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Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

Call for proposals

European Degree Exploratory Action

ERASMUS-EDU-2026- EUED

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EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This call for proposals provides EU action grants under the Erasmus+ Programme to support the further development of the European Universities initiative and extend the path towards the Joint European Degree Label to other higher education institutions and consortia.

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

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

The call is launched in accordance with the 2026 Work Programme[3] and will be managed by the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **ERASMUS-EDU-2026-EUED: 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:

[1] 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).

[2] 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).

[3] Commission Implementing Decision C(2025) 7358 final of 05.11.2025 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2026 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[4] 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[5] and the STEM Education Strategic Plan[6] 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[7] 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[8].

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.

In line with the Resolution and the Recommendation, the Commission published the Operational Guide for the Joint European Degree Label[9] in June 2026 enabling the rollout of the Joint European Degree Label by awarding authorities at national and regional levels.

[4] COM(2024) 144 final

[5] COM(2025) 90 final

[6] COM(2025) 89 final

[7] C/2025/2939

[8] C/2025/3006

[9] European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Operational guide for the Joint European Degree Label, Publications Office of the European Union, 2026, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/7148441

This call for proposal supports the further rollout of the Joint European Degree Label by supporting higher education institutions to seek the Joint European Degree Label for their joint programmes and make them more inclusive and accessible for students. In doing so, it will help unlock the full potential of the European Universities initiative, involving higher education institutions from all parts of Europe, from capitals to rural areas, as well as any other type of higher education institutions' consortia (not being part of the European Universities initiative) willing to engage on the path towards a possible European degree/European Joint Degree label.

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

Objectives

This action is aimed at offering an experimental space for higher education institutions in the exploratory path towards a possible European degree including with a European label. In this context, it aims at supporting them 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[10] and the Operational Guide for the Joint European Degree Label.

These joint programmes may be established in any field or discipline, reflecting the broad scope of European cooperation in higher education. Nevertheless, attention should be given to areas of strategic relevance for Europe, including following areas corresponding to specific European priorities:

- Strategic educational fields identified in the Union of Skills, competitiveness Compass and the STEM Education Strategic Plan, in particular digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence as well as clean and circular technologies, bioeconomy, transport, energy, water resilience, healthcare, aerospace, and defence;
- New European Bauhaus, with particular relevance to interdisciplinary combinations of architecture, design, arts and culture, engineering, environmental and sustainability studies, urban and regional planning, and social sciences;
- Professional development of teachers and school leaders, including in teacher education, pedagogy, curriculum and instruction, educational psychology, digital and STEM education, inclusive and special education, language education, educational leadership and school management, supporting their skills, competences and capacity to respond to evolving educational needs.
- Sport, including disciplines related to sport sciences, physical education, health and wellbeing, coaching and sport management, as well as interdisciplinary approaches linking sport with education, inclusion and healthy lifestyles

Themes and priorities (scope)

Themes include:

1. Creation of new joint programmes aligned with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label;

[10] C/2025/3006

2. Adaptation of joint programmes to the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label;

3. Student support mechanisms that promote inclusive access and participation in joint programmes that have received the Joint European Degree Label or are in the process of receiving it.

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 may choose which theme(s) to address in their application. Proposals covering more than one theme are encouraged.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Applicants are encouraged to address their desired activities in separate, corresponding Work Packages:

a) Creation of new joint programmes aligned with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label

Applicants are expected to create at least one new joint programme at EQF level 6, 7, or 8, meeting the criteria for the Joint European Degree Label.

The proposed programmes must be **genuinely new** and demonstrate clear **innovation and European added value**. They should introduce a new joint educational offer resulting from the cooperation of the participating institutions.

The proposed programme(s) whose concept, initial activities or development have already been supported under other Erasmus+ actions, such as European Universities alliances, Erasmus Mundus or other Erasmus+ actions, will not be considered genuinely new. Applicants should declare that the proposed programme(s) have not been previously initiated or developed under another Erasmus+ action.

