



# Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

## Call for proposals

Partnerships for Excellence

European Universities – European Degree exploratory action

ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PE-EUED

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## EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.A – Erasmus+ and EU Aid Volunteers  
EACEA.A.1 - European Higher Education

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of 'Cooperation among organisations and institutions – Partnerships for Excellence', in higher education, under the **Erasmus+ Programme**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))<sup>1</sup>
- the basic act (Erasmus+ Regulation [2021/817](#))<sup>2</sup>.

The call is launched in accordance with the 2025 Work Programme<sup>3</sup> and will be managed by the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PE-EUED - Partnerships for Excellence: European Universities – European Degree exploratory action**

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call document](#) outlines the:
  - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
  - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
  - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
  - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
  - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
  - award criteria (section 9)
  - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
  - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport (OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2025) 1334 final of 05.03.2025 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2025 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Erasmus + Programme.

- procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
- recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
  - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

You are also encouraged to visit the [Erasmus+ Project Results](#) website to consult the list of projects funded previously.

## 1. Background

The Blueprint for a European degree<sup>4</sup> presented on 27 March 2024 outlined a concrete path toward a European degree with a step-by-step approach. It built on the Council conclusions on a European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future of Europe and on the Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation, as well as the results of Erasmus+ policy experimentation projects.

The Commission Communication on a Union of Skills<sup>5</sup> and the STEM Education Strategic Plan<sup>6</sup> of 5 March 2025 set the ambition for the Union of Skills to offer the highest quality education and training, pooling together resources through transnational and transdisciplinary cooperation. This includes to support the development of joint education programmes in disciplines for strategic sectors and key technological domains and to continue working towards a European degree for engineers.

Building on this, the Council Resolution on a joint European degree label and the next steps towards a possible joint European degree<sup>7</sup> adopted on 12 May 2025 invites the Commission and Member States to roll out together a joint European degree as a label as from mid-2026 on the basis of the criteria adopted in the Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system<sup>8</sup>.

The Resolution invites the Commission to design targeted actions to support higher education institutions in their efforts toward receiving a joint European degree label for their joint programmes. The Resolution also invites the Commission to continue exploring the feasibility of a joint European degree as a legal type of degree.

This call for proposals is an answer to this invitation, with the aim to offer support for higher education institutions in the implementation of the joint European degree label.

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<sup>4</sup> [COM\(2024\) 144 final](#)

<sup>5</sup> [COM\(2025\) 90 final](#)

<sup>6</sup> [COM\(2025\) 89 final](#)

<sup>7</sup> [C/2025/2939](#)

<sup>8</sup> [C/2025/3006](#)

## **2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact**

### Objectives

Partnerships for Excellence support projects with a long-term sustainable perspective. This action aims at fostering excellence in higher education by supporting higher education institutions in the design, adaptation, and implementation of innovative and inclusive transnational joint programmes at bachelor, master, or doctoral levels, aligned with the criteria for the joint European degree label, as set out in Annex II of the Council Recommendation on a European Quality Assurance and Recognition System in Higher Education<sup>9</sup>.

The action will generate practical models and evidence to inspire broader adoption of the joint European degree label across Europe. The action also encourages targeted exploration of the concept of a European degree in engineering.

Partnerships between higher education institutions and/or European Universities alliances / consortia of higher education institutions, bringing diversity and combinations in terms of modes of cooperation and wide geographical representativeness are highly recommended.

### Themes and priorities (scope)

Themes include:

- 1.** Adaptation of existing joint programmes and design of new joint programmes, in any field, aligned with the criteria of the joint European degree label;
- 2.** Student support mechanisms that promote inclusive access and participation in joint programmes, including through scholarships, tuition fees balancing, or other measures to ensure inclusive access for students.

By targeting these themes, the action aims to support trailblazing institutional initiatives, develop models for replication, and provide the evidence base for broader policy development. Applicants must address both themes (1. & 2.).

