

OPEN PhD POSITION

Transport Research Centre (TRANSyT) – Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM)

TRANSFORM (“*Urban Mobility Cultures in Transition: Socio-spatial implications of transformative practices*”) is a Doctoral Network funded by Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. Transform investigates the efficacy of transformative practices as mechanisms for initiating and consolidating transitions in urban mobility cultures, and analyses the resulting socio-spatial effects.

TRANSyT is a Madrid-based multidisciplinary research centre focused on mobility and transport. It addresses their economic, social, environmental, and spatial dimensions to provide innovative solutions for society.

PhD topic: Conceptualizing and Assessing “Transitional Urban Spaces” Through Virtual Reality Experiments

This doctoral thesis (3 years, fully funded) will use Virtual Reality (VR) to explore “transitional urban spaces” (like tactical urbanism projects) and their potential to drive sustainable urban mobility. It will create immersive scenes of these spaces using software like CityEngine, Blender, and Unity, and analyse their impact across European case studies. The research aims to develop a new theory on these spaces and provide policymakers with VR tools to design effective mobility transitions.

As part of the training programme, the candidate will **collaborate with leading European institutions through secondments**, fostering interdisciplinary exchange and broadening the thesis's impact within the Transform network.

Supervisors

Julio A. Soria-Lara
Professor at UPM
Transform coordinator

Amor Ariza-Álvarez
Assistant professor at UPM



Required background

- A Master in Science (MSc) in Architecture, Urban and Spatial Planning, Urban Design, Urban Studies, Civil Engineering, Transport Engineering, Human Geography, Smart Cities, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Spatial Analysis, Digital Twins or equivalent. (MSc students are encouraged to apply if they fulfil the conditions by August 2025)
- At the time of incorporation into the position, **candidates must not have resided in Spain for more than 12 months within the previous 36 months.** (*Check MSCA-DN Eligibility Conditions – Researchers section*)

Required skills

- Proficiency in written and spoken English (C1 or higher).
- A strong interest in collaborating within an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research environment as part of a Europe-wide network.
- Self-motivation, strong organisational skills, and the ability to take personal responsibility for completing tasks.
- Good communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

Valuable skills

- Previous experience with working on tactical urbanism, urban experiments, digital twins and virtual reality simulations, participatory planning, and stakeholder engagement in urban policy-making will be highly valued.
- Experience with qualitative research methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, workshops, case studies, etc.).
- Experience with statistical data analysis.

Expected incorporation date

July – September 2025

Annual gross salary

€32,000, expandable up to €38,000 depending on the family allowance

HOW TO APPLY

Please send an email to carlos.rolan.hernandez@upm.es with the subject “*HRS2025/127 Postgraduado no doctor/ Postgraduate non-doctoral researcher*”, attaching the following documents: (1) CV (mandatory), (2) Motivation Letter (mandatory) and (3) Recommendation Letter (optional).

More details can be found in the [official website offer](#) and the [project webpage](#)

Submit your application before April 21st 2025