

D5.2

MOBILITY HANDBOOK

CHARM-EIGHT ∞ (CHARM-EU EXPANSION, INTER-INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS,
GOVERNANCE, HIGHER EDUCATION, TRANSFORMATION)

DELIVERABLE D5.2 – CHARM-EU: MOBILITY HANDBOOK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **CHARM-EU Mobility Handbook** is a comprehensive and practical guide designed for professionals engaged in international mobility at both strategic and operational levels within the CHARM-EU Alliance. Drawing from the CHARM-EU Interactive Mobility Handbook (2022), this new edition expands its scope to inspire stakeholders to build on the innovative initiatives developed under the CHARM-EIGHT project (2023–2024).

The Handbook is structured around key questions to provide clarity and actionable insights:

1. Why focus on this topic?

Each chapter highlights the aims, rationales, and unique CHARM-EU interpretations of specific mobility topics, aligning them with the overarching goals of the CHARM-EIGHT project.

2. What has CHARM-EU done so far?

Activities implemented by CHARM-EU are detailed, showcasing the Alliance's efforts to innovate and enhance mobility practices.

3. How to replicate these efforts?

Practical recommendations and step-by-step guides are provided to help institutions implement CHARM-EU's initiatives internally or externally.

4. What can we learn from CHARM-EU?

Case studies and best practices from CHARM-EU's pilot activities are shared to serve as replicable models for others.

5. Where to find additional support?

References to internal and external resources are included to guide readers in successfully implementing the outlined actions.

The questions are answered in relation to the key areas covered in the Handbook, including:

- **Semester Mobility:** CHARM-EU establishes a flexible mobility network, enabling students from all disciplines (with some restrictions) to study for a term or academic year across partner universities.
- **Traineeship Mobility:** The CHARM-EU traineeship mobility programme fosters international collaboration and professional development by enabling students to undertake work placements or research traineeships at member universities, supported by Erasmus+ grants, through both student-initiated and host-initiated models.

- **Blended Intensive Programs (BIPs):** The launch of Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) under CHARM-EU aims to foster innovation, inclusivity, and transdisciplinary collaboration, while expanding access to international mobility and creating opportunities for underrepresented student groups to benefit from these experiences.
- **Mobility and Micro-Credentials:** The CHARM-EU Alliance explores the potential of micro-credentials to enhance internationalization by linking them to mobility components, facilitating cross-border recognition, promoting equity of access, and addressing gaps in knowledge through an initial framework that integrates micro-credentials and mobility in innovative ways.
- **Doctoral Mobility:** CHARM-EU aims to increase doctoral mobility by fostering international collaboration, enhancing research quality, expanding networks, while addressing the challenges of diverse institutional structures and systems to create a more integrated and inclusive academic environment for doctoral candidates and beyond.
- **Intercultural Preparation:** The intercultural preparation course aims to train students and staff going on mobility periods, raising awareness about interculturality and providing support before exchanges, with the light version of the course launched in November 2024, and the extended version under development.
- **Transnational Online Learning:** Transnational Online Learning (TOL) courses offered by CHARM-EU partner universities provide students with the opportunity to expand their academic portfolios and gain international experience through hybrid or online courses, with pilots implemented in the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 academic years.
- **Staff Mobility:** Staff mobility within the CHARM-EU Alliance supports professional development, international collaboration, and skill enhancement by offering academic and non-academic staff access to teaching, training and other types of peer learning opportunities funded through Erasmus+.
- **Credit Recognition:** The CHARM-EU Alliance aims to enhance transparency and efficiency in credit recognition processes, simplifying exchange planning for students and helping them identify compatible study programs more easily.

This Handbook consolidates CHARM-EU's expertise and provides a roadmap for institutions seeking to elevate their international mobility practices. By integrating CHARM-EU's educational principles, it aims to strengthen collaboration, innovation, and sustainability in the European Higher Education landscape.