For proposals related to the field of engineering, initiatives that explore the feasibility and added value of a European degree in engineering are encouraged. These initiatives may address specific challenges including but not limited to regulated professions, specific fields and disciplines including in strategic areas such as STEM (as identified in the Competitiveness Compass), digital technologies (e.g. Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum, cybersecurity), and interdisciplinary fields like health and biotech. Such efforts offer a unique opportunity for applicants to demonstrate innovation and contribute to strategic areas crucial for enhancing the competitiveness of European higher education.

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<sup>9</sup> [C/2025/3006](#)

### Activities that can be funded (scope)

Proposals must address the first four (a, b, c, and d) types of activities. The fifth one (e) applies only to those initiatives exploring the feasibility and added value of a European degree in engineering (see above *'Themes and priorities'*).

#### **a) Adaptation of existing joint programmes**

Applicants are expected to adapt at least four existing joint programmes at European Qualifications Framework (EQF) levels 6, 7, and/or 8 to align with the joint European degree label criteria.

For each programme, the applicants must provide at least:

- Name and details of the existing joint programme being adapted;
- Names of all participating institutions and organisations for the programme;
- Scope and nature of adaptations: specific changes to be made to meet the joint European degree label criteria (e.g., curriculum alignment, governance, mobility requirements, quality assurance);
- Number of enrolled students: current number of students enrolled in the programme (by partner and total);
- Accreditation: All existing joint programmes that will be adapted must be accredited. If for some programmes re-accreditation is needed, the accreditation process, along with information on the relevant accreditation body, must be included as part of the project deliverables.

By the end of the project, the consortium must provide evidence that the adapted programmes have obtained the joint European degree label.

#### **b) Design of new joint programmes**

Applicants are expected to design at least two new joint programmes at EQF level 6, 7, or 8, meeting the criteria for the joint European degree label. These joint programmes may be in any field or discipline, including but not limited to:

- strategic areas (e.g. STEM, as identified in the Competitiveness Compass);
- digital technologies (e.g., AI, quantum computing, cybersecurity);
- interdisciplinary fields (e.g., health, biotechnology).

For each programme, the applicants must provide at least:

- Theme and subject area: clear description of the discipline or interdisciplinary field covered;
- Full list of partner institutions and organisations;
- Key design elements and structure: curriculum, mobility components, governance, and quality assurance measures, in alignment with the joint European degree label criteria;
- Added value: explanation of how the joint programme improves compared to existing offers in terms of quality, scope, or international cooperation;
- Expected time for accreditation (if applicable): The accreditation process, along with information on the relevant accreditation body, must be included as a formal part of the project deliverables, with a detailed description of potential challenges and obstacles;
- Estimated number of students expected to be enrolled in the first cohorts;
- Programme funding sustainability: evidence of current and planned funding sources, including any commitments from partners or external funding bodies to ensure long-term viability;



- Measures to attract and increase the number of students: outreach, marketing, and promotional activities; scholarships or incentives for participation; strategies to attract a diverse and international student population.

By the end of the project, the consortium must provide evidence that the new joint programmes have obtained the European degree label.

If accreditation cannot be completed within the project timeframe, the beneficiaries must at the final report stage:

- Provide evidence that the programme has been designed fully in accordance with the joint European degree label criteria;
- Document the efforts undertaken to obtain accreditation during the project timeframe;
- Clearly describe the challenges and obstacles that prevented completion of the accreditation process.

**c) Communication, peer learning, and dissemination** to share experiences and promote transferability, cooperation with partners, and other selected projects, and contribution to the joint European degree policy development process.

**d) Support for students**

At least 50% of the total budget must be dedicated to student support measures including financial support (e.g., scholarships, mobility grant top-ups, tuition fee balancing, etc.) and service-based support (e.g., student housing, student guidance, mentoring, digital tools, accessibility and inclusion services, outreach activities, etc.). These measures should aim to guarantee inclusiveness, reduce barriers to participation, and facilitate cross-border mobility within the joint programmes (See also below '*eligible activities*');)

**e) European degree in engineering**

Only for projects exploring the feasibility and added value of a European degree in the area of engineering, proposals may cover the following activities:

- Analysis of field-specific regulatory, skills, accreditation, or recognition requirements;
- Exploration of synergies between a possible European degree in engineering and other instruments<sup>10</sup>;
- Engagement with European, national and regional authorities, representative organisations, professional bodies, and employers;
- Design of joint programmes in engineering with a clear European dimension and aligned with sectoral expectations.

