Campus, the Catalunya Campus and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences are the focus of several projects to improve and modernise services and

facilities in order to ensure high-quality teaching and research.

The largest of these projects is the work on the main building of the Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology, on the Sescelades Campus, which is being completely renovated. While the work is underway, students have been distributed among other spaces on campus and at the Seminari Tarraconense cultural centre located in Tarragona's historic quarter. With a budget of 9.5 million euros, the project will affect both the interior and exterior of the building and is slated for completion by 2026-27.

On the exterior, the façades are being insulated, new enclosures are being installed, and thermal insulation is being placed on the roof. In the area surrounding the Faculty, the lighting is being renewed and the entry points are being upgraded. Actions inside the building include improving the condition of the structure and adding fire protection and new stairs for emergency exits. Architectural barriers inside classrooms and lecture halls are also being removed, and a disabled lift is being installed. Floors, walls, ceilings, and doors will also be changed.

In addition, how some spaces are used has been reorganised, with a

new classroom, the rearrangement of three others, and the creation of 10 new spaces for research groups in the former library, which served as a multipurpose classroom.

The space being completely renovated is the Faculty's main lecture hall. The seating area, auxiliary spaces, toilets, parquet flooring, lighting, public address system and climate control system will all be completely new. A new independent entrance will also be added so the room can be used without having to open the rest of the building. This project is largely funded by the Tarragona Provincial Council, which is contributing around €700,000, with the aim of turning it into a social and cultural centre for the university community and, at the same time, a space open to society.

The renovated building will reduce the University's carbon footprint because it will run entirely on electricity and the roofs will be prepared to accommodate solar panels. Energy efficiency will also be improved through the use of LED lights and a new system to control lighting and heating and air conditioning. Sanitation networks,

audiovisual and telecommunications systems, public address systems and security systems are also being upgraded, along with much of the furniture in classrooms and offices.

Meanwhile, work at the main offices of the Baix Penedès Campus has been undertaken for the purpose of improving access and dignifying spaces. Started in July 2025 and expected to last about three months, this project cost €390,000, €290,000 of which was contributed by the Tarragona Provincial Council and the remaining €100,000 by the El Vendrell City Council.

The facilities are located in the town of Coma-ruga in the municipality of El Vendrell. One of the two entrances to the campus is located on Avinguda Diagonal and is being improved to make it wider and more visible. Inside the campus, the entire outdoor space is being transformed to facilitate accessibility and mobility between the buildings containing the teaching laboratories and the health simulation classroom, the classrooms in prefabricated buildings and the CRAI. Specifically, new ramps and terraces enclosed by low walls are being installed, the paving, irrigation,

Actions on the Catalunya Campus will expand green areas and improve sustainability with an upgraded climate control system

lighting and drainage systems are being upgraded, the existing landscaping is being improved, green areas are being created and outdoor furniture is being installed.

The Catalunya Campus, meanwhile, is also the scene of renovation measures that improve sustainability

and expand green areas. Specifically, more planters have been installed in Plaça de la Concòrdia, the paving has been repaired, and the climate control system has been upgraded throughout the buildings. This project will primarily serve to modernise the campus, decarbonise it and improve its performance.

As for the expansion of green areas, as the objective is to generate shaded areas in which the university community can meet and rest, in addition to achieving a less harsh and greener space, two galvanised steel pergolas have been put in place. The work has a budget of €200,000 and includes repairing pavement damaged due to tree growth.

Upgrading the climate control system cost €2,000,000 euros and was fully funded by the Government of Catalonia's Programme to Promote the Rehabilitation of Public

Buildings (PIREP). The renovation, which is due to be completed in 2025, includes replacing the climate control equipment in buildings A1 and D1 and the collectors located on each of the roofs, as well as upgrading the control system. The climate control system, based on gas boilers, had become obsolete and was inefficient, making it necessary to modernise it to be fully sustainable.



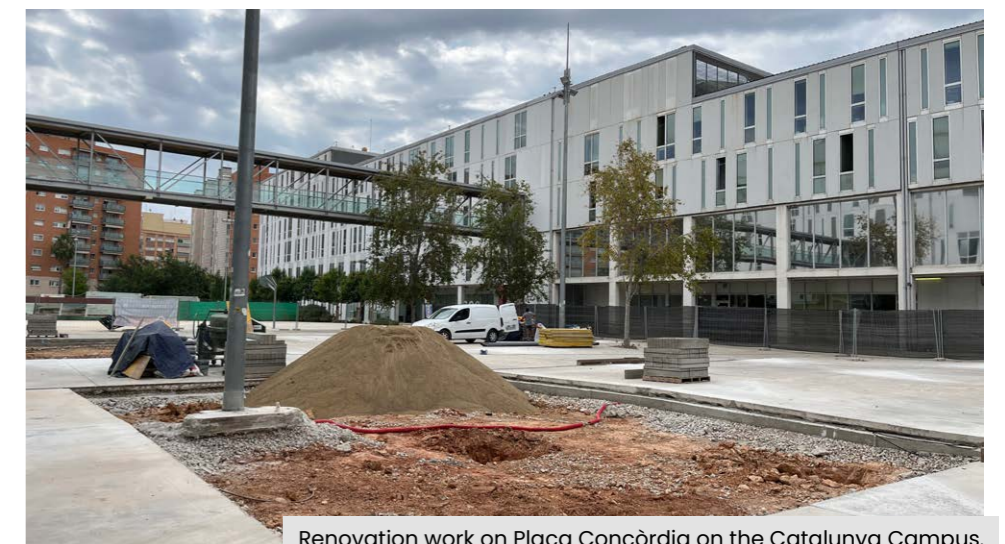
Exterior image of the FCEP.



Works inside the FCEP.



Beginning of work at the main offices of the Baix Penedès Campus.