INTRODUCTION

Internationalisation is a key element of European University Alliances, offering students, staff, and institutions the opportunity to enhance teaching & learning, research, and societal engagement through diverse forms of physical, virtual, and blended exchanges. As one of the European University Alliances, CHARM-EU strives to create an inter-university campus that facilitates the seamless exchange of knowledge and experiences, fostering a more inclusive and interconnected academic community across borders.

CHARM-EU aims to significantly contribute to the European Union's vision of engaging 50% of the student population in international exchanges – whether through physical or virtual means. CHARM-EU sees physical mobility as more than just a logistical action; it is a strategic tool for fostering intercultural collaboration among students, academics, and staff. Through this approach, mobility becomes a key enabler of personalized and innovative learning experiences tailored to the diverse needs of the CHARM-EU community. On the other hand, CHARM-EU is also committed to providing virtual exchange opportunities, ensuring that students can benefit from the cross-border collaboration with CHARM-EU partners without physical relocation.

CHARM-EU is implementing two complementary approaches to achieve its goals:

- Fine-tuning and upscaling current mobility initiatives: CHARM-EU aims to enhance its current international offerings, such as semester mobility, blended intensive programmes (BIPs), traineeship mobility, and the mobility of doctoral candidates and staff. This includes refining the internationalisation scheme and funding procedures for the MGSC joint master's programme. CHARM-EU seeks to establish a robust support system for these initiatives, ensuring they are well-integrated and accessible across its partner institutions.
- Systemic and action-led innovations: CHARM-EU is focused on pioneering new approaches to internationalisation, driven by adaptive innovations and fully bottom-up initiatives. This includes the development of a transnational online learning catalogue, the integration of micro-credentials with internationalisation experiences, and the expansion of intercultural preparation courses. CHARM-EU is dedicated to addressing systemic challenges, such as credit recognition and streamlining processes to facilitate smoother academic transitions for students moving between institutions. By fostering these innovative solutions, CHARM-EU aims not only to meet current needs but also to set the stage for future advancements in international mobility and education.

SEMESTER MOBILITY

Aims and actions

As a means to work towards the goal of 50% mobility within the Alliance, the partners decided to establish an open mobility agreement, also referred to as the CHARM-EU Mobility Network. The CHARM-EU Mobility Network aims to take further steps towards these objectives and to be a channel to promote and enhance the inner networks of student and staff exchange at all levels and from all academic disciplines.

Each CHARM-EU University commits itself to accept students for one term or for one academic year from each of the partners of this CHARM-EU Mobility Network, provided that the student meets the general academic criteria and language requirements up to a predefined quota per study programme and hosting university. The CHARM-EU Mobility Network allows participating universities to place additional students alongside existing departmental level bilateral agreements.

Semester mobility is a key part of the CHARM-EU Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability (MGCS) joint programme. To learn more about the MGCS programme, visit the official website: [CHARM-EU Master's Programme](#). Detailed information about mobility funding and support concerning the MGCS programme is available in the [Interactive Mobility Handbook](#).

It is important to note that there are still restrictions to subject areas to participate in semester mobility. For example, Medicine and Veterinarian Sciences are restricted due to language requirements in the host country. There is an ambition to change these restrictions in order to allow for students in more areas of study to participate in semester mobility.

Benefits for the students

Benefits specifically connected to the CHARM-EU Mobility Network are:

- **Expanding access to a variety of subject areas:** Ordinary Erasmus+ agreements are usually limited to subject areas. The great advantage of the open agreements within the CHARM-EU Mobility Network are that they are not limited by subject areas (with some exceptions, see above), and students can select courses more freely, of course within the requirements of the home university.
- **Improving advising to students through strengthening of partner relationships:** The partner universities know each other well, and are able to advise students on what to expect when abroad and how to prepare for the exchange semester.

General benefits for students that go on semester mobility are:

- Widening one's academic horizons, challenge oneself, gain a deeper understanding of one's field of study;

- Immersing oneself in a new environment, enhancing cultural awareness and sensitivity, developing “21st Century skills” and personal growth;
- Developing language skills;
- Building a network of colleagues across multiple universities and countries.

Due to the larger amount of mobility to the same partners, more and deeper info will be available on the CHARM-EU website for the students about the specific aspects of mobility (experience on the courses, housing, student life, etc.).