In the application, the applicants must provide for each proposed programme:

- Theme and subject area, including a description of the discipline or interdisciplinary field covered;
- The list of partner universities participating in the joint programme, including their role;
- The programme concept, including objectives, target learners, estimated number of students to be enrolled in the first cohorts, and expected learning outcomes;
- An explanation of the programme's rationale in relation to the European Joint Degree Label criteria;
- The planned accreditation pathway, including indicative timeline.

Applicants should demonstrate, in particular, how the new programme(s) will be designed from the outset in accordance with the European Joint Degree Label criteria, and:

- respond to emerging educational, societal or labour-market needs;
- bring together the complementary expertise and academic strengths of the participating institutions;
- offer a genuinely integrated joint curriculum, rather than a collection of existing courses or programmes;
- provide a meaningful international and/or transnational learning experience, including appropriate mobility opportunities;
- introduce innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment where relevant; and

- contribute to strengthening the quality, attractiveness and European dimension of higher education.

By the end of the project, the consortium must provide:

- The new programme design, and an explanation on how it aligns with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label;
- Evidence of the steps undertaken to obtain accreditation and the Joint European Degree Label.

If accreditation and award of the Joint European Degree Label cannot be completed within the project timeframe, the beneficiaries must explain in the final report:

- The stage reached in the process;
- The efforts undertaken to obtain accreditation and the Joint European Degree Label during the project timeframe;
- The challenges and obstacles that prevented completion.

b) Adaptation of existing joint programmes

Applicants are expected to adapt at least one previously developed joint programme at European Qualifications Framework (EQF) levels 6, 7, and/or 8 to align with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label.

In the application, applicants must provide for each programme:

- Name and details of the joint programme to be adapted;
- Names of all partner universities involved in the programme;
- Current stage of implementation, including accreditation status and, where applicable, student enrolment;
- 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, etc.,);
- Indicative pathway towards accreditation/re-accreditation (where relevant) and the Joint European Degree Label.

By the end of the project, the consortium must provide evidence that the adapted programme has obtained the Joint European Degree Label.

If the award of the Joint European Degree Label cannot be completed within the project timeframe, the beneficiaries must explain in the final report:

- The stage reached in the process;
- The efforts undertaken to obtain accreditation and the Joint European Degree Label during the project timeframe;
- The challenges and obstacles that prevented completion.

c) Support for students

Applicants are expected to put in place student support measures including:

- **(1) Direct financial support to students**, such as scholarships, mobility grant or support to offset tuition fee differences. These measures, implemented as Financial Support to Third Parties (see also below 'Eligible activities'), should directly enable students to participate in and complete the joint programme(s);
- **(2) Student services**, including, guidance and mentoring, accessibility and inclusion services, digital tools, language support and outreach activities; and
- **(3) Institutional support for programme implementation**, covering the activities necessary for the effective running of the joint programme(s), such as

programme coordination and management, joint admission and selection, academic and administrative coordination, etc.

The measures should target students enrolled in joint programmes that have received the Joint European Degree Label, or are in the process of receiving the Label, and should aim to guarantee inclusiveness, reduce barriers to participation and facilitate cross-border mobility.

In Proposal Part B (Section 2.1.4 Cost effectiveness and financial management), applicants should explain the methodology for calculating the unit costs applied in the detailed Excel budget table for the different types of student support.

During project implementation, the consortium must provide a **list of students benefiting from direct financial support from the grant, together with the corresponding period and type of support provided** (see also below 'eligible activities').

Expected impact

- Enhanced visibility and understanding of the Joint European Degree Label at national and European levels;
- Increased number of joint programmes that have obtained the Joint European Degree Label;
- Increased number of joint programmes aligned with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label.
- Greater inclusiveness and accessibility of joint programmes through efficient direct student support;
- Increased attractiveness for the joint programmes awarded or aligned with the Joint European Degree Label.

3. Available budget

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

Topic	Topic budget
European Degree Exploratory Action	**EUR 14 000 000**

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:	5 November 2026
Deadline for submission:	18 February 2027 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Evaluation:	mid-February-June 2027
Information on evaluation results:	August 2027
GA signature:	November 2027

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).