Expected impact

- Enhanced visibility and understanding of the joint European degree label at national and European levels;
- Growing interest and institutional capacity of higher education institutions to support the uptake of the joint European degree label that could be reflected through an:

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<sup>10</sup> For example, see [EUR-ACE label](#)

- Increasing number of existing (adapted) joint programmes that have obtained the joint European degree label;
- Increasing number of new joint programmes that comply with the joint European degree label criteria.
- Greater inclusiveness and accessibility of joint programmes through efficient student support;
- Increased evidence and tested models to inform system level policy changes and future developments on the joint European degree;
- Increased evidence and tested models to contribute to the feasibility and added value of a European degree in engineering.

### 3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 14 000 000**.

We expect to fund 14 projects with an indicative requested EU contribution of up to EUR 1 000 000 per project.

Topic	Topic budget
Partnerships for Excellence: European Universities – European Degree exploratory action	<b>EUR 14 000 000</b>

We reserve the right not to award all available funds, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	17 December 2025
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>17 March 2026 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	Late March-June 2026
Information on evaluation results:	September 2026
GA signature:	December 2026

## 5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Calls for proposals](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C — contains additional project data and the project's contribution to EU programme key performance indicators (*to be filled in directly online*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
  - Detailed budget table
  - CVs (standard) of core project team
  - activity reports of last year: not applicable
  - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*)


Please be aware that since the detailed budget table serves as the basis for fixing the lump sums for the grants (and since lump sums must be reliable proxies for the actual costs of a project), the costs you include MUST comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#)). This is particularly important for purchases and subcontracting, which must comply with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and be free of any conflict of interests. If the budget table contains ineligible costs, the grant may be reduced (even later on during the project implementation or after their end).

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that all participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (*especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc*). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable** (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).

 For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

## 6. Eligibility

### Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must be:

- legal entities (public or private bodies);
- established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - Erasmus+ Programme Countries:
    - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs));
    - non-EU countries:
      - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme ([list of participating countries](#));
- higher education institutions (HEIs), holding a valid ECHE certificate (Erasmus Charter for Higher Education).

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*). The geographical range for the associated partners may also extend to third countries not associated to the Programme that are part of the European Higher Education Area<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, associated partners may be any public or private organisation active in the fields of education, training or employment, including accreditation and quality assurance agencies.

The participation of all universities involved in a joint programme in the consortium, as beneficiaries or associated partners, is not mandatory. However, all universities must be clearly indicated in the application (in the narrative part – Part B of the proposal), to enable broader student support (*see below 'Eligible activities'*).

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

### *Specific cases and definitions*

**Natural persons** — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

**International organisations** — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

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<sup>11</sup> Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus (suspended), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Holy See, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Russian Federation (suspended), San Marino, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Ukraine

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>12</sup>.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>13</sup>. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations for participation in the programme (*see list of participating countries above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature and if the association covers the call (i.e. is retroactive and covers both the part of the programme and the year when the call was launched).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)<sup>14</sup>. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092<sup>15</sup>. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### [Consortium composition](#)

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least 2 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities), which complies with the following conditions:

- minimum 2 eligible entities from 2 different eligible countries (*see also above, 'Eligible participants (eligible countries)'*);
- a higher education institution may only participate as full partner in one single application; it may participate in other applications only as associated partner. This limitation does not apply to associated partners.

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<sup>12</sup> See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>13</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>14</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

<sup>15</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

### Eligible activities

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which they are submitted.