Benefits for CHARM-EU

Hosting exchange students from the partner universities in CHARM-EU offers numerous advantages, both on an institutional level and for the Alliance as such.

International students often bring unique skills, knowledge and experiences that can contribute to the academic community. This addition to campus life can help enrich the classroom discussions and broaden the perspective of all students. The international environment on campus can inspire local students to pursue their own exchange opportunities, promoting a culture of internationalization that is mutually beneficial.

The presence of CHARM-EU exchange students can strengthen the Alliance’s network and reputation and could possibly also help promote the Alliance’s MGCS programme. The exchange of students within the CHARM-EU network will help boosting outgoing and incoming numbers for each member university. Closer collaboration of the partners will result in strengthened trust. A university level mobility agreement means higher visibility of the mobility opportunities.

Recommendations

The following steps should help enhance the student semester mobility experience within the CHARM-EU Alliance:

- **Establish the strategic background and structures for semester mobility:** Create a Multilateral Inter-institutional Agreement complemented by a continuously updated factsheet that indicates the number of places offered per partner institution.
- **Clarify available opportunities:** Provide detailed information about the mobility options available to students, making it easier for them to understand and choose the best fit for their academic and personal goals.
- **Clearly communicate the requirements for students:** Ensure that all necessary information is easily accessible and understandable, emphasizing that the process involves nomination rather than application.

- **Provide bilateral consultations:** Conduct bilateral consultations between partner universities to address specific issues and streamline processes.
- **Involve student counsellors:** Engage student counsellors through events such as job shadowing, staff weeks, or dedicated workshops to better support students in their mobility journey.
- **Develop course packages:** Create one or several course packages at each university to simplify the recognition process for students, making it easier for them to transfer credits. For further information about the process of credit recognition, please read about [Credit recognition](#) here.
- **Offer incentives for students:** Identify and implement incentives to encourage students to choose CHARM universities for their mobility experience. This could include unique academic opportunities, cultural experiences or other.
- **Simplify application and acceptance procedures:** Streamline the application procedures for CHARM-EU agreements by simplifying language documentation and refining the nomination process.
- **Develop mobility windows:** If not already in place, establish mobility windows to provide structured periods during which students can participate in exchange programs. (For a definition of mobility window, please go to the [Credit recognition](#) chapter.)
- **Simplify credit recognition:** Work on simplifying the procedures for credit recognition to ensure a smooth transition for students moving between universities.
- **Promote opportunities:** Share best practices, create a bank of promotional materials, and develop incentives to attract students to the CHARM-EU mobility programs. Promotion through regular announcements on the official CHARM-EU website as well as local promotions within network. This can include collection of student testimonials as well through use of CHARM-EU student ambassadors. Recommendations of best practices for student experience during the mobility. Increase in positive student testimonials lead to increase in mobility.
- **Run dedicated workshops:** Organize a design-thinking workshop to identify challenges and develop innovative solutions for improving student mobility within the Alliance.
- **Engage student organisations:** Collaborate with the CHARM-EU Student Council and the university level student organisations.
- **“Live my life”:** arranging job shadowing within CHARM-EU could make it easier for the international relations officers to advise students going on exchange within the network.

Case studies and best practices

- Engineering Schools in France – More information on the restructure of mobility for Engineering Schools in France can be found here: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/france/mobility-higher-education>

Further resources

- The previous CHARM-EU Handbook can be found here: <https://charm-eu.eu/resource/mobility-matrix-handbook-and-funding-system/>

TRAINESHIP MOBILITY

Aims and actions

The traineeship mobility program offered by CHARM-EU member institutions enables students to **undertake work placements** at other member universities while benefiting from an Erasmus grant. This initiative provides considerable advantages for both students and host institutions. Student trainees have the opportunity to join various host units, either by **supporting administrative teams** (e.g., international offices, CHARM offices, communication departments, alumni networks, or departmental administration) or by participating in ongoing **research activities** within university institutes and research groups through research traineeships.

