

Call for an Open Education Internship Project in the COLOURS European University Alliance

at the

Digitalisation & Data department, City of Paderborn

- Paderborn University -

Description of the Project

The 'Digitalisation and Data' department of the City of Paderborn is the central point of contact for matters of digitalisation of the City of Paderborn for both internal and external enquiries, and acts as interface for other stakeholders in the City of Paderborn. Here, digital projects are initiated, bundled and managed.

The Digitalisation and Data department is offering one Open Education internship project to students of the COLOURS Alliance, providing the option of choosing **one** of the three following challenges to work on:

- 1. Data strategy of municipalities in Germany in a European comparison - differences and challenges**
- 2. Possible applications of AI in public administration in Germany compared to municipalities in other European countries**
- 3. An international comparison of the digital transformation of municipalities**

The project can be worked on by students virtually, and may last any time between 4 and 8 weeks. The internship can commence from September 2025.

Tasks and objectives of the internship project work

The Digitalisation and Data department of the City of Paderborn offers *one* internship project. Students applying for this project will need to indicate their preferred project topic in their application - the three possible topics that can be chosen are as follows:

1. Data strategy of municipalities in Germany in a European comparison - differences and challenges

The digital transformation is fundamentally changing both society and municipal administrations. Cities are generating ever-increasing amounts of data, while the importance of data as a foundation for innovative and public-interest-oriented solutions continues to grow. It is often referred to as the "gold of the digital age."

This raises the requirements for handling data. It must be accurate, reliable, complete, up-to-date, and easy to understand. However, German municipalities currently have few or no well-defined data strategies. Some initial approaches and resolutions can be found on municipal websites, but overall, the development is still in its early stages.

- *How can municipalities effectively use their data to improve administrative efficiency, make informed decisions, enhance transparency, and increase citizen participation?*
- *What key topics should a comprehensive data strategy address?*
- *What priorities have cities that already implement a data strategy set? And how do approaches differ across Europe?*

2. Possible applications of AI in public administration in Germany compared to municipalities in other European countries

With the AI Act, the EU has created a regulation for the use of artificial intelligence. On this basis, artificial intelligence will also play an increasingly important role in public administration. For example, AI can be used for routine tasks, answer questions around the clock with the help of chatbots or support data-based decision-making.

For municipalities, the use of AI raises a variety of questions:

- *In which areas of government can AI-powered RPA help increase efficiency? Are there already successful examples from Germany or other European countries?*
- *What are the challenges regarding the acceptance and usability of AI-powered chatbots?*
- *How can AI prepare decisions without replacing human decisions?*
- *What is the impact of the AI Act on the use of AI in public administration?*
- *What are the differences in implementation between German municipalities and other European countries?*

3. An international comparison of the digital transformation of municipalities

The digital transformation of government poses many challenges for municipalities. It is not just about the use of technology, but rather about digital organizational development. However, in addition to a structure for the cross-divisional impact of digitalization, there is often a lack of ways of working together that are necessary to promote and use digitalization to overcome complex challenges.

Questions in this context could be:

- *How do the digitalization strategies of municipalities in different countries differ from each other?*
- *What best practices in municipal digitalization can be identified and transferred internationally?*
- *What are the challenges and barriers to the digital transformation of municipalities in different countries?*
- *To what extent do inter-municipal and international cooperations promote the digital transformation of municipalities?*
- *How can German municipalities learn from international pioneers in digital transformation?*

Project execution and set-up:

- **(Virtual) exchange and collaboration** between students from at least 2 COLOURS partner institutions from the same or different study fields/ disciplines related to the project task
- **(Virtual) kick-off and short virtual meetings** to discuss progress and questions by a designated contact at the Digitalisation and Data department/ City of Paderborn (alternative: interim presentation)
- **Academic mentorship via two mentors:** One from UPB plus at least 1 COLOURS partner institution act as supervisors for project work
- **Project outcomes:** Final (virtual) presentation. Any grading or ECTS allocation must be arranged individually between students and their academic mentors.
- **Programme:** Humanities, social sciences, economics and business administration, or other programmes
- **Subject(s):** Sociology, Architecture, IT, Business & Economics, Administrative Sciences or other relevant fields
- **Level:** Any
- **External Partners:** Digitalisation and Data department, City of Paderborn
- **Timing (Dates) of internship:** Any time between September 1 until December 2025
- **Duration/ Length in weeks:** 4 – 8 weeks within the above mentioned timeframe
- **Mobility Type:** virtual or blended
- **Financing Options:** none (if blended option is chosen, students are encouraged to apply for ERASMUS+ funding at their home institution)
- **Language:** B2 level of English proficiency required (other languages may be used in the joint project setting in consultation with the academic mentors/ supervisors).

Application:

To apply, please submit a motivation letter outlining your academic background, experience and reasons for applying to the internship, along with your CV, to Mouna Amhoud (implementation.colours@uni-paderborn.de). Applications can be submitted until **15 August 2025**. Applicants must have or find a mentor at their home institution who is willing to supervise their work.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact Mrs. Amhoud.

COLOURS European University Alliance

Since January 2024, Paderborn University has been coordinating the [Colours European University Alliance](#), funded by the European Commission with approximately 14 million euros. The initiative aims to foster long-term collaboration in research, teaching, and knowledge transfer, enhance international visibility, and promote the mobility of students and researchers across Europe.

COLOURS stands for "*COLlaborative innOvative sUstainable Regional univerSities*," and focuses on *open innovation, challenge-based teaching, challenge-based learning, and impact-driven research*. These topics are closely linked to the regional "*Smart Specialisation Goals*": Health and Well-being, Food Production, green transition & IT and digitalisation. Through this approach, COLOURS seeks to drive social and technological innovation for citizens across Europe and accelerate progress through strategic cooperation.

Through hands-on, challenge-based activities like the Open Education Internship Projects, the Alliance aims to engage students from all COLOURS partners, empowering them to contribute actively and collaborate in developing innovative solutions while fostering cultural exchange.

Alongside Paderborn University as the coordinating institution, the Alliance includes Le Mans University (France), the University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain), the University of Ferrara (Italy), Kristianstad University (Sweden), Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa (Poland), Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek (Croatia), Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (Latvia), as well as St. Kliment Ohridski University in Bitola (North Macedonia). Additionally, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University (Ukraine) is an associated partner.