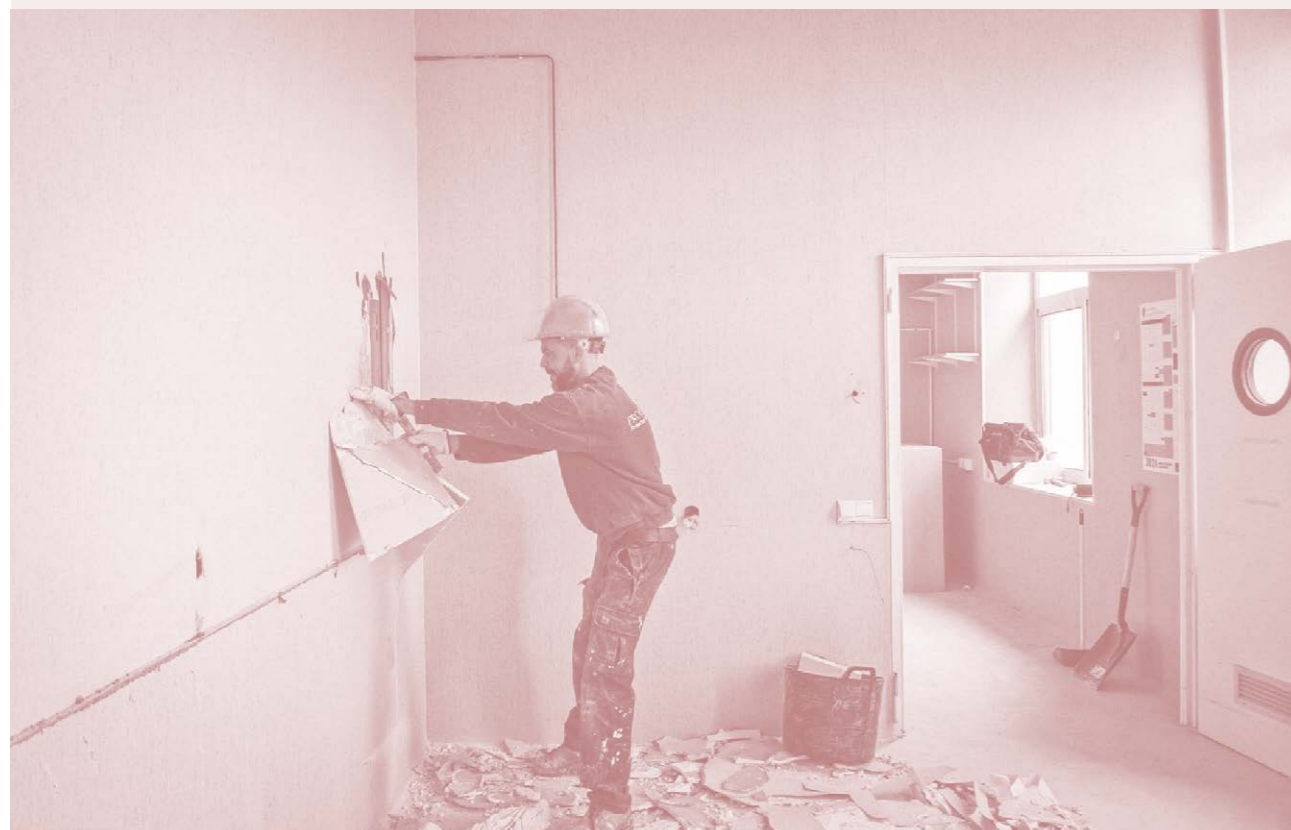


Renovation work on Plaça Concòrdia on the Catalunya Campus.

The Faculty of Medicine's move to Bellissens takes shape

The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences is leaving the centre of Reus to set up at its new location on the Bellissens Campus. Although there is no fixed timetable for the move, the relocation is already starting to move forward. On 19 June, the Governing Council allocated 1.94 million euros to conduct the study for the preliminary phase of the project. The funds, drawn from 2024 surpluses and supplemented with ordinary URV resources, will be used to commission the drafting of a technical report outlining the project's master framework.

The current faculty is currently being renovated to ensure the quality of teaching is maintained. Accordingly, in 2025 work has been done to provide spaces for teaching and practical classes funded by a subsidy received from the Ministry of Health two years earlier when the number of student places was increased.



A championship University

The URV successfully concludes the coordination of the University Championships with record participation and new spaces for inclusion

The 40th Catalan University Championships (CCU) brought a growing interest in university sports in Catalonia into the spotlight. With the URV coordinating and Tarragona hosting, the championships broke participation records and showcased the Anella Mediterrània as a key venue for university sports.

The organisation of the championships was a great success thanks to the involvement of the URV, the Government of Catalonia and the Tarragona City Council. In total, more than 11,500 students from a dozen Catalan universities competed throughout the year in team and individual sports, with a programme running from November to March and the Anella Mediterrània in the Campclar neighbourhood as its main stage.

The six team sports (football, futsal, basketball, volleyball, handball and rugby sevens) included nearly 3,000 participants, who played 300 games, mainly in Tarragona. The finals held on 11 March were dominated by the University of Barcelona, which

secured titles in seven different sports. In total, nine universities took the podium. The winners represented Catalonia at the Spanish University Championships.

Although the URV did not win gold in any team competitions, it excelled in the individual events, winning 32 medals, 8 of them gold, in events including judo, athletics, table tennis and archery. A total of 250 students participated from the University, which provided considerable logistical and institutional support.

One of the most celebrated novelties was Uni-diversity Day, which showcased the potential of students with intellectual disabilities through the Inserlab programme. They shared spaces, supported teams and took part in concurrent activities, which led to a more inclusive and socially



The event attracted 11,589 participants, cementing Tarragona's position as a hub for university sports with the Anella Mediterrània as its epicentre

engaged competition model. The league of open running events, such as UNIRUN, was also strengthened, enhancing the social dimension of university sports.

The closing ceremony provided an opportunity to take stock and pass the torch to the University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC), which will carry on the legacy of an event highly praised by all involved. The

rector of the URV, Josep Pallarès, underscored the value of collective learning and acknowledged the technical contributions of the university and the municipality as well as institutional support.

The 2025 University Championships also marked the 40th anniversary of the Esport Català Universitari initiative, a project that has grown thanks to the joint support of universities, local governments and the Government of Catalonia, promoting sports as a tool for education, integration and social cohesion. Mayor Viñuales passed the University Championships flag to the Mayor of Vic, Albert Castells, with university coordination placed in the hands of the Vice-Rector of UVic-UCC, Albert Juncà.

With the transfer, the URV concludes a chapter marked not only by its sporting and organisational excellence, but also for making the championships an open and inclusive event with deep roots in the region. Transformed for a few months into a university sports town, Tarragona demonstrated its full capacity for hosting sporting events.



People at the helm

The URV rolls out a training programme, reorganises services and brings back the productivity bonus linked to skills

To strengthen the professional development of technical, management, administrative and services staff (PTGAS), in 2025 the URV launched a training programme focusing on key skills, while also approving substantial organisational changes to improve and streamline internal management procedures. The University also brought back its productivity bonus with a new system based on the assessment of skills.

The new training programme has begun to be rolled out with a participatory approach and face-to-face sessions. It includes training in effective communication, with tools for active listening, assertive relationships and tackling complex conversations, as well as

personal planning and organisation to improve time management, task prioritisation and personal productivity. These topics are complemented for the first time by sessions on wellbeing and emotional management, and new editions and content will be scheduled for 2026 before the end of the year. This training is being introduced as a strategic asset within the Office of the General Manager to promote continuous improvement across the board. At the same time, organisational changes have been promoted to adapt existing structures to current needs. The Human Resources Service has become the People Management Service,

Training in communication, time management and emotional wellbeing is now part of the technical, management, administrative and services staff's new professional growth path



reinforcing its mission as a space for staff support and development. Teaching and research staff and research staff management have merged into a single section, specialised technical professionals have been incorporated and versatility has been promoted to streamline processes.

In the area of research, the Office for the Promotion of Research Projects (OFIR) was created, replacing the International R&D&I Proposal Support Section. This new service was set up with specialised staff and its own structure to respond to the URV's increasing participation in international calls for proposals and to support all areas of research. The Research Support Office was also strengthened with more functional responsibility for grant management.

The Office of the General Secretary was also restructured. The Deputy Secretary will now assume the functions of the Data Protection Officer. Subunits are being reorganised to improve the management of agreements, archiving, registration, transparency and electoral processes, with a cross-cutting

The assessment of key competencies such as adaptability and lifelong learning will be used to determine staff productivity bonuses

administrative support model in pool format. The International Center has consolidated its two main lines of action – strategy and international mobility – and strengthened its financial management and dialogue with organisations through new specialised positions. Finally, the Infrastructure Service created a new Technical Management Subunit to optimise coordination, procurement and financial management.

These measures are accompanied by an important development in the area of remuneration: the reinstatement of the productivity bonus for PTGAS, now linked to skills assessment. The new system moves away from the attendance-based model and adopts a qualitative approach that assesses two cross-cutting skills: flexibility and adaptability, and lifelong learning. Each person conducts a self-assessment with evidence of behaviours

that demonstrate these competencies. Their immediate supervisor validates the assessment and, if the result is favourable, the bonus is paid out.

The evaluation period is annual (from January to December) and will take place during the first half of the following year. The bonus was stipulated in the 2024 budget with an initial amount of €144,195.84.

With these actions, the URV is consolidating a more modern people management model that focuses on recognising talent and continuous training in order to create a more efficient, cohesive university with teams prepared for present and future challenges.