The main goal of the traineeship mobility program is to **promote collaboration and hands-on learning across CHARM-EU member universities**. By working in different institutional settings, students can develop their professional skills, gain international experience, and learn from new perspectives. At the same time, the initiative helps universities share knowledge, build field-specific partnerships, and improve their practices. This initiative supports CHARM-EU's mission to prepare students for global challenges while strengthening connections between its member institutions.

As part of the traineeship mobility scheme, there are two primary hosting models:

1. **Student-Initiated Traineeships:** Students are encouraged to proactively reach out to units where they wish to undertake a compulsory or additional traineeship, often as part of their curriculum. This approach is typically supported and promoted by the sending institution.
2. **Host-Initiated Traineeships:** In this structured and coordinated model, host institutions define tasks in advance, and the available traineeship opportunities are centrally collected and advertised on the CHARM-EU website.

The following steps have been undertaken to advance the development of the traineeship mobility scheme:

- Conducting a concept and institutional survey;
- Creating an offer form;
- Disseminating the call for offers;
- Publishing the initial traineeship opportunities on the CHARM-EU website;
- Launching the Chemistry Mobility Network, featuring traineeship opportunities for students.

Benefits for the host units

- Fresh and enthusiastic perspectives
 - Benefit from the fresh perspectives of an international student, enriched by their background and mobility experience.
 - Gain an enthusiastic team member to assist with administrative tasks, event organization, and material preparation.
- Attracting talent
 - Enhance the institution's attractiveness to other interns and potential new employees by sharing the positive internship experiences.
 - Enhance the institution's attractiveness to former interns as a potential future educational venue.
- Financial support for interns
 - Interns receive an Erasmus+ grant, easing financial concerns that would come with hiring local student colleagues. (Optionally, HEIs can provide additional financial support in accordance with national or internal regulations.)
- Future employment opportunities
 - Potentially offer part-time or full-time positions to interns if there is mutual interest.
- Academic and research collaboration
 - Curriculum enrichment: Insights from diverse educational environments can inform and improve curricula.
 - Inter-university collaboration: Strengthens ties between institutions, facilitating joint research projects, academic exchanges, and sharing of best practices.
 - Innovation and knowledge transfer: Encourages the exchange of innovative ideas and practices, benefiting the wider academic community.

Obstacles for the host units

One key challenge for host units is that the responsibility to initiate contact lies with the students. For example, finding a research placement typically requires students to independently approach academics, similar to applying for an open position. Academics may be hesitant to engage unless students take the lead, as they are unlikely to invest time in proactively recruiting trainees.

Benefits for the students

- Enhanced skill development
 - Practical experience: Students gain hands-on experience in their field of study, applying theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios.
 - Diverse hard and soft skill sets: Exposure to different teaching methods, research practices, and administrative systems enhances adaptability and problem-solving skills.
 - Academic opportunities: Participation in the professional activities of a higher education institution might open up new educational or other academic opportunities, e.g. postgraduate offers for the participating students.
- Increased employability
 - Work experience: Traineeship mobilities provide valuable work experience, making students more attractive to future employers.
 - Networking opportunities: Interactions with professors and peers across Europe can lead to job offers and collaborations post-graduation.
- Cultural and linguistic enrichment
 - Cultural awareness: Living and working in a different country fosters cultural sensitivity and broadens perspectives.
 - Language skills: Immersion in a foreign language environment improves language proficiency, an asset in the global job market.
- Personal growth
 - Independence and confidence: Navigating another university environment fosters independence, resilience, and confidence.
 - Global mindset: Students develop a global outlook, essential for addressing global challenges.
- Financial and logistical support
 - Erasmus grants: Financial support reduces the economic burden on students, making international experiences more accessible.
 - Structured support systems: Established frameworks within CHARM-EU ensure smooth administrative processes and student support.

Obstacles for students

Students may face challenges in proactively finding and securing a host unit, as it often requires them to independently reach out and navigate the application process. As a response to this challenge, CHARM-EU creates an offer of possible traineeship opportunities, providing students with a structured list of options to simplify the process and ensure better alignment with their academic and professional goals.