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

For projects addressing themes 1 & 2 (*see above – 'Themes and priorities'*), the work plan must include the following work packages, focusing on:

- Adaptation of existing joint programmes;
- Design of new joint programmes;
- Support for students (with a relevant project deliverable: list of students benefiting from support from this grant with the corresponding period for which the support was provided).

For projects addressing theme 3 (*see above – 'Themes and priorities'*):

- The work plan must include specific work package(s) focusing on analysing engineering-specific accreditation and recognition requirements and engaging relevant stakeholders, as specified in the call;
- The financial plan must include adequate resource allocation for engagement with European, national and regional authorities, representative organisations, professional bodies, and employers if relevant;
- The risk management plan must include key risks associated with the regulatory, accreditation, and stakeholder engagement processes in engineering education together with a set of mitigation measures that can help ensure alignment with sectoral expectations.

Projects should take into account the results of projects supported by other EU funding programmes. The complementarities must be described in the project proposals (Part B of the Application Form).

Applicants must ensure that the activities funded under this call are not already financed by other EU grants (e.g. Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters, Erasmus+ KA1, etc.). If a project involves a joint programme that already receives EU funding, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the additional value and complementarity of the new activities. Students who are already receiving full EU scholarships (e.g., Erasmus Mundus scholarships) for the same programme during the same period cannot receive additional financial support under this call.

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*). Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (e.g., *activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc*).<sup>16</sup>

Financial support to third parties is allowed for universities being part of the joint programmes that do not participate in the consortium as beneficiaries or associated partners. The only type of activities accepted is support for students (*see above, 'Activities that can be funded'*). Your project application must clearly specify how financial support to third parties will be managed, the mechanism for selecting the students, and also describe the results to be obtained.

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<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

### Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*).

### Duration

Projects should normally last 36 months.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

### Ethics

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards and
- applicable EU, international and national law.

## **7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion**

### Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for coordinators, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations;
- public legal entities, and institutions and organisations in the fields of education and training, youth and sport that have received over 50% of their annual revenue from public sources over the last two years;
- if the project requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information;
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*);
- prefinancing paid in instalments;
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*).

or



- propose no prefinancing;
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Quality' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their operational capacity via the following information:

- profiles (qualifications and experience) of the and implementing the project;
- description of the consortium participants;
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*).

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>17</sup>:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts);
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts);
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>18</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);

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<sup>17</sup> See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>18</sup> 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.



- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted<sup>19</sup> an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that<sup>20</sup>:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information;
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

Proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An **evaluation committee** (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- 1) The *ex aequo* proposals within the call topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these


<sup>19</sup> 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

<sup>20</sup> See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'.

- 2) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.
- 3) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund projects across the different themes in order to ensure a balanced spread of the geographical and thematic coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

**Grant preparation** will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Full compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

## 9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

### 1. Relevance (30 points)

Extent to which the proposal:

- addresses the themes, priorities and objectives of the call;
- demonstrates a strong rationale for adapting and designing innovative joint programmes, addressing identified gaps or emerging needs;
- presents a sound needs analysis that justifies the chosen approach, defining measurable and realistic targets (KPIs) directly linked to identified needs;
- specifies the scale and depth of planned activities (e.g., number and type of joint programmes to be created/adapted, number of students benefitting, number of qualifications with a joint European label delivered, etc);
- allocates and justifies at least half of the budget for student support , explaining how these enhance inclusiveness, accessibility and participation;

- applies state-of-the-art methods and techniques, leading to concrete results and solutions in general or in the project's geographical context (e.g., content, outputs, working methods, types of organisations involved);
- brings EU added value by fostering deeper transnational cooperation, producing results unattainable at country or institution level alone, involving partners from different countries, and delivering replicable models aligned with the EU's strategic and legislative context;
- supports the respect and promotion of shared EU values, including human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, human rights, and non-discrimination.