In defense of language rights

The Language Rights Point provides the tools needed for members of the university community to assert their language rights confidentially and directly

With the slogan 'Viula URV en català' (Experience the URV in Catalan), Rovira i Virgili University has established the first Language Rights Point, a pioneering initiative that aims to make the language rights

to access the language rights section of the Llengües URV website. From there they can access the language rights channel, a confidential and individualised service that allows users to make queries, submit complaints

URV Language and Publications Service celebrates its anniversary by promoting Catalan, multilingualism and publications

of the entire university community visible and effective. The point is located on the Catalunya Campus and consists of a fixed panel installed on the wall of the lobby (next to the Purple Point). Users can scan a QR code

or make suggestions about the use of languages at the University. The new point, which has been funded by the Interlingua programme of the Catalan Ministry of Research and Universities, is the first in a series that

Consulta els teus drets lingüístics!
 urv.cat/viulaurvencatala

VIU LA URV EN CATALÀ

#ViulaURVenCatalà

@llenguesURV

UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI LLENGÜES URV

will be progressively rolled out to all the campuses that make up the URV. It is part of the institution's Language Policy Plan and responds to the objective of strengthening the normal and preferred use of Catalan as one's own and the working language at the University. As explained during the presentation by José Antonio Moreno, Commissioner for Language Policy and Publications, the aim is to enforce the rights of the entire community – students, PTGAS and PDI – to receive attention, training and information in Catalan, but also to use their own language in the university context, in accordance with the legal and institutional framework.

The main tool is an online form accessible to the URV community, which allows violations or breaches of linguistic rights to be reported. It is managed by the Language Policy Committee, which is responsible for guaranteeing language rights. The website also offers clear and practical information on the campaign's FAQs and outreach materials.

The launch of the Language Rights Point coincided with the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Language Service and the 20th anniversary of URV Publications. On this double anniversary, the University wishes to highlight the work carried out in these areas which play such an essential role in shaping its identity: the promotion of Catalan, the encouragement of multilingualism and the dissemination of knowledge through scientific and academic publications.

In this context, the new Llengües URV website was also launched with a more user-friendly structure and content including all the activities related to language and publication policy. The website shows all the events scheduled during the academic year. The first was the *Café de Llengües*, with a round table focusing on the present and future of university language services. And in June, the *Vives Forum on Scientific Publications in Catalan* took place, as well as exhibitions and actions sponsored by URV Publications to disseminate the role of Catalan in academia.

At a time when Catalan is experiencing a stage of decline in social use, a firm commitment to a decisive language policy is more necessary than ever. The URV Language and Publications Service is a fundamental asset for guaranteeing language rights, normalising the use of Catalan, strengthening capacities in other languages and sharing knowledge from the University. This double anniversary, with the Language Rights Point as the first visible action, reinforces this commitment.

A Statute for the future

The Senate approves a revised text aligned with the Organic Law of the University System that adapts the URV's organisation to current and future challenges

Rovira i Virgili University has approved a new Statute that updates the basic operating standard of the institution to adapt it to the Organic Law of the University System (LOSU), but also to respond to new challenges and opportunities. The University Senate endorsed the text with the support of 90% of its members. The next step is to submit the document to the Government of Catalonia, which has four months to determine its alignment with the law and prepare a report.

The Statute includes the technical modifications derived from the LOSU including the change of name from administrative and services staff (PAS) to technical, management, administrative and services staff (PTGAS), the term extension for single-person bodies from four to six years, and the obligation of 25% student representation in collegiate bodies. It also includes reforms specific to the URV. They respond to the exercise of university autonomy and seek to adapt the governance structure and internal organisation to the new challenges of the university system.

Among the most noteworthy changes are the new composition of the Governing Council, which includes all department heads; the revised requirements to submit a candidacy for rector; and the adaptation of the competences of the collegiate bodies. In addition, the articles have been reorganised to give greater visibility to the principles and mission of the University, the regulations governing the Institute of



The reform has moved forward with 90% support and includes changes that go beyond those required by law

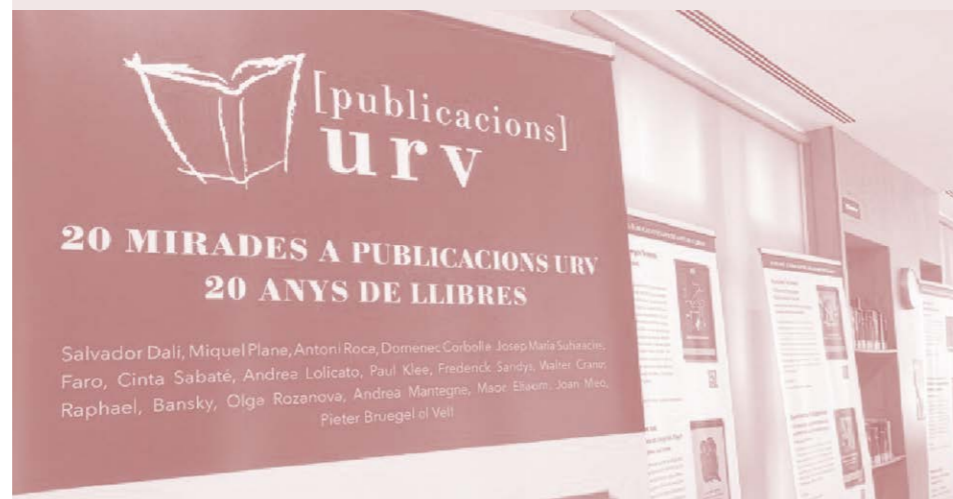
Education Sciences have been updated, and a chapter dedicated to instrumental entities, such as the URV Foundation, has been added.

The new text is the result of a review process that began in November 2023, with a committee made up of representatives of all university groups. After the public presentation of the preliminary project and the analysis of proposals and amendments, the final project includes technical improvements that have contributed to its clarity and coherence.

With the new Statute, the URV has adopted a renewed legal framework that reinforces its commitment as a public university, open to the region and committed to innovation, collective wellbeing and sustainable progress.

Twenty years on covers

Entitled '20 miradas en Publicaciones URV' (20 perspectives in URV Publications), the University's publishing house commemorates two decades of history with an exhibition that invites visitors to rediscover the covers of twenty notable titles from its catalogue. The exhibition highlights the link between knowledge and artistic creation, with works by Dalí, Klee, Miró and Banksy, as well as contemporary artists such as Cinta Sabaté. It also includes an interactive space with copies, magazines and podcasts.



Awards for research in Catalan

Jordi Bertran and Helena Segú win Josep Maria Pujol Awards for their theses on the Santa Tecla festival and the consumption of insects and intestinal health

The URV has once again affirmed the value of Catalan as a language of science and research through the presentation of the Josep Maria Pujol Awards for the best doctoral theses written in Catalan. The fourth Josep Maria Pujol Awards, organised by the Committee on Language Policy, recognised Jordi Bertran and Helena Segú for their research on distinctly different but academically and socially valuable subjects: Tarragona's festival traditions and the effects of insect consumption on health.

In the Social Sciences and Humanities category, the award went to Jordi Bertran for his thesis *El cicle de Santa Tecla, el Corpus i les entrades espectacularitzades a Tarragona en el context dels territoris de llengua catalana* (The Santa Tecla festival cycle, the Corpus Christi celebration, and theatrical street processions in Tarragona in the context of the Catalan-speaking territories), supervised by Francesc Massip from the Department of Catalan Studies. His research covers more than five centuries of history. He analyses the theatricality of the Santa Tecla festival cycle with a

Bertran's research presents the Santa Tecla festivities as a theatrical ritual with strong foundations in Catalan cultural tradition

perspective that combines history, folklore and cultural anthropology.

In the Experimental and Health Sciences category, the winning thesis was by Helena Segú, titled *Impacte en la salut del consum d'insectes a través de la seva interacció amb el tracte gastrointestinal* (Effects of insect consumption on health via its interaction with the gastrointestinal tract), supervised by Maria Teresa Blay and Esther Rodríguez of the Department of Biochemistry and Biotechnology. Her study is part of an emerging area of research focusing on insect consumption as a sustainable alternative for human nutrition.

She analyses how insect consumption can benefit intestinal and systemic health, particularly through its effect on intestinal taste receptors,

which play a key role in regulating the immune and metabolic systems. Her results suggest that including insects in the diet can alleviate inflammatory processes and metabolic disorders and contribute to our understanding how dietary patterns influence human physiology.

The two award-winning theses stand out for their clarity of exposition, linguistic quality, use of inclusive language and ability to transfer knowledge. The papers can be viewed in full in the Online Doctoral These (TDX) repository.

