NEWS LETTER

NOVEMBER 2026



RESEARCH **GROUP**

OTRI

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KNOWLEDGE **TRANSFER**

PROJECTS

INFORMATION

UDIT
UNIVERSIDAD DE DISEÑO, INNOVACIÓN Y TECNOLOGÍA

Vice-Rectorate for Research

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INTRODUCTION



Thinking about the future of research at UDIT means asking ourselves what we can contribute to society. Progress as a university means expanding our capacity to conduct research and ensuring that knowledge finds useful applications for people. This is a shared undertaking, built on the talent of our university community and collaboration with companies, public authorities, foundations and non-profit associations.

Bringing design, technology and innovation together creates opportunities to address needs in our communities from different perspectives. This is true of research into health and well-being, and of studies exploring how educational spaces can be adapted to the different ways neurodivergent people perceive and learn. It is also evident in initiatives to make better use of textile materials and in social robotics, which focuses on interaction between people and robots. These areas of research connect academic questions with issues we encounter in everyday life.

Knowledge transfer means enabling research findings to be applied in society. It requires listening, sharing experiences and working alongside those who can use them. Chairs, laboratories and collaborative projects facilitate this exchange and help shape new proposals. The university also learns through the process: it discovers problems that enrich research and finds new ways to help solve them.

This work is made possible by researchers and doctoral candidates, teaching staff and the teams that support their activities. It takes time, resources and dialogue between professionals from different disciplines. Listening to someone who approaches a question differently can help us reconsider our ideas and open the door to collaborations we had not anticipated.

Artificial intelligence also expands the tools available for analysing information and communicating results. To make the most of it, we need training, we need to verify its outputs, and we must take responsibility for our decisions. The aim is to use it to conduct better research and put our capabilities at the service of people.

From the Research Directorate, we want this newsletter to support that effort, bring UDIT research closer to our community and help us get to know one another better. We invite you to discover the work of other teams, share your experiences and explore new opportunities to collaborate. Thank you to everyone who helps turn the knowledge generated at our university into a valuable contribution to society every day.

Adiela Batista
Director of Research

RESEARCH GROUPS



Meet our research groups: ROBITA-LAB (Robot Design, Interactive Technologies and Artificial Intelligence)

A smart insole that detects gait abnormalities, a mycelium growth chamber with temperature and humidity controls, a system that automatically administers photobiomodulation to laboratory mice, an interactive multisensory sound installation for children, and a social robot that interacts with people on equal terms. What do all these projects have in common? Robotics, product design, interactive technologies and artificial intelligence—in other words, ROBITA-LAB.

Social robots are designed to operate outside controlled industrial settings. They are the robots familiar to us from science fiction: human-like agents with language and non-verbal interaction abilities, capable of carrying out machine-based tasks such as translation, answering queries, summarising information and providing intellectual support. In reality, however, bringing these robots into our daily lives requires solutions to many challenges across technological and humanities disciplines: mechanics, electronics, programming and control systems, but also design, psychology, sociology, philosophy and ethics. In this sense, robotics is centripetal: it draws multiple disciplines together.

At ROBITA-LAB, we develop social robots through this multidisciplinary approach. Along the way, research and development give rise to innovations that can be transferred to other fields, including education, entertainment, health and contemporary art. In this sense, robotics is centrifugal: it spreads knowledge and innovation outwards.

UDITO is a UDIT social robot designed and built by female students on the Product Design degree under Javier Sanz's supervision, with support from companies such as Porcelanosa. Its vision system can detect faces and identify objects. The same technology, applied to the detection of laboratory mice, is the basis of PHOTONEU, a project developed in collaboration with Nebrija University.

The robot also has multiple sensors of different kinds: buttons, pressure sensors, accelerometers and a microphone, among others. It can express itself through non-verbal sounds, using rhythm, changes of pitch and volume, and silences. The development of this technology underpins LISA (La Isla de los Sonidos Automáticos, or The Island of Automatic Sounds), a project funded by FECYT under its science and technology outreach programme.

LISA, UDIT's first competitively awarded project, involves creating a multisensory interactive installation inspired by a magical, fantastical, utopian tropical island. Covering approximately 50 square metres, it includes several interactive elements: a bridge with pressure sensors, a diamond-shaped control panel, a tunnel with SONAR rangefinders and polystyrene 'stones' incorporating accelerometers and inertial sensors. These elements produce sounds, rhythms, melodies, harmonies and noise, introducing children and young people to sensors and sound art. The installation was developed in 2025 with the GUMTS group, which collaborated on sensor-programming and smart-textile workshops.

