

CALL FOR PAPERS & SPEAKERS

EDUCATION, SECULARISM AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Responsibilities, relationships, transitions

Abstract submission deadline: **15 September 2026**

International study days: **19-20 November 2026**

Paper submission deadline for publication: **15 December 2026**

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The research project aims to explore the relationship between education, secularism and religious freedom, considering educational communities as privileged places for observation, experimentation and social inclusion, where legal rules, pedagogical values, cultural identities and religious references intertwine. From this perspective, educational communities are not regarded only as spaces for the transmission of knowledge, but as complex environments for the formation of the person, in which the practical forms of coexistence among cultural pluralism, the institutions' non-indifference to religious experience, freedom of conscience and recognition of religious affiliations are defined. The research therefore seeks to analyze the relationship between law, society and education, with particular attention to the way in which the religious dimension can contribute to the promotion of paths of growth, responsibility, inclusion and social development. In this perspective, the project aims to examine how constitutional principles affect the organization of educational communities, with reference not only to religious freedom, but also to freedom of teaching, the right to education, the principle of equality and the prohibition of discrimination.

The investigation also intends to verify how these principles can guide educational, organizational and relational choices, especially in contexts characterized by growing cultural and religious pluralism. The analysis concerns the religious dimension as a value-based, cultural and relational resource within educational processes. The research intends to assess the extent to which spirituality, rituality and religion can contribute to the integral development of the person, to the construction of identity, to the maturation of a sense of responsibility and to the promotion of solidarity-based behaviour and aware citizenship. At the same time, it intends to investigate the critical issues that may arise when religious references interfere with educational autonomy, freedom of conscience or the principle of equal dignity among the persons involved.

Particular attention will be devoted to the tensions and synergies among the legal, educational and religious dimensions, highlighting the positive potential of dialogue between education and religion, especially when this is translated into paths of listening, mutual recognition, dialogue, education for peace, solidarity and responsible citizenship. The project also aims to identify integrated educational models capable of combining respect for the supreme principle of State secularism with the enhancement of the cultural, ethical and social contribution of religious traditions. In this sense, the research intends to contribute to the definition of theoretical and operational tools useful for promoting inclusive educational communities that respect differences and are capable of transforming cultural and religious pluralism into an opportunity for collective growth.

A specific in-depth study will be devoted to the comparison of educational models developed in secular and denominational contexts, in order to highlight convergences, divergences, strengths and possible critical issues. This comparison, which may also concern contexts outside Italy, will make it possible to understand how different institutional and cultural frameworks address the relationship between the formation of the person, religious freedom, moral education and democratic citizenship.

Another major focus of the research is the theme of intercultural and interreligious inclusion. In educational communities, in fact, synergistic action appears increasingly necessary in order to foster dialogue among cultures and religions, to overcome stereotypes and conflicts, and to enhance identities without turning them into factors of separation or opposition. The research therefore intends to analyze the concrete dynamics of educational coexistence, identifying practices capable of promoting mutual recognition, conflict mediation and the active participation of the persons involved.

Finally, in a context marked by the growing relevance of the digital dimension, the project aims to value educational communities also as central places for education in the conscious, critical and responsible use of technologies, also thanks to the contribution of the religious dimension. Digital education will be considered not only from a technical point of view, but also in its ethical, civic and relational dimension, with particular attention to preventing phenomena of polarization, discrimination, radicalization and the spread of cultural or religious stereotypes. In this way, the research intends to connect technological education, value-based formation, democratic citizenship and the protection of religious freedom, contributing to the construction of educational communities capable of addressing the challenges of contemporary pluralism.

CALL TOPICS

The topics of reference for the papers may concern, starting from the objectives of the research project, all the different disciplines studied and researched in the university context, but must include the connection between one or more of the following areas (institutional and/or thematic) and the religious dimension:

- Family
- School
- University
- Religious communities
- Family-type and residential care communities
- Socio-educational communities
- Non-school educational communities (oratories, parishes, religious bodies, religious associations, sports associations, cultural associations, museums, libraries, social cooperatives, third-sector bodies, anti-violence centres, counselling centres, prisons...)
- Religious instruction; alternative activities
- Intercultural dialogue
- Interreligious dialogue
- Religious symbols
- Sport
- Peace
- Tourism
- Culture and Art
- Sustainability
- Clothing
- Food

- Emotional life and sexuality; gender identity
- Gender-based violence
- Religious holidays
- Hate speech, stereotypes, radicalization, propaganda
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Social communication tools
- Digital and social media
- Artificial intelligence and the digital/technological world

PROPOSALS AND ACTIVITIES

Interested scholars may propose a paper which, once accepted, must be presented in one of the panels during the Study Day of 19 November 2026. On 20 November 2026, the 12th Benevento Study Day dedicated to the theme of this call will then be held, with speakers identified by the Scientific Committee. The in-person activities will take place at Giustino Fortunato University in Benevento. Participation in person is recommended, together with a commitment to attend both study days (19 and 20 November).

The text of the paper will be included in the final publication of the initiative. Publication costs will be borne by the organizers.

Therefore, those admitted must deliver their presentation (19 November 2026) and send the paper for publication (by 15 December 2026).

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Those who intend to propose a paper - and the related presentation - must send by e-mail the attached participation form together with an abstract in Italian and English not exceeding 500 words, containing a brief summary of the topic of the paper.

The deadline for submitting abstracts, to be sent to progettoeducazione2026@gmail.com, is 15 September 2026.

The Scientific Committee will review the proposals and communicate the outcome of its evaluation by 30 September 2026.

The Study Day for the discussion of the papers of this call will be held in person (with the possibility, where necessary, of streaming connection) at Giustino Fortunato University in Benevento on 19 November 2026. On 20 November 2026, the 12th Benevento Study Day dedicated to the theme of this call will then be held, with speakers identified by the Scientific Committee. Participation in person is recommended, together with a commitment to attend both study days (19 and 20 November).

The presentation may be delivered in Italian or English. The paper may likewise be written in one of the above-mentioned languages.

PUBLICATION

Papers intended for publication, using the specific editorial and methodological guidelines that will be indicated and between 3,000 and 5,000 words including bibliography, must be sent to progettoeducazione2026@gmail.com by 15 December 2026.

The papers will be published in a collective volume with ISBN, with anonymous peer review of each contribution. Publication is free of charge for authors.

OTHER INFORMATION

Travel and accommodation expenses for in-person participation in the Study Days will be borne by the participants.

DEADLINES SUMMARY

Abstract submission deadline: 15 September 2026

International study days: 19 and 20 November 2026

Paper submission deadline for publication: 15 December 2026

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Prof. Antonio Fuccillo (Director), University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"

Prof. Paolo Palumbo (Research Project Coordinator), Giustino Fortunato University

Prof. Marco Parisi, University of Molise

Prof. Raffaele Santoro, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"

Prof. Francesco Sorvillo, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"

Prof. Ludovica Decimo, University of Sassari

Dr. Federico Gravino, San Pio V Institute of Political Studies of Rome

Dr. Miriam Abu Salem, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"