Additionally, adapting to unfamiliar institutional environments and overcoming cultural or linguistic barriers can be demanding, especially within a limited traineeship period. To address this, CHARM-EU provides a pre-exchange [intercultural preparation](#), equipping students with the skills and knowledge to navigate cultural differences, enhance their communication abilities, and adapt more smoothly to their new institutional environments.

Benefits for CHARM-EU

The traineeship mobility system of CHARM-EU partner institutions strengthens inter-university collaborations and supports knowledge transfer through the exchange of trainees. The system does not just contribute to reaching the ambitious goals set by CHARM-EU of providing transnational learning experience for 50% of the student population, but also creates new ways of internal dissemination, networking and ultimately internal transformation opportunities for the Alliance members.

Recommendations

This step-by-step guide provides a clear framework for both departments and students to effectively engage with the CHARM-EU traineeship mobility system. It outlines key actions for promoting the program, collecting and managing offers from departments, supporting both the host institutions and trainees, and ensuring a smooth, structured experience. By offering detailed instructions tailored to each stakeholder, this guide aims to maximize the mutual benefits of the traineeship, enhancing institutional collaboration while enriching students' academic and professional development through international mobility.

Towards the host units

Institutional survey

Conducting an institutional survey and feasibility check is essential for assessing the openness and capacity of an institution to participate in a traineeship mobility scheme. It ensures that potential obstacles – such as national and institutional regulations, budgetary constraints, and other limiting factors – are identified early, allowing the institution to tailor the traineeship concept to its unique context.

Key elements of the questionnaire:

- Current Erasmus+ traineeship mobility funding
 - Possibility of funding traineeship mobility through Erasmus+ grants;
 - Number of funded mobility opportunities per year;
 - Timing and frequency of the submission of traineeship applications
- Alternative funding sources
 - Complementary resources besides Erasmus+ to fund traineeship mobility;
- Post-graduation funding
 - Erasmus+ funding availability for traineeship mobility after graduation;
 - Number of funded post-graduation mobility opportunities;
- Support for external placements
 - External stakeholders for traineeship mobility;
 - Institutional assistance in securing placements with companies or collaborating organizations.

This data will help determine the feasibility of implementing the mobility scheme at each institution.

Information and promotion

Promoting the benefits of hosting trainees is crucial for attracting host units to participate, highlighting the benefit from additional support in administrative tasks or research initiatives, and it's an opportunity to enhance international collaboration and create lasting relationships with talented students.

A fact sheet should include:

- Benefits for the host units (e.g., support in daily operations, contribution to research projects).
- Examples of roles and responsibilities of trainees.
- Erasmus+ funding details (students receive grants, possible additional support from the host).
- Success stories or testimonials from previous trainees and host units.

Collection of offers

To facilitate the process of gathering offers from host units, use a standardized template where they can specify:

- The nature of the tasks and responsibilities the trainee will undertake.
- Required skills and language proficiency.
- The host unit's expectations (e.g., working hours, reporting structure).
- Details on any additional support offered (e.g., accommodation, additional financial resources to be offered voluntarily by the host institution).
- This form should be attached to the letter sent to the host units. Once completed, offers should be compiled and forwarded to CHARM-EU Partners for publication among their students.

Support for the host units

Ensure departments are supported throughout the process by providing:

- Access to clear guidelines on hosting trainees, including administrative and legal obligations.
- Contact points within the CHARM-EU office and the international office to handle any queries. Host units are encouraged to ensure continuous communication with their international offices and coordinators throughout the mobility period. This will provide departments and trainees with timely assistance and guidance in case of any questions or challenges, helping to ensure a smooth and well-coordinated traineeship experience.
- A timeline of the key steps, from application to the completion of the traineeship.
- Guidelines for the selection of the candidates, if applicable.

Mentoring of the students

Departments should designate mentors for the trainees to guide them throughout their placement. Mentorship should include:

- Regular check-ins to discuss progress and challenges.
- Opportunities for the trainee to engage in meaningful tasks that align with their skills and learning objectives.
- A feedback mechanism to ensure both the department and trainee benefit from the experience.