ROBITA-LAB is also closely connected to contemporary art. In 2025, we developed an interactive installation for LUZ MADRID alongside designer and lecturer Pedro Cerisola, involving Product Design students. The work included interactive platforms and sound and light generation, and will be installed at the Technology, Innovation and Applied Sciences Campus.

At ROBITA-LAB, we bring together expertise in software development (Luis Miguel Danielsson), video games and AI (Luis Peña), AI and development (Danilo Guevara and Sandra Garrido), product design (Javier Sanz), and even architecture (Alberto Calderón). We are a young group that continues to grow through new projects, developments and members.

Discover ROBITA-LAB

Dr. Javier Fernández de Gorostiza
Principal Investigator of ROBITA-LAB



Inside the Vice-Rectorate for Research: our interns' experience

Discovering how a university works from the inside and participating in real projects are among the opportunities offered by internships at UDIT's Vice-Rectorate for Research. Manuel Bayo Pacheco, a Data Science and Artificial Intelligence student, shares his first-hand experience, the projects he has worked on and what he is learning during this stage:

Manuel Bayo Pacheco: “When I first heard about the Vice-Rectorate for Research, I thought it was an area removed from everyday university life. However, after some time as an intern, I have discovered that this is not the case. The experience has allowed me to see a technical, dynamic environment up close, where ideas become real projects that contribute to UDIT's development and improvement.

A research internship is not simply about helping with administrative tasks or completing training hours. You work on live projects and take responsibility. In my case, I have been involved in UDIT's Materioteca web platform, including its architecture, service design and digital workflows.

Validating access or troubleshooting a system that is already running presents you with problems that do not come with ready-made answers.

That is where you notice the difference from the classroom. You see how a product team works: agile methods, version control, data traceability and decisions designed around real users. Moving from exercises with predetermined solutions to open-ended problems, where efficiency and scalability matter, is just as valuable as the technical work. You also learn to coordinate with people from different professional backgrounds, justify your decisions and understand that technology exists to address a need.

If you are a UDIT student considering an internship at the Vice-Rectorate for Research, I recommend making the most of the opportunity. It is a chance to grow professionally, gain practical experience and see first-hand how research and innovation make it possible to develop new ideas and turn them into projects that contribute to the university's future.”

Manuel Bayo Pacheco
Data Science and Artificial Intelligence degree student.

Discover the Materioteca



UDIT encourages its researchers to apply for the 2026 Ramón y Cajal grants

The Spanish State Research Agency has allocated €240 million to a renewed funding call combining recruitment, scientific leadership and funding for researchers' own projects over five years.

Through its Vice-Rectorate for Research, UDIT (University of Design, Innovation and Technology) encourages the research community to explore the 2026 Ramón y Cajal grants offered by the State Research Agency (AEI). The programme seeks to attract and retain researchers with outstanding track records, support their scientific independence and facilitate their progression towards stable positions within the Spanish research system.

This year's edition introduces a significant change: the grants support not only the recruitment of researchers but also the implementation of their own R&D&I projects over five years. Successful applicants will therefore be able to lead a research line from the outset, foster new collaborations and begin building research teams. The call also includes incentives to establish permanent positions and strengthens the international reach of research careers.

Applications will be assessed on candidates' scientific and technical contributions, the quality and originality of the proposed project, its scientific, economic and social impact, the researcher's leadership and independence, and the feasibility of the proposal. A new feature is an interview with the technical evaluation committees. The programme also encourages future applications to European Research Council (ERC) calls and provides for beneficiaries to obtain the R3 certificate.

The call is open to Spanish and international researchers who meet the published requirements and have a strong scientific track record. Private universities are among the organisations eligible for the relevant funding streams, so UDIT can explore applications aligned with its capabilities and strategic research areas. Individual eligibility and institutional conditions must be verified before each application is initiated.

The official application period opens on 10 November 2026 and closes on 10 December 2026 at 2:00 p.m. (Spanish mainland time). Both candidates and R&D centres must submit their respective applications through the AEI's online systems, following the procedure set out in the call.