Given the scope of this action, applicants may include any other organisation consisting of the above referred higher education institutions specifically set up with the purpose of implementing deep institutional transnational cooperation, including joint educational activities. An ECHE is not required for this type of organisations. Those organisations cannot be coordinators.

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[11]. In relation to the typology, in addition to higher education institutions, associated partners

[11] Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus (suspended), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Holy See, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Russian Federation (suspended), San Marino, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Ukraine.

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.

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[12].

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'[13]. ⚠ 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)[14]. 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[15]. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors,

12 See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

13 For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

14 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.

15 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).

recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). Currently no such measures are in place.

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), from 2 different eligible countries *(see also above, 'Eligible participants (eligible countries)*.;

Eligible activities

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

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

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).

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*).[16]

Financial support to third parties is allowed for students receiving direct funds from the participating universities, such as scholarships, mobility grants, tuition fee offsets, etc. Your project application must clearly specify how financial support to third parties (students) will be managed, the mechanism for selecting the students (which must be open, published widely and conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality). Your project application must also describe the results to be obtained. The relevant cost category in the Excel budget table (D1. Financial support to third parties) should treat students as units, and Part B (Section 2.1.4 Cost effectiveness and financial management) should detail the method used to calculate the total estimated amount of student support under the relevant Work Package. Students who are already receiving full EU scholarships (e.g., Erasmus Mundus scholarships, ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-SSEF, etc.,) for the same programme during the same period cannot receive additional financial support under this call.

Geographic location (target countries)

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

Duration

Projects should normally last at least 24 months.

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

Ethics

Projects must comply with:

[16] See, for instance, Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy.

- 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 team 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[17]:

- 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[18] (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);
- 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,

[17] See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

[18] '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.

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[19] 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[20]:

- 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 will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these 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

[19] '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.

[20] See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

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 (25 points)

Extent to which the proposal:

- addresses one or several themes and the objectives of the call;
- presents a sound needs analysis that justifies the chosen project objectives, defining measurable and realistic targets (Key Performance Indicators) directly linked to these objectives;
- specifies the scope and scale of planned activities (e.g., number and type of joint programmes to be created/adapted, number of students benefitting, expected progress towards the award of the Joint European Degree Label);
- (if covering theme 3): allocates and justifies a proportionate part of the budget for student support, explaining how this will enhance inclusiveness, accessibility and participation;
- brings EU added value by fostering deeper transnational cooperation;
- supports the respect and promotion of shared EU values.

2. Quality:

2.1 Project design and implementation (25 points):

Extent to which the proposal:

- is technically sound, ensuring coherence between objectives, activities, timeline and expected results;

- presents a work plan that is clear, and realistic;
- demonstrates solid management arrangements, capable of supporting the tight implementation schedule for the programme(s) accreditation/assessment pathway;
- allocates appropriate resources to each activity and demonstrates the adequacy and effectiveness of the budget to ensure best value for money.

2.2 Partnership and cooperation arrangements (25 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 (25 points):

Extent to which the proposal:

- includes an appropriate communication and dissemination strategy to raise awareness of the project activities and results;
- adequately describes the benefits for target groups and sets out how these will be tracked and evaluated;
- provides measures and resources to sustain results and benefits beyond the project's lifetime.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	13	25
Quality — Project design and implementation	13	25
Quality — Partnership and cooperation arrangements	13	25
Impact	13	25
Overall (pass) scores	**60**	**100**

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 13/25, 13/25, 13/25 and 13/25 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):

For projects covering theme 1: max 100 000 per joint programme to be created.

For projects covering theme 2: max 70 000 per joint programme to be adapted.

For projects covering theme 3:max 600 000 per programme - Student services and institutional support for programme implementation should normally not exceed 20% of the overall requested amount for student support.

For projects covering more than one theme, the maximum requested grant amount is the sum of the maximum amounts applicable to each theme covered. This must be reflected in the Detailed budget table and explained in Part B (Section 2.1.4).

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 [21]

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.

At mid-term, 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.

[21] Decision of 24 March 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions and unit contributions under the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027.

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

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 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.