The book *La guerra de las Vespres, 1282-1285* (The war of the Vespers, 1282-1285) by Guifré Colomer, published by URV Publications, was also presented at the awards ceremony held on Saint George's



Segú explores the effects of insect consumption on intestinal and systemic health in healthy and disease contexts

Day. The book is based on the thesis for which Colomer received the Josep Maria Pujol prize the previous year. Through these awards, the URV reaffirms its commitment to the normalisation of Catalan in all academic areas.

New spaces and services created through participatory budgets

The improvements resulting from the University's third participatory budgeting are now a reality. Charging stations for electronic devices are now available in the Learning and Research Resource Centers on all campuses. They allow users to leave their mobile phones and laptops while they charge, as the stations are equipped with combination locks.

New benches with flower boxes and planters have also been installed on the Catalunya Campus to encourage socialising and create a greener outdoor setting.

Students can submit their ideas using the form available on the URV's website. Proposals must be technically and legally feasible, and have a positive impact on the university community. The initiative has a budget of €50,000 per year.



Summer school to strengthen university leadership

The first summer school on leadership and innovation in university management was held in July, an initiative aimed at deans; heads of departments, faculties and schools; and members of the URV management team. The summer school provided an opportunity for reflection and training aimed at strengthening the URV's institutional culture and enhancing the leadership capacity of management personnel.

As part of the URV's training plan for management roles, it was designed as a tool to address tackling the University's strategic challenges through a transformative approach.



Tribute to Antoni Tàpies and his legacy

To mark the conclusion of the Any Tàpies (Tàpies Year), the University honoured its special bond with the artist, recognising his legacy and the logo he designed for the University in 1992. The commemoration featured a public exhibition of the original painting Antoni Tàpies created as the emblem of the URV, temporarily displayed in the lobby of the Rector's Office alongside an audiovisual piece.

The video, accompanied by a soundtrack by composer Josep Maria Mestres Quadreny, a friend of Tàpies and member of the Dau al Set avant-garde group, recreates the creative act that gave rise to the logo through dance and painting. The work reflects the symbolic elements in the emblem: the alpha and omega symbols, the letter tau for Tarragona, and a central cross representing a universal meeting space.



Francesc Xavier Rius, the new Ombuds officer

The University Senate approved the appointment of the new head of the URV Ombuds Office at its meeting on 21 November 2024. Professor Emeritus Francesc Xavier Rius, a professor in chemical sciences with a long history in management and social engagement at the URV, was appointed as the new URV Ombuds Officer, replacing Encarnació Ricart, who took the office in 2019. His appointment coincided with the presentation of the Ombuds Office's report for the 2023-24 academic year, which recorded a total of 68 actions, 76% of which were initiated by students.

Francesc Xavier Rius expressed his commitment to serve the University 'with justice, moral authority, and above all, with humanity,' and accepted the challenge of continuing to strengthen this body of institutional trust.

Celebrating togetherness

The third URV Festa Major brings thousands to the Parc del Francolí

The URV's Festa Major has established itself as the definitive gathering point for the university community. The third celebration of this event was held on Thursday 27 March at the Parc del Francolí in Tarragona and brought together thousands of members of the student body, teaching and research staff and technical, management, administrative and services staff in a day full of activities, music and community spirit that lasted from noon to eleven at night.

The park was a new venue for the party, which featured an extensive and diverse programme combining popular culture, food, sports and musical performances. The day began with the arrival of the first groups of students from the University's different campuses, including those of Terres de l'Ebre and Penedès, who were provided with a free shuttle service. The musical group La Xaranga Pujats de To got the party started followed shortly thereafter by the Pataquers, who erected their impressive human towers in front of an enthralled audience.

Speeches by URV Rector Josep Pallarès and Tarragona Mayor Rubén Viñuales marked the official start of the festivities, which continued with a community meal accompanied by music by PD Pelacanyes. Throughout the afternoon, the space pulsed with activity: the talent contest, won by Marc Salvadó, gave way to the 3x3 basketball tournament and a massive spinning exhibition class. Traditional games such as bowling and tug-of-war were also on display, while dozens of students visited the stands of university services and associations set up in the fair area.

One of the highlights of the day was the DJ competition, which continues to draw attendees year after year. This year's winner, DJ Canoo, was chosen to perform next year. But the great musical moment of the day came in the evening, when Flashy Ice Cream got everyone up and dancing with an explosive mix of trap, *reggaeton*, dancehall and

Concerts, competitions, human towers, sports and activities to celebrate the diversity of the URV community

rhythm-blues. Their energetic performance set the Parc del Francolí and the party buzzing with life.

To close the day, DJ Anna Gisbert offered a session full of rhythm, with commercial and alternative sounds that kept the party alive until the last minute. This festive, participatory and incident-free event establishes the URV's Festa Major as one of the most anticipated gatherings of the academic year and an essential opportunity to reinforce the feeling of belonging among the members of the University community.





IQAS 2.0, Xavier López Vilar Award for management improvement

The revision and update of the URV's internal quality assurance system (IQAS 2.0) was recognised with the Xavier López Vilar Award for management improvement by the Board of Trustees with the support of the Tarragona Provincial Council. The project has enabled the system framework model to be redefined with the creation of 20 specific processes for faculties and schools and 14 organisation-wide processes. As a result of the collaborative efforts of the URV's technical, management, administrative and services staff, its teaching and research staff, and representatives of all faculties and schools, the new IQAS has become a strategic tool for ensuring teaching quality and strengthening a culture of continuous improvement. It will be implemented in the academic year 2025-26.



Tribute to Antoni Gonzàlez Senmartí, a key figure in the history of the URV

The URV's ceremonial hall of the URV, the Paranimf, was packed as people gathered to honour Antoni Gonzàlez Senmartí, a major driving force behind the University and a prominent figure in its institutional journey for almost five decades. The event, which featured live music and the screening of a documentary about his life and work, hosted a round table that showcased his legacy and personality. Josep Pallarès, the URV's rector, announced the creation of a URV Publications humanistic collection associated with Antoni Gonzàlez Senmartí financed by an endowment fund. Recognised for his vision, discipline and commitment to the URV, Txatxo Gonzàlez Senmartí, who passed away in 2023, served in multiple strategic positions and was considered a 'master manager'.



URV+ Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments
In the news
Figures and development



URV professor and nutritionist **Jordi Salas-Salvadó** was awarded an honorary doctorate by the National University of La Plata. The Argentine academic institution acknowledged his contributions at the head of the Human Nutrition Unit of the URV and as a principal investigator of the Center for Biomedical Research in Network (CIBER) of the Carlos III Health Institute. The recognitions continue to accumulate for Salas-Salvadó, who was also awarded an honorary membership in the Federation of European Nutrition Societies (FENS) and the Royal National Academy of Medicine.



Mercè Gisbert has been appointed as the new director of the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya). As a professor of educational technology in the Department of Pedagogy and principal investigator of the ARGET group, she was the top candidate among the nine applicants. The appointment is for a term of four years, can be renewed once, and comes into effect on 1 October.



Carla Casadevall, a researcher with the Department of Physical and Inorganic Chemistry, has joined the Early Career Advisory Board of the scientific journal *JACS Au*. The appointment recognises her career as a young researcher in sustainable chemistry and catalysis. Casadevall is a Ramón y Cajal researcher and the recipient of one of the 20 Leonardo grants awarded by the BBVA Foundation. The grant will fund an innovative project to convert sunlight, water and CO₂ into renewable fuels.



Àlex Arenas, a full professor in the Department of Computer Engineering and Mathematics, was awarded the CSS Senior Scientific Award 2024, the highest honour conferred by the Complex Systems Society. The award recognises his fundamental contributions to the field and grants him lifelong affiliation with the organisation. Arenas had already been recognised by the Government of Catalonia with the Narcís Monturiol Medal for his distinguished scientific career.



Lluís Marsal, a full professor in the Department of Electronic, Electrical and Automatic Engineering, has been named a Fellow of the European Optical Society. The award distinguishes his contributions in optics and photonics with nanostructured materials applied to biomedicine and green energy. Marsal leads the NePhoS group, is a distinguished professor, an ICREA Acadèmia researcher and also a Fellow of the American Optical Society since 2020.