UDIT's Research Results Transfer Office (OTRI) offers guidance on the call, an initial review of eligibility requirements, assistance in preparing documentation and coordination of institutional procedures. We encourage anyone considering this opportunity to contact the office well in advance to assess their application and plan its submission. Supporting research talent also means creating new opportunities for science and innovation at UDIT.

View the Ramón y Cajal 2026 call for applications

Irene Miguel
Project Manager

Open funding calls

Research and innovation activities carried out at UDIT often require access to competitive funding sources to support the development of new research areas, strengthen research teams, and maximise the scientific and social impact of the results achieved. In this context, the OTRI plays a key role in identifying funding opportunities at both national and international levels, facilitating access to calls for proposals aligned with the interests and capabilities of the university's research groups.



Beyond identifying and sharing funding opportunities, the OTRI provides specialised support throughout the entire proposal preparation process. This support includes guidance on project definition and structuring, identifying partners and establishing consortia, preparing and reviewing technical and administrative documentation, developing budgets, and work plans, as well as addressing questions related to the specific requirements of each call for proposals.

In this way, the OTRI serves as a strategic support service for UDIT's research community, helping to transform research ideas and findings into competitive projects capable of attracting funding.

Irene Miguel Corbacho - **Project Manager**

CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

- **University Lecturer Training Grants (FPU 2026)**
- **Cervera Technology Transfer R&D Projects — CDTI**
- **CaixaResearch Health Research 2027**
- **R&D Projects (PID) — CDTI**

Knowledge transfer also counts: activities you might not recognise as transfer

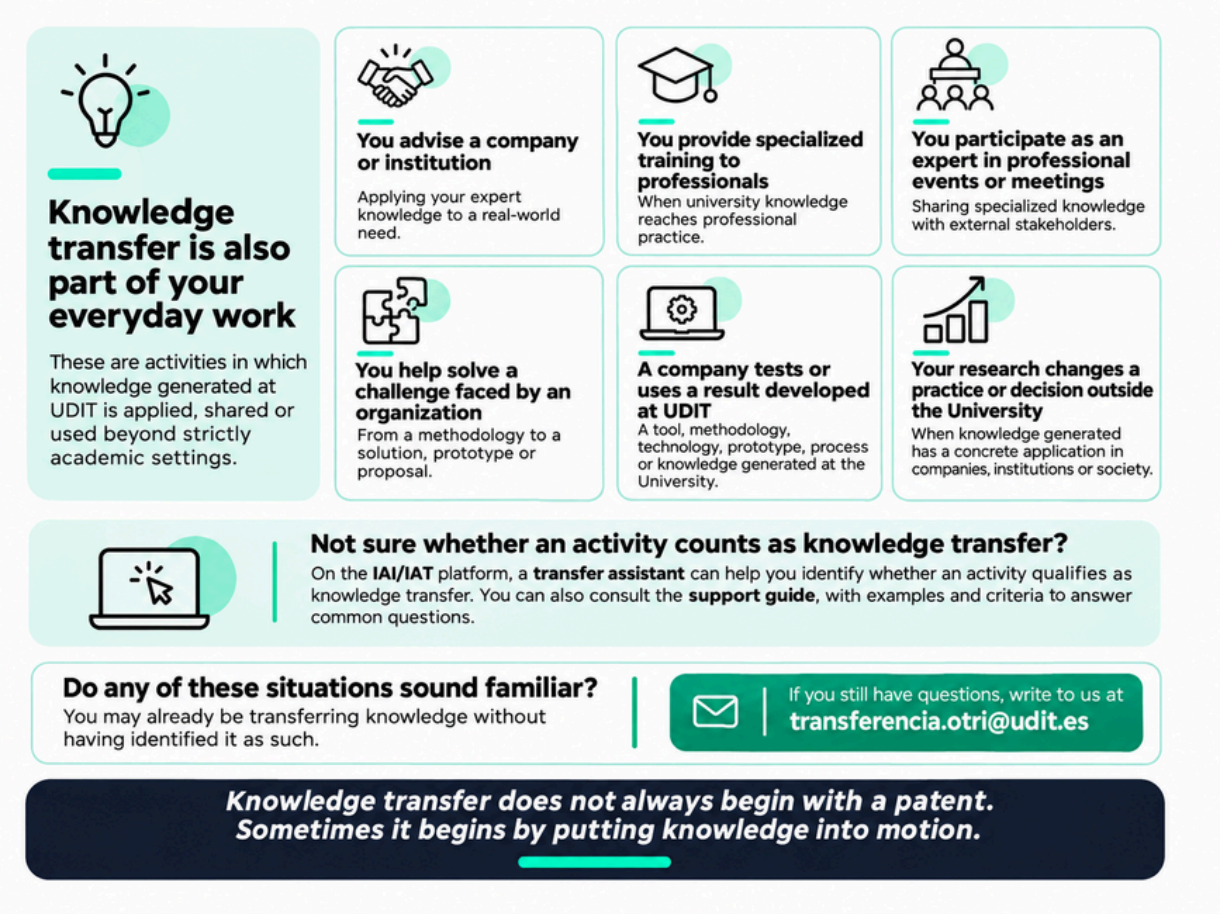
When we think about knowledge transfer, the first things that come to mind are often a patent, a licence or a major collaboration project with a company. Yet university knowledge transfer is much broader. It takes place through many activities that our researchers carry out regularly, even if they do not always identify them as transfer.

