

THE NORMAN FOSTER INSTITUTE UNVEILS MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ITS FIRST ACADEMIC PROGRAMME ON SUSTAINABLE CITIES



Madrid, 28 June 2023

The Norman Foster Institute (NFI) is pleased to release more information about its inaugural academic Programme on Sustainable Cities.

The Norman Foster Institute's Programme on Sustainable Cities will combine practical on-site experience with academic input from the Norman Foster Foundation's network of international experts. The course begins with training tools and skills that can be used to address wide-ranging issues of cities. These could be applicable to cities all over the world, as well as informal settlements and suburbia.

Taking a multidisciplinary approach, the scholars will use the most up-to-date digital tools as part of the NFI Lab, to allow them to explore, test and evaluate their interventions in the quest to improve a sustainable quality of life in cities. Scholars will develop skills in leadership, advocacy, communication, presentation, diagramming, mapping and the understanding and interpretation of data.

The curriculum narrows down to three pilot cities that scholars will visit to engage directly with their planners and managers. For study purposes, neighbourhoods have been selected in each city to raise awareness of the issues that affect the living standards for those who live or visit there.

Towards the end of the year, the scholars will present their findings to the city administration. The lessons from these real-life experiences will be documented by film and other media, culminating in a public event. On the basis that historically cities learn from each other, it will be important for the scholars to explore the relevance of their conclusions in the wider context of global cities.

The focus of the course is to train scholars from different disciplines in the sustainable development of cities with strategies for the future. This will be achieved through hands-on fieldwork and community engagement, the use of advanced simulation tools and the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into local action plans.

Programme Structure

The 36-week programme consists of three stages—*Foundations*, *Transformations* and *Interventions*—with time divided between classrooms, lab, studios and cities.

• Stage 1: *Foundations*

Introductory Week + 3 weeks

January–February 2024

The first stage of the programme consists of an in-depth study of the concepts and processes necessary to understand a city, from its history and governance to the ethics and metrics that define sustainable cities. Through seminars by experts followed by brainstorming and round-table debate, scholars will engage with the foundations of a city.

• Stage 2: *Transformations*

12 Weeks + 2 Weeks of Visits

February–May 2024

The second stage of the programme will be devoted to the layers of transformations of the city, essential skills and project development work. It analyses six of the layers that define a city: Climate & Natural Environments, Networks & Mobility, Planning & Building, Resources & Energy, Economy & Social Activity and Culture & the Arts.

This stage will culminate with preparation and visits to the pilot cities with a focus on chosen neighbourhoods. Scholars will study and debate these issues to identify challenges and opportunities for the transformation of these neighbourhoods.

Pilot city visits

The scholars will visit the pilot cities to workshop with their representatives. Fieldwork will play a central role in project development, overcoming distances between planning and site, proposal and inhabitants, and intervention and stakeholders.

Visits include

- Transformation challenges, presentation and feedback
- Experience and fieldwork in chosen neighbourhoods: observing, walking, recording, collecting and filming
- Community engagement and development of outreach skills
- Identification of potential improvements

• Stage 3: *Interventions*

12 Weeks + 6 Weeks of Project Development

June–October 2024

The third stage of the programme will focus on the development of project proposals for pilot neighbourhoods and testing strategies for improvement through hands-on technical workshops and skills courses. Concentrating on tangible solutions for the issues studied in the previous stage, the scholars will develop, test and quantify the impact of their proposals, opening up to a wider debate.

Project Development and Presentations to the Mayors

Through technical workshops oriented towards testing proposed strategies for sustainable improvement at each layer, strategies will be selected for implementation in each pilot neighbourhood. Scholars will present their projects to the mayors or civic leaders representing the three selected cities.

Scholarships

To further foster diversity within its programme, the NFI awards partial and full scholarships to talented applicants in need of financial support, based on merit, distinctive competencies, background and/or academic excellence.



Norman Foster Institute

The Norman Foster Institute is an initiative of the Norman Foster Foundation addressed to those who wish, through practice or education, to improve the quality of life in cities worldwide.

The Norman Foster Institute is accepting applications for its first academic Programme on Sustainable Cities, starting in Madrid in January 2024.

Visit www.normanfosterinstitute.org for more information.