Lucía Casado, tenured professor of administrative law, has been appointed a member of the Government of Catalonia's Legal Advisory Committee, the body that advises on the legality of actions taken by Catalan administrations. Her appointment recognises her career as a jurist and researcher in environmental and administrative law, her extensive scientific output and leadership in research and knowledge transfer projects.



Salvador Anton Clavé, a full professor of regional geographical analysis, has been chosen by the Government of Catalonia to be part of the group of experts in charge of advancing the new tourism law and a sectoral territorial plan. The appointment gives recognition to her academic and research background in tourism and territory, a field in which she has led projects and publications analysing the relationship between tourism and public space.



Rosa Solà Alberich, a full professor in the Department of Medicine and Surgery, received the President Macià 2024 Work Medal in recognition of her professional career and commitment to general interests. An internist working at Sant Joan University Hospital, she has combined teaching and research with outstanding healthcare work focused on chronic patients and the link between hospital and primary care.



Fàtima Sabench, dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and new chair of the Spanish Society of Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Diseases, was honoured with the Enric Aguadé Prize, awarded by the Academy of Medical and Health Sciences of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. The award was conferred upon Dr Sabench in recognition of a scientific article published in *Obesity Surgery* in collaboration with the GEMMAIR research group of the URV and the IISPV, which analyses the relationship between the results of bariatric surgery and the improvement of fatty liver.



Jenifer Malumbres, a nurse and lecturer at the URV, won the Young Talent in Research Award of the 8th #TenimTalent Awards by the Catalan Balearic Nursing Society. The recognition highlights her research on ageing, untrained caregivers, and end-of-life care with the aim of promoting more humane and effective care.



Alberto Puga, a researcher in the Department of Chemical Engineering, received the award for the best patent at the BASF-ICIQ Innovation and Entrepreneurship Awards. His method involves converting wastewater into hydrogen using a photocatalytic panel reactor, combining waste management with clean energy production. The URV Foundation provided support during the patent protection and patent application processes.



Albert Samper, a researcher in the School of Architecture, received the Gresol Foundation's Academic Talent Award at the 10th Gresol Young Entrepreneurial Talent Awards. The judges' panel highlighted his career as a researcher in digitization of cultural heritage and his leadership in projects such as 'Gaudí a les teves mans' (Gaudí in your hands) and the startup Scan Draw. The WaveWatt team was also awarded the Technological Talent Award for the RENERGY project, a tidal buoy to generate electricity on boats.



Anna Fonoll, a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Communication Studies, was awarded the 36th CAC Award for research on audiovisual communication for her thesis on feminist documentary filmmaking. Her work is entitled *Interseccions, girs i alteritats en la producció documental feminista espanyola contemporània* (Intersections, shifts and otherness in contemporary Spanish feminist documentary filmmaking). The award, which recognises research in audiovisual studies with a transformative approach and comes with a with €3,500 prize, was presented at the University of Lleida.



The work of Albert Salas-Huetos, a researcher in the Department of Basic Medical Sciences was recognised with the Matthew P. Hardy Young Andrologist Award 2025 for his significant contribution to andrology before the age of 45. The prize, awarded by the American Society of Andrology during the annual congress held in Washington DC, celebrates his career in fertility research, especially in relation to genetics, epigenetics and lifestyle. With more than 90 published articles, he is also an associate professor at Harvard.



Dolors Comas d'Argemir, professor emerita in the Department of Anthropology, Philosophy and Social Work and an expert on gender and care, has been appointed a member of the state commission that will design the Spanish strategy on ageing for the fifth ministerial conference of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), to held in 2027. Her academic background and commitment to the rights of older people were central factors in her selection. The commission's goal is to define the policies to follow over the next five years in this area.



Joan Josep Carvajal, dean of the Faculty of Chemistry, was appointed as the new chair of the Spanish Conference of Chemistry Deans. The conference brings together the 36 faculties teaching chemistry across Spain and the General Council of Official Chemical Associations. Carvajal tackles how to advance the teaching of chemistry in a context of change with challenges such as the incorporation of artificial intelligence, the consolidation of dual pathway programmes, and the need to attract new talent despite a downward demographic trend.



Antoni Brosa, a URV lecturer, received the prize from the Spanish Society of Linguistics for the best doctoral thesis in linguistics in Spain. The project, led by María Dolores Jiménez, proposed a computational model to better understand linguistic universals and systematically review Greenberg's postulates. The panel highlighted the project's interdisciplinary and practical approach as a valuable and innovative contribution for future research.



Silvia Reverté, director of the Chair of Innovation and Simulation in Health of the Terres de l'Ebre, was awarded one of the Fourth Best Research Project Awards from the Spanish Society of Neurology Nursing (SEDENE). The recognition was presented at the SEDENE's annual congress to honour her work in the areas of research, teaching and care in neurological nursing and acknowledges its positive impact on the wellbeing of patients and the advancement of the discipline.



Alfredo Bardají, a researcher in the Department of Medicine and Surgery and a doctor at the Hospital Joan XXIII, received the Sant Cosme i Sant Damià distinction, the highest recognition granted by the College of Physicians of Tarragona. During the second Antonius Musa Awards, Dr Pere Romero, a researcher at the URV and founder of the Ophthalmology Service of Sant Joan de Reus Hospital, was also recognised as professional associate of the year. The awards recognise outstanding professional careers in medicine in the province.



Eudald Carbonell received the Creu de Sant Jordi for his scientific and educational contributions in archaeology and human evolution. The Government of Catalonia distinguished the URV's Professor Emeritus of Prehistory for his key contributions to the study of the ancient settlement of the Iberian Peninsula and the discovery of *Homo antecessor*. Carbonell, co-director of the Atapuerca Archeological Site and former director of IPHES, received this distinction as the culmination of a life dedicated to science and disseminating knowledge.



Laureano Jiménez, a full professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering, was appointed as scientific advisor to the Spanish Government's Ministry of Industry and Tourism. He is part of the new advisory body created to build bridges between science and public policy. Leader of the Improved Process Sustainability using Computer Aided Process Engineering Tools (SUSCAPE) research group, he stands out for his research in process and environmental engineering and for extensive educational activities recognised both within and beyond academia.



Antoni Terceño, a full professor in the URV Faculty of Economics and Business, received the 2024 Institutional Economist Award from the College of Economists of Catalonia. The recognition was awarded as part of Economists' Day, which took place at the Fira de Reus and was dedicated to competitiveness and the territorial economic model. **Laia Palazón**, who graduated with a double degree in Business Administration and Management and Law, was awarded for achieving the highest academic performance in the Faculty.



Carme Ferré, Professor Emeritus of Nursing, was appointed an honorary member of the Portuguese Society of Mental Health Nursing for her scientific contributions to mental health nursing. The recognition also highlights the collaboration between research teams at the URV and the Higher School of Nursing of Oporto, which have jointly supervised 11 doctoral theses and promote the internationalisation of mental health research.



Rodrigo Martín and **Blas Herrera**, researchers in the School of Architecture, received the Tsuboi Award from the International Association for Shell and Spatial Structures for the best scientific article of the year. Their research explores an innovative approach to designing large stadium roofs with non-circular shapes and triangular radii, providing a light and stable structure that poses significant mathematical challenges. Its iterative method opens the door to new structural solutions in architecture and engineering.



María Rosa Fenoll, a researcher in the Department of Basic Medical Sciences, received the Teaching and Medical Education Award from the Spanish Royal National Academy of Medicine (RANME). Fenoll, a lecturer at the URV since 1993, introduced the use of information and communication technologies in teaching and has received teaching innovation awards, such as the Vicens Vives Award from the Government of Catalonia and the URV.

In the news



25/10/2024

The Board of Trustees presents a plan outlining actions for social betterment and advancement

The URV Board of Trustees has approved a three-year action plan (2024-26) to promote social improvement and development in the region. The document, the first with these characteristics to be presented in Catalonia, defines objectives and actions to strengthen the University's connection with institutions, companies and social entities, and to promote equal opportunities for students and the professional excellence of its staff.