Knowledge transfer begins when the knowledge, expertise or results generated at the university move beyond the strictly academic sphere and are used by companies, institutions, public authorities, professionals or other stakeholders in society.

It does not always involve developing a technology or achieving a commercial outcome. Sometimes it simply means making what we know useful beyond the university.

Because knowledge transfer is not just about generating results: it is about enabling those results to create value, have an impact and transform the world around us.

Noemí Jiménez
Knowledge Transfer, Science Communication and Impact



Discover UDIT's science communication initiatives



UDIT strengthens links between research and business innovation at the EdTech Technology Transfer Forum and Madrid Connect

Connecting university research with the real needs of businesses, institutions and other stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem is one of the main aims of knowledge transfer. With this in mind, UDIT recently took part in two events designed to establish new connections and explore collaboration opportunities: the EdTech Technology Transfer Forum, held at HUB232 in El Cantizal, Las Rozas, and Madrid Connect 2026, organised at the Madrid Science Park.

The first event took place on 21 October, bringing together universities, educational institutions, businesses and organisations working in educational innovation and technology. During the event, UDIT presented two initiatives with potential for new partnerships: Learnia and the Immersive Laboratory.

Learnia offers new possibilities for virtualising courses, programmes and degree qualifications, while the Immersive Laboratory opens the door to virtual environments for teaching and research, particularly useful for practical activities that are complex, expensive or difficult to reproduce in a conventional setting.

The EdTech Technology Transfer Forum featured short presentations, rapid meetings and networking sessions that provided opportunities to learn about the needs and challenges of participating organisations and identify potential connections and areas for collaboration.

A week later, UDIT also attended Madrid Connect 2026 at the Madrid Science Park, represented by the OTRI and César Leandro Londoño, Principal Investigator of the DESIRe research group.

Madrid Connect brought together universities, companies, technology centres and organisations involved in entrepreneurship and innovation. New contacts were made and potential collaboration opportunities explored with organisations interested in UDIT's research and knowledge transfer capabilities.

Beyond the individual contacts established, participation in both events reflects a shared strategy: to showcase UDIT's knowledge and capabilities beyond the university, identify external needs and help turn those connections into projects, pilots, partnerships and new opportunities for knowledge transfer.

Because knowledge transfer also begins in these spaces—where universities, businesses and innovation meet and start building something together.

Noemi Jiménez
Knowledge Transfer, Science Communication and Impact

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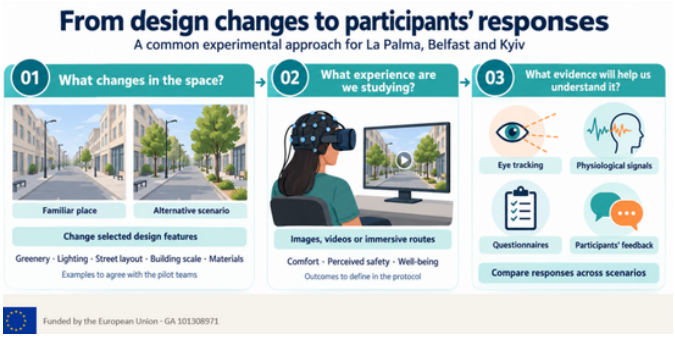
DISCOVER WHAT WE DO

- **NEURO-REBUILD: rebuilding cities with people's well-being in mind**
- **RED-Diseña brings forgotten women in design history back into view**
- **Book: “Transatlánticos urbanos. El caso de las Unidades de Habitación en España”**

NEURO-REBUILD: rebuilding cities with people's well-being in mind



Rebuilding a neighbourhood after a disaster or conflict involves restoring much more than its buildings. It also means restoring meeting places, connections to the surrounding environment and residents' sense of trust. How can the design of public spaces contribute to this process?