## **2. Quality:**

### **2.1 Project design and implementation (20 points):**

Extent to which the proposal:

- is technically sound, ensuring coherence between objectives, activities, timeline and expected results;
- demonstrates the quality and feasibility of the methodology proposed and its appropriateness for producing the expected results;
- the work programme is clear, complete, and feasible (including work packages, task/resource allocation, deliverables, milestones);
- demonstrates solid management arrangements. Timelines, organisation, coordination, supervision and other responsibilities are well defined and realistic;
- allocates appropriate resources to each activity and demonstrates the adequacy and effectiveness of the budget and financial planning to ensure best value for money;
- ensures appropriate financial management arrangements, aligning tasks, roles and resources among partners;
- sets out specific monitoring and quality assurance measures, including KPIs with a relevant timeline;
- identifies potential risks across the project life cycle and proposes mitigation strategies.

### **2.2 Partnership and cooperation arrangements (20 points):**

Extent to which the proposal:

- reflects the consortium's strengths, with complementary skills, expertise and experience aligned to the project's objectives;
- clearly describes the role, commitment and responsibilities of each organisation/team, in line with their capacity and expertise;
- establishes effective procedures for communication, decision-making and problem-solving within the consortium.

### 3. Impact (30 points):

Extent to which the proposal:

- includes an appropriate communication strategy to raise awareness of the project;
- adequately describes the benefits for target groups and how these will be tracked and evaluated, including the added capacity of higher education institutions to implement the joint European degree label and design more inclusive and accessible joint programmes that enhance student participation;
- defines a sound dissemination and exploitation approach to facilitate uptake of results by target groups;
- ensures transferability across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), highlighting models, practices and evidence that can be adopted more widely;
- provides measures and resources to sustain results and benefits beyond the project's lifetime.

Award criteria (both topics)	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	16	30
Quality — Project design and implementation	11	20
Quality — Partnership and cooperation arrangements	11	20
Impact	16	30
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 16/30, 11/20, 11/20 and 16/30 points.

Overall threshold: 60 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

### 10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

#### Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive starting

date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 6 above.*

### Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

### Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (requested grant amount): Up to EUR 1 000 000 per project;

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a lump sum grant. This means that it will reimburse a fixed amount, based on a lump sum or financing not linked to costs. The amount will be fixed by the granting authority on the basis of the estimated project budget and a funding rate of **80%**.

### Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

*Budget categories for this call:*

- Lump sum contributions <sup>21</sup>

*Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:*

- the lump sum amount must be calculated in accordance with the methodology set out in the lump sum decision and using the detailed budget table provided;
- the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:
  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: the estimated budget must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#))
  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: costs for financial support to third parties can be included in the detailed budget table. Maximum amount per third party: EUR 60 000 (*see above 'Eligible activities'*).

### Reporting and payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **70%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.


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<sup>21</sup> [Decision](#) of 24 March 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions and unit contributions under the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027.

In Month 19, you are required to submit a **progress report** as part of your deliverables. This report will not be connected to any payment obligations.

**Payment of the balance:** At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if you or one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for **keeping records** on all the work done.

### Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement (*art 23*).

### Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

### Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

#### Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5):*

- rights of use on results: Yes
- access to results for policy purposes: Yes
- access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability obligations: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5):*

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5):*

- EU restrictive measures: Yes

#### Other specificities

Consortium agreement: Yes

#### Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).

 For more information, see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

### **11. How to submit an application**

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

#### **a) create a user account and register your organisation**

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EULogin account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

#### **b) submit the proposal**

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Calls for proposals](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:



- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Part C containing additional project data. To be filled in directly online.
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System, otherwise the proposal may be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

### **Guidance on the use of generative AI tools for the preparation of the proposal**

When considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilised.

Specifically, applicants are required to:

- Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies;
- Provide a list of sources used to generate content and citations, including those generated by the AI tool and double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced;
- Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources and check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarising someone else's work;
- Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool in the proposal preparation, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge.



## 12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- Topic Q&A on the Topic page
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

### Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address:

[EACEA-PE-EUED@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EACEA-PE-EUED@ec.europa.eu)

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

## 13. Important



### IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No cumulation of funding/no double funding** — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions'). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants; projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this Call document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with Regulation [2018/1725](#). It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).