21/11/2024 **Thirteen chemical companies take part in the Work Experience Awards.**

The School of Chemical Engineering (ETSEQ) has presented the Work Experience Awards to 12 students who, in addition to having their first year of their master's degrees funded, will take on internships and do their final projects at companies in the sector. The programme, currently in its 11th edition, has already recognised more than 90 students and continues to grow with the addition of new companies, such as Repsol, Fluor and Deasyl, bringing the number of companies to 13. The participating companies value the talent they attract, while the School of Chemical Engineering is able to strengthen its training model to better align to with the professional world.



22/11/2024

The URV Equality Councils fill the campuses with activities to mark 25-N

On the occasion of 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the URV's Equality Councils organised a wide range of awareness-raising activities on the campuses. With more than 60 active 'purple agents', they coordinated exploratory marches focusing on gender issues, screenings of documentaries and critical reading clubs on masculinities to raise awareness in the university community and encourage collective reflection.



28/11/2024

The URV hosts the CRUE Conference of General Secretaries

Representatives of 77 universities from all over the country took part in the 34th General Secretaries Conference of the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) held in Tarragona. The goal of the conference was to promote collaboration and address key issues such as adapting the statutes to the Organic Law on the University System, university governance and access to public information. URV lecturer Antoni Gonzàlez Senmartí was also honoured at the event.



29/11/2024

Scientific mission to Quebec to strengthen collaboration on AI

Researchers Domènec Puig and Josep Domingo-Ferrer have undertaken an institutional mission in Quebec to promote scientific cooperation in artificial intelligence. The delegation from Catalonia visited government institutions, universities and technology centres with the aim of positioning Catalonia as a key partner in research, especially since Canada intends to join the Horizon Europe programme.



04/12/2024

The URV's TermFolk now available on Cercaterm

TERMCAT, the public terminology service of the Government of Catalonia and the Institute of Catalan Studies, has added the *Terminological Dictionary of Popular Oral Literature* created by the Folklore Archive of the URV's Department of Catalan Studies. TermFolk is the result of a research project coordinated by Carme Oriol that documents 131 terms such as *cantarella de màgia* (a 'magical' nursery rhyme) and *rondalla d'enginy* (a folktale with a moral), with definitions, examples and equivalences. The dictionary can be updated and is now available online for researchers, teachers and culture experts.



13/12/2024 **First eight-level human tower successfully completed by URV Pataquers.**

For the first time, the URV's human tower group has successfully completed and dismantled a *3 de 8 amb folre* (3 people per level and 8 levels high with an additional support on the second level), becoming the third university group to achieve an eight-level human castle. The *castell* was completed during the winter human tower event, which had been moved to the premises of the group Jove de Tarragona due to rain. The Pataquers opened the event with two *pilars de dol* ('mourning' pillars in remembrance of someone who has passed away, with only one person per level) and also completed a *2 de 7 amb folre* (2 people per level and 7 levels high with additional support on the second level).



04/02/2025

The rector reaffirms the URV's role as a driving force before Parliament

In his address to the Committee on Research and Universities, Josep Pallarès presented the URV's contribution to the Catalan university system and to developing the region. He stressed the role of the institution as an economic and social driving force and called for political backing for strategic projects such as decarbonisation and the health platform. He also emphasised the need to ensure generational renewal and the value of people as a key asset of the University.



18/02/2025

The URV hosts the first Correllengua Universitari event to increase the visibility of Catalan

The Correllengua Universitari flame toured the campuses of the URV in Tarragona with festive and activist events to promote the visibility of Catalan in the university setting. The first edition of this initiative from the National Youth Council of Catalonia passed through Catalonia's four main cities and was dedicated to philologist Carme Junyent.



24/02/2025

Blood donations up 21% over last year

Once again, the blood donation campaign of the URV and the Blood and Tissue Bank has proved a success. Blood donations on the campuses were 21% higher than last year. In total, 581 donations were recorded, 45% from new donors, mainly people aged 18 to 24. The Sescelades and Catalunya Campuses were once again the most active and the Vilafranca Campus joined the campaign for the first time. The campaign was conducted with the support of the Blood and Tissue Bank and volunteer nursing students.



09/04/2025

Abril, + saludable promotes integral health at the URV

The URV organised a new edition of Abril, + saludable, a programme that promotes health and wellbeing with mindfulness ceramics workshops, talks on self-esteem, stress management and outdoor activities. The 11th Solidarity Walk, with 250 participants, stood out as the highlight of a programme adapted to the great diversity of backgrounds and experiences within the URV community.



22/04/2025

Lletrafest hosts a large portion of Sant Jordi activities

Lletrafest 2025 brought together many of the activities organised by the Faculty of Arts and other URV units to celebrate Sant Jordi on the Catalunya Campus with a cultural programme that included recitals, tours, pairings, readings, competitions and book presentations. The CRAI offered workshops, bookmarks and online recommendations, while the Faculty of Chemistry hosted the presentation of the work *La Pensilvània. L'or negre dels Vilella* (Pensilvania, the Black Gold of the Vilellas), by Josep Cruset.



28/04/2025

The leading role of women in the Faculty of Nursing is recognised

The Faculty of Nursing honoured the directors and deans who have led the school and the Department of Nursing since 1990, during an event commemorating the 30th anniversary of the incorporation of the John XXIII School into the URV. The tribute included a round table on female leadership, a historical overview of the academic programme, and a video with testimonies about its history and contributions to the health system.



08/05/2025

The URV hosts the 25th national meeting of university information services

The Catalunya Campus was the setting for the University Guidance and Information Services' (SIOU) annual meeting, which brings together representatives of university information and guidance services from across the country. Over three days, participants discussed topics such as internationalisation, student participation and support for vulnerable groups, and share good practices and projects in a forum for collective reflection.



14/05/2025

The Campus Challenge reaffirms the University's commitment to transferring knowledge and innovation in education

The second Campus Challenge connected about a hundred URV students with 16 companies and entities in the Terres de l'Ebre region to find solutions to real challenges that have a social impact. The winning projects were made into a programme to provide education professionals with tools to promote emotional wellbeing in the classroom, a protocol to guarantee the rights of transgender people in sports facilities, and a project focusing on improving the psychosocial wellbeing of workers.



17/05/2025

The Federico Mayor Zaragoza Award promotes peace among young people in 21 different localities

The 18th Federico Mayor Zaragoza Award distinguished 76 audiovisual pieces that examine the culture of peace as an educational commitment. With the slogan 'La pau és el camí' (Peace is the way), the event organised by the Friends of the URV Association and Rovira i Virgili University brought together students and organisations from 21 municipalities and paid tribute to Mayor Zaragoza. The winning works dealt with issues such as respect, human rights and the positive use of social networks.



10/06/2025

Conclusion of Inspira STEAM in Tarragona with 1,600 students

The closing day of the Inspira STEAM project in Tarragona brought together schoolchildren, mentors and collaborators after an intensive course in which 29 schools and nearly 1,600 students took part. The project, held in Tarragona by the URV and led in Spain by the University of Deusto, aims to promote scientific and technological careers, especially among girls. This edition had 133 mentors and received the support from a number of companies and institutions in the region.



02/07/2025

Over 200 people take part in Teaching Innovation Day

Teaching Innovation Day brought together more than 200 participants, including teaching staff from the URV and 16 schools, who shared 50 projects carried out in the last year. The programme covered topics from active teaching methods to the use of artificial intelligence in the classroom and introduced the new basic teacher training (FID) and advanced teacher training (FAD) programmes promoted by the Institute of Education Sciences.



04/07/2025

Nil Novau awarded for describing his research project in four minutes

URV doctoral student Nil Novau won the second prize at the 'Present your thesis in 4 minutes' competition with a monologue on the relationship between the intestinal microbiota and Alzheimer's disease. He represented the URV after winning the 'Do you want to know what I'm researching?' contest, competing with students from 11 Catalan universities. The competition is organised by the Catalan Foundation for Research and Innovation. His research project is conducted through the NuMeh Group at the Environmental, Food and Toxicology Technology Center (TecnATox).