This is the question explored by NEURO-REBUILD—Neuro-Responsive Urban Reconstruction for Inclusive and Sustainable Environments—an EU-funded Horizon Europe project (Grant Agreement No. 101308971) combining neuroarchitecture, virtual reality and citizen participation to study how urban environments affect people's well-being.

Coordinated by the Polytechnic University of Madrid, the consortium brings together ten organisations from four countries: UPM, UDIT, La Palma Research Centre, Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture, the National Union of Architects of Ukraine, Lviv Regional State Administration, Queen's University Belfast, Propeer Solutions and Colin Neighbourhood Partnership.

The project will work in three settings facing different challenges: La Palma, following the volcanic eruption; Belfast, in the context of the legacy of conflict and social regeneration; and Kyiv, facing reconstruction challenges associated with the war. Community participation will allow people's memories, needs and expectations to inform the scenarios being studied.

The proposal involves creating virtual replicas of urban spaces and alternative designs that participants can explore immersively. For example, the same street might be shown with different amounts of greenery, rest areas or spatial configurations. During the experience, measurements of brain activity, eye tracking and other physiological signals will be combined with questionnaires and participants' feedback. The aim is to understand which environmental features are associated with responses relating to attention, stress, comfort and perceived safety.

UDIT is responsible for the project's scientific coordination and leads the development of the assessment methodology and experimental protocols. The NEURO-COLAB and ECSIT groups are collaborating to adapt recording systems and synchronise signals with each participant's experience in the virtual environment. UDIT will also lead experimental data collection and analysis in collaboration with partners across the three case studies.

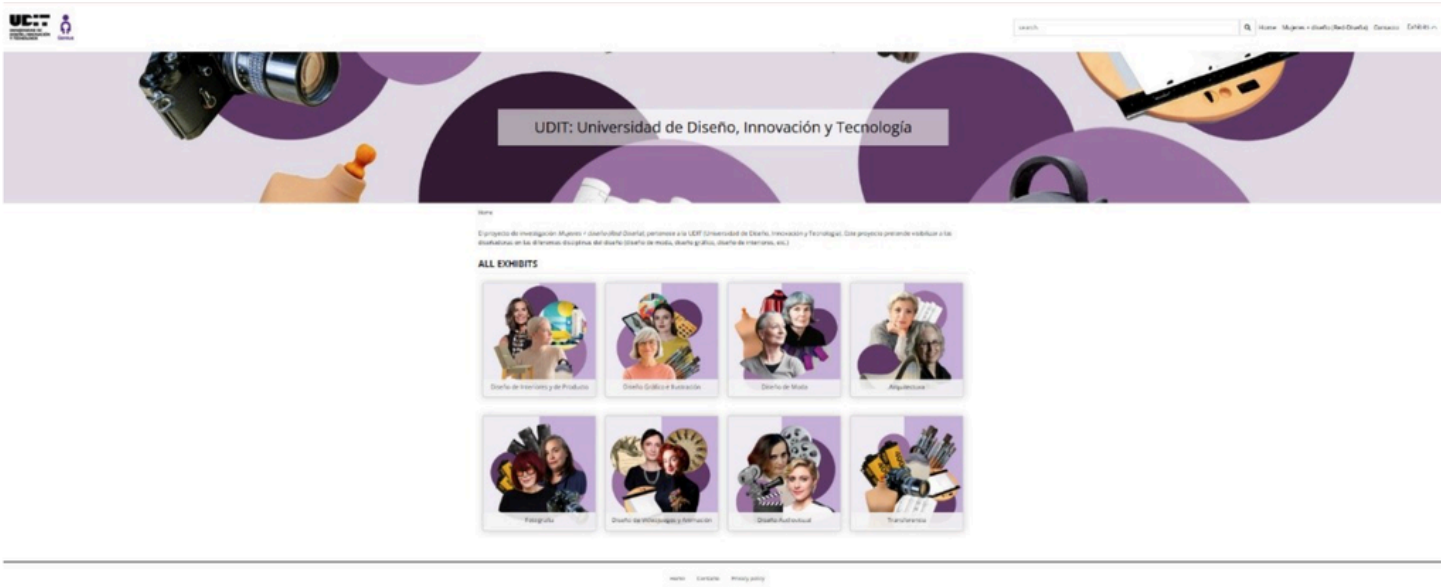
Following the kick-off meeting held in Madrid in October, the team is reviewing scientific evidence, selecting technologies and preparing research procedures.

The findings will contribute to tools and recommendations that enable professionals and public authorities to make better-informed decisions about urban design and planning, drawing on both community experience and evidence about well-being.



Explore the project

María Beltrán PI
Principal Investigator of the NEURO-COLAB group



RED-Diseña brings forgotten women in design history back into view

Where are the women in design history? RED-Diseña, a project from UDIT's GENIUS group, traces, documents and highlights the careers of women designers who were excluded from the established historical narrative for decades.

Design history also has women's names. Yet many of them barely feature in textbooks, exhibitions or research. Some creators were omitted from the historical record altogether, while others' work remains scattered across archives, publications, private collections and institutional holdings. Recovering their work and restoring their rightful place is the starting point of Mujeres + Diseño (RED-Diseña), a project developed by UDIT's Design, Visual Culture and Gender Research Group (GENIUS).

The initiative grew out of an apparently simple question: Where are the women designers, and why do we know so little about them? In response, RED-Diseña is conducting extensive research, identification, cataloguing and dissemination work to make women's contributions across design disciplines visible.

One of the project's main tools is a digital repository of women designers. Conceived not only as a documentation platform, it is also a resource for researchers, students and anyone interested in exploring design history from a more inclusive perspective.

The scope of the research reveals the scale of the heritage still waiting to be recovered. The most recent working data identifies approximately 1,000 women designers from a wide range of fields, including graphic design and illustration, interior and product design, and fashion design.

RED-Diseña aims to do more than compile a catalogue. It seeks to generate new knowledge and encourage a critical re-examination of design history by including professionals whose contributions have been little studied or overlooked. Researching, documenting and raising visibility are ways to rewrite the narrative. By recovering the work of women designers, RED-Diseña offers an opportunity to broaden our understanding of the past and build a history of design in which women are present and occupy their rightful place.

Discover RED-Diseña

María del Mar Martínez PI
Principal Investigator of the GENIUS group.





Book: “Transatlánticos urbanos. El caso de las Unidades de Habitación en España”

Eva Hurtado Torán, lecturer and researcher in UDIT's GENIUS group, has published the book “Transatlánticos urbanos. El caso de las Unidades de Habitación en España” (Urban Ocean Liners: The Case of Unités d'Habitation in Spain), published by Ediciones Asimétricas in collaboration with UDIT.

Building on earlier research into new forms of dwelling and urban density, including work developed through UDIT's “La casa del Futuro” projects, the book offers a historical reassessment of a distinctive form of collective housing.

Homes with adaptable shared facilities, dual aspects and interiors with varying ceiling heights may still seem utopian today, yet architects in the first half of the twentieth century sought to make them a reality. Conceived as veritable “stranded ocean liners”, these buildings aimed to humanise social housing in the modern city and became known as Unités d'Habitation.

Their historical implementation was experimental, intermittent and sometimes controversial. Throughout, however, they retained a central objective: integrating multiple urban functions within a single collective housing block.

The book takes readers on a journey through these megastructures, whose “streets in the sky”, communal areas and duplex apartments demonstrate an ambition to conceive collective housing through its vertical section. It examines the antecedents and historical context of Unités d'Habitation in Spain and compares five case studies, exploring relationships between urban density and the diversity of uses. This critical approach aims to reveal their value and consider how they might be reinterpreted today.

From the Soviet social condensers of the early twentieth century to the mixed-use programmes developed by contemporary architecture practices, the evolution of the Unité d'Habitation over the last hundred years remains a highly relevant topic. There is broad agreement on the social importance of shared urban life in the twenty-first century. Revisiting high-density housing is therefore an essential exercise in remembering the past to build the future.