18/07/2025

Campus Experimenta and Bio4Health win the local phase of the Santander X Awards

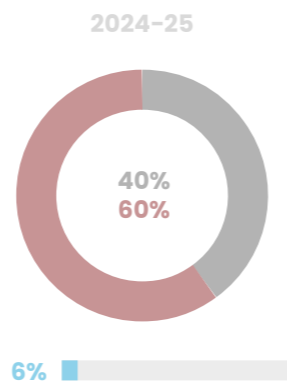
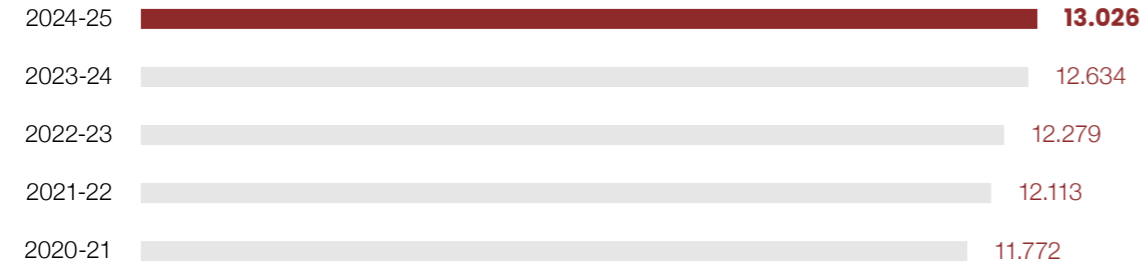
The Campus Experimenta and Bio4Health projects won the local phase of the Santander X Award 2025 at the URV. The award supports entrepreneurial projects with a minimum viable product in the validation stage. They are now eligible to compete in the national phase of the award, in which universities from all over Spain participate.

Figures and development

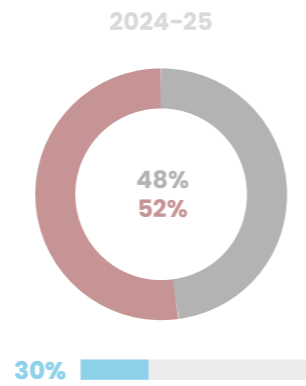
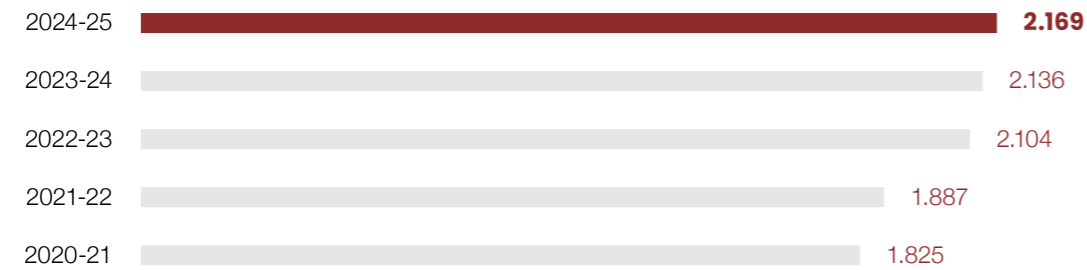
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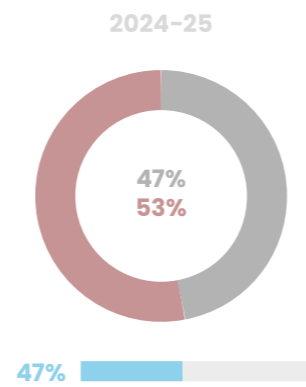
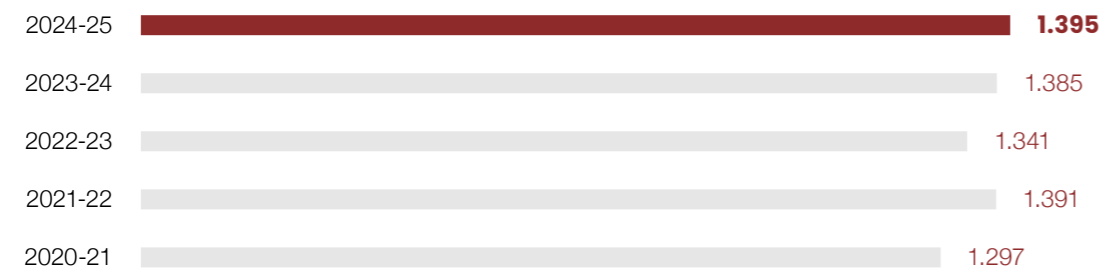
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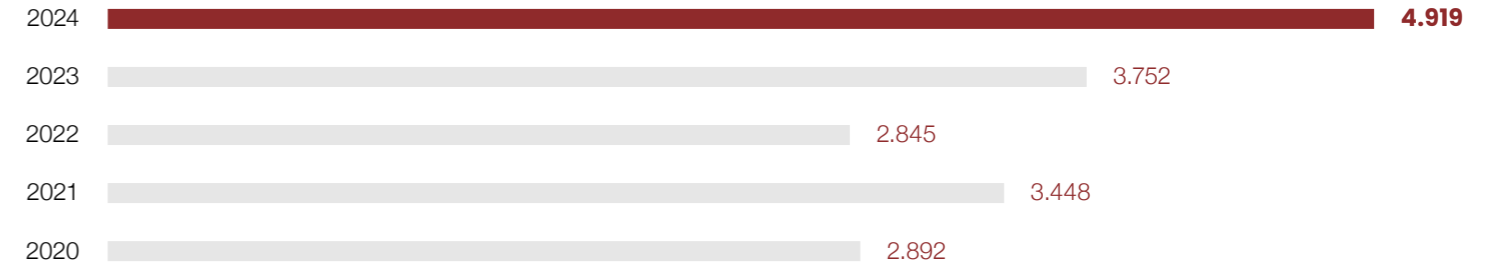
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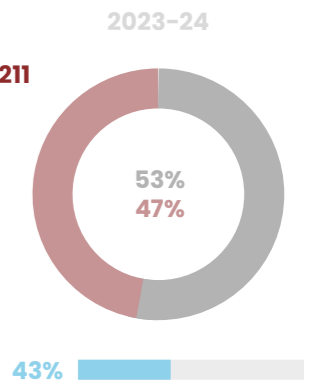
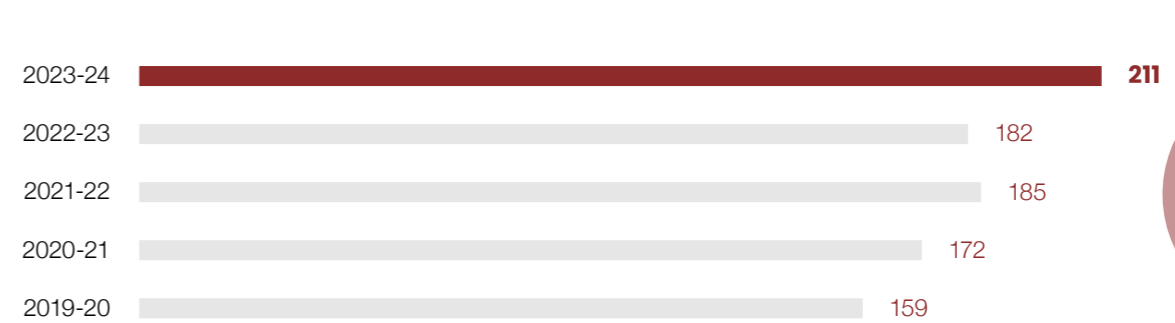
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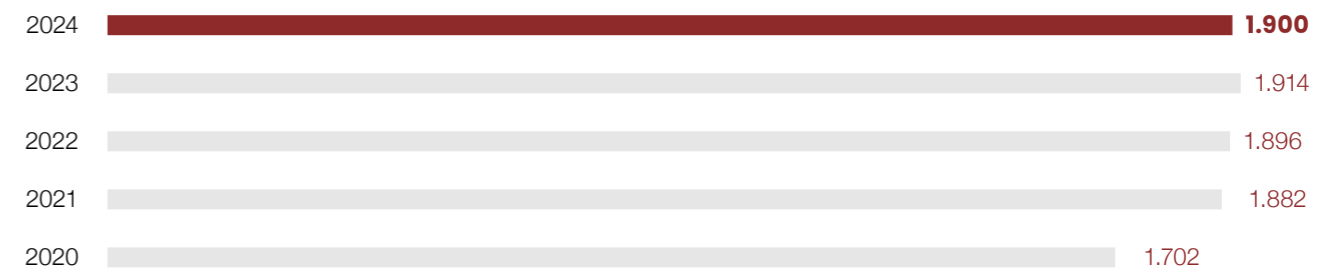
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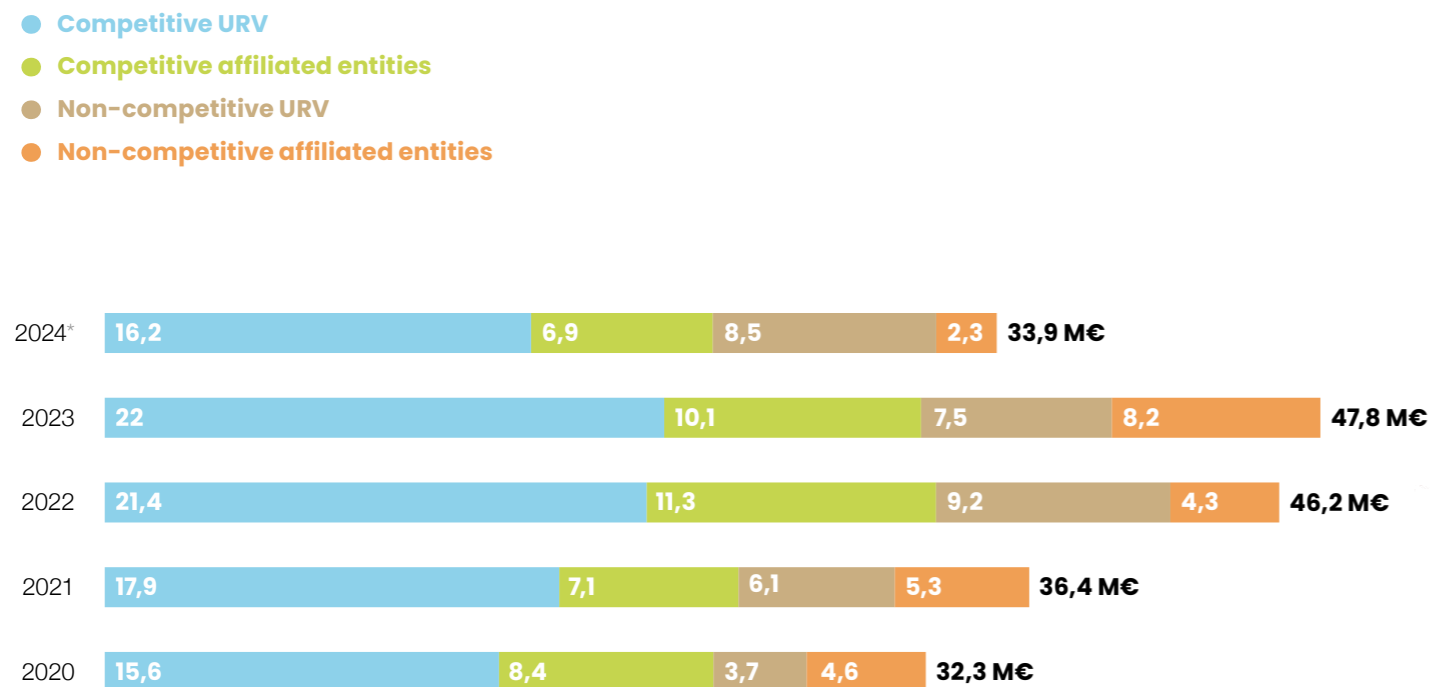
Doctoral theses defended