Intervention in existing city buildings, particularly the rehabilitation of twentieth-century architecture, is a key area of interest for interior design and offers professional opportunities for our graduates. UDIT's Bachelor's and Master's programmes in Interior Design also explore urban density, user participation and climate-related implications—design issues that form part of the discussion in this book.

You can find the book in the UDIT Library.

Explore the book



UDIT formally joins the Conference of Directors of Doctoral Schools

UDIT (University of Design, Innovation and Technology) has officially become a full member of the Conference of Directors of Doctoral Schools (CDED). Its membership was unanimously ratified at the General Assembly of the organisation's 14th Annual Conference, hosted by the University of Murcia on 22 and 23 October.

The university began the membership process on 23 June 2026, when the CDED Standing Committee approved its application. The process was completed with the Assembly's endorsement. Dr Francisco García, Director of UDIT's Doctoral School, attended the institutional meeting on the university's behalf.

The event included specialist working sessions examining the regulatory and operational issues shaping the evolution of doctoral education in Spain. A key topic was the impact of artificial intelligence on academic supervision, considered from the perspective of the Spanish Research Ethics Committee to address ethical boundaries, training regulations and how thesis supervisors' roles may need to evolve in response to these technologies.

The sessions also explored internationalisation strategies across Europe and Ibero-America, focusing on mobility, international cooperation and the administration of jointly supervised international doctoral theses. In quality management, participants discussed progress on the recognition of the European Diploma Supplement, institutional accreditation models and the opening up of knowledge through open and citizen science.

The conference also reviewed how research centres are adapting to CoARA and to the guidance of Spain's National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA), with a focus on the transition towards alternative metrics and the reform of research assessment.

Joining the CDED marks a significant step in the institutional consolidation of UDIT's Doctoral School and strengthens its participation in discussions about the future of doctoral education in Spain. As a full member, the School can share its experiences and concerns, exchange good practices and contribute to collective reflection on the academic and administrative challenges facing doctoral programmes. Membership opens new opportunities for collaboration to strengthen quality, international visibility and support for researchers in training.

Discover the Doctoral School



UDIT strengthens its commitment to research by establishing its own publishing house

Some projects mark a turning point in a university's life, and today we are proud to share one that is particularly exciting. The Library team has taken the first concrete steps towards establishing and consolidating UDIT Publishing, an initiative designed to give a voice, a format and a wider audience to the scientific, academic and creative work produced in our classrooms and laboratories.

The publishing house is still at an early organisational stage, but its foundations are already taking shape. We would like to share the milestones achieved so far and explain what this project will mean for our community.

The first major formal step has been completed: we have officially registered the publishing brand with the Spanish Patent and Trademark Office (OEPM). This legal process protects our institutional identity and gives us formal recognition to operate as a publishing imprint within the academic and publishing sector.

From now on, publications arising from UDIT's talent will have solid, unified and legally recognised institutional support.

Although we are building the catalogue step by step, UDIT Publishing has already begun to make its mark with editorial projects. Key works published under the new imprint reflect our university's distinctive combination of research, design and technology:

- “Lo fugaz y lo eterno” (Lookbook): A catalogue of the Fashion Design students' collection presented at Fashion Week 2024.

- “Creativity in a Digital World”: This book brings together a research group's programme of AI workshops, a hackathon, a film forum and Science Week activities, reflecting on how to foster creativity in digital environments.

These works are just the beginning and demonstrate the range of formats and approaches our catalogue will embrace. Establishing our own publishing imprint is more than an organisational achievement: above all, it is a resource for our teaching and research staff.

The Library team is enthusiastically defining future publishing lines, scientific committees and manuscript submission procedures. We will soon share further information about the next steps and how you can submit your publishing proposals.

The adventure of publishing under our own imprint has only just begun, and we want you to be part of it!

Explore the UDIT Library Catalogue

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

Would you like to collaborate with us on projects, sign an agreement, take part in our activities, submit a proposal or get in touch with our researchers?

We would be delighted to hear from you and explore new opportunities for collaboration and impact together.



OTRI

We would be delighted to hear from you and explore new opportunities for collaboration and impact together.

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DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Doctoral programmes, support for doctoral candidates and research training activities.

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Materials inclusion and consultation, cross-disciplinary projects with degree programmes, guided visits and escape room activities.

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LIBRARY

Information resources, research support and specialised library services.

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