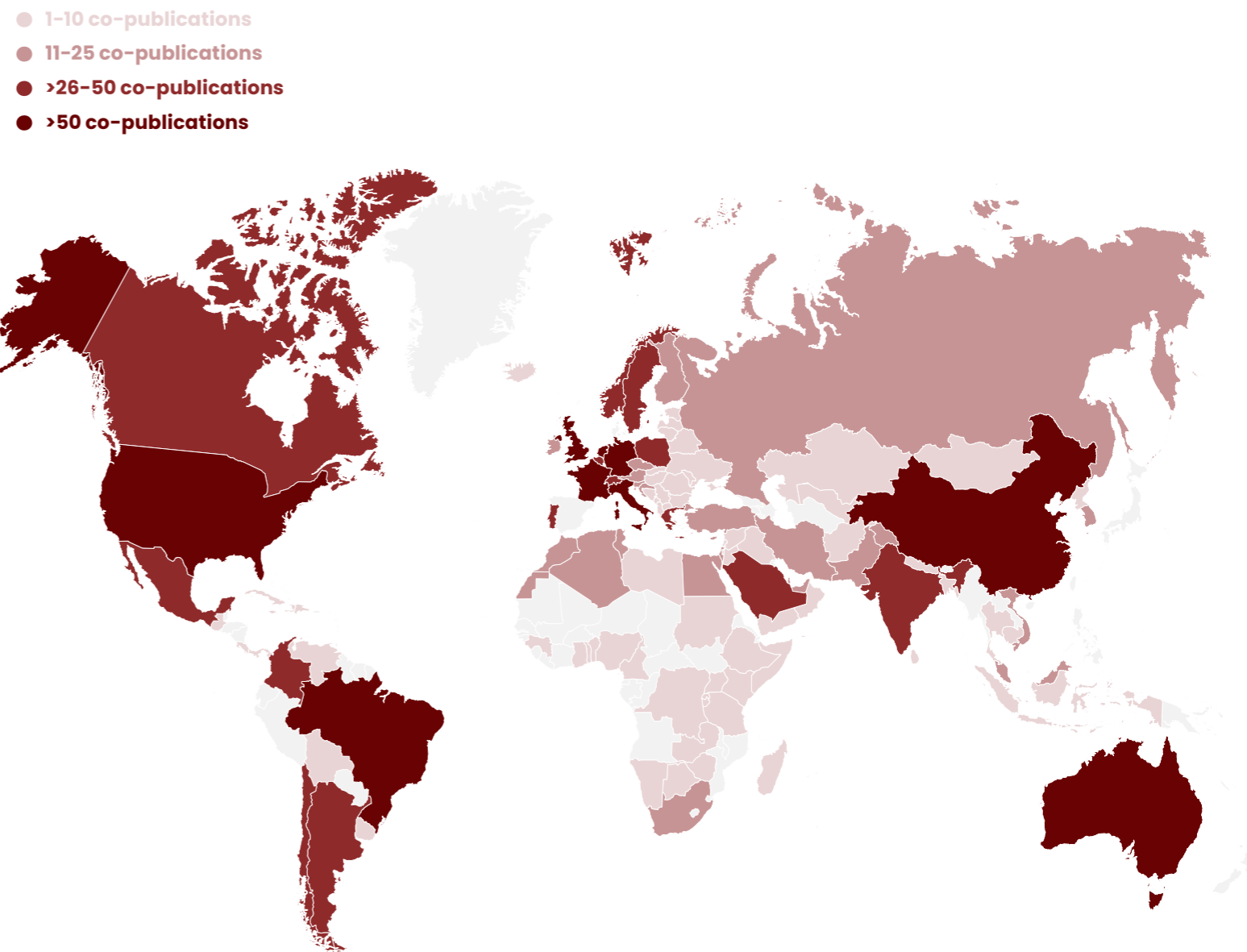
Scientific articles indexed in Web of Science / Scopus



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Publications involving international collaboration (2024)



* Eurecat data corresponding to affiliated entities are not included.

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Memory

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