Towards the students

Promotion

Promote the traineeship programme through university channels, including:

- Information sessions that outline the benefits of the traineeship for students' academic and professional development.
- Flyers, newsletters, and social media campaigns highlighting the Erasmus+ funding and opportunities for international experience.
- Success stories or testimonials from former trainees to motivate prospective applicants.

Support for the students

To ensure a smooth experience for students:

- Provide detailed information on the application process, eligibility criteria, and financial aspects (e.g., Erasmus+ grant, possible additional support from host universities).
- Encourage students to take a proactive approach in finding opportunities by networking within their departments and contacting potential supervisors. However, students should be informed of the formal selection process at the host institution and the conditions that may apply (such as specific skill requirements or language proficiency).
- Guide them on how to fill out the necessary paperwork (Learning Agreement) and what to expect during and after the mobility.
- Offer advice on potential challenges during their traineeship, such as adjusting to a new work environment or cultural differences, and whom to contact if issues arise.

Case studies and best practices

Joint Student Exchange Network and Research Project Portfolio in Chemistry

Overview

The CHARM-EU Alliance launched a joint student exchange network and interdisciplinary research project portfolio to enhance academic collaboration and student engagement in cutting-edge chemistry research. This initiative allows highly motivated master's students to work on interdisciplinary research projects under the mentorship of faculty across participating universities.

Objectives

The objective of this initiative is twofold:

- Providing advanced training in the theory and application of chemistry to students undertaking this mobility through an interdisciplinary research project. Possible applications for the benefit of society to address global challenges for sustainability will also be sought.
- Intensification of the collaborative effort of CHARM-EU Alliance partners through networking and application of elements of the CHARM-EU educational principles at the student exchange level.

If successful, the model is envisioned to be extended to other academic disciplines, fostering broader interdisciplinary research opportunities within CHARM-EU.

Objectives

1. **Advanced training for students:** Students participating in this program receive advanced training in both the theory and practical application of chemistry. The research projects emphasize real-world applications aimed at addressing global sustainability challenges.
2. **Strengthening collaboration within CHARM-EU:** The initiative seeks to intensify collaborative efforts among Alliance partners by creating a structured network for student exchanges. This approach integrates CHARM-EU's educational principles, promoting interdisciplinary learning and fostering stronger academic and professional networks.

Expected impact

The joint program exemplifies the potential of European university alliances to innovate in education and research. It not only enriches student learning experiences but also strengthens institutional collaborations, paving the way for scalable and transferable models across disciplines and alliances.

Further resources:

- [European Commission - Erasmus traineeship](#)
- [ESN Internships](#)

BLENDING INTENSIVE PROGRAMS

Aims and actions

The [Erasmus+ 2021-2027](#) program introduces a new form of international mobility under the umbrella of [Blended Intensive Programmes \(BIPs\)](#). After the initial experiences with this type of mobility in the 2021 call, and the set of BIPs for students and staff developed within the framework of the CHARM-EU Alliance, the need has been identified to offer practical guidance and insights for planning, designing, preparing and running a BIP.

Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) offer unique opportunities by integrating virtual teaching and learning with short periods of physical mobility. This innovative approach facilitates meaningful interactions among participants.

BIPs are short, intensive programs organized by a minimum of three European universities from three different Erasmus program member countries. These programs combine short stays abroad (between 5 and 30 days) for students and/or staff with a mandatory virtual component. This virtual part brings participants together online to work collectively and simultaneously on specific tasks that are integrated into the BIP and count towards the overall learning outcomes.

The aim of these programs is to foster the ability to develop and implement innovative teaching and learning practices in participating higher education institutions. BIPs can be for mobility for studies or internships and can also be organized for teaching staff as well as staff training, including both teaching and administrative staff. Additionally, Erasmus considers short-term mobility a way to promote inclusion, as it allows the participation of a large number of participants and makes mobility accessible to groups who traditionally face difficulties participating in long-term mobility, such as those who work or have dependents. It is important to remember the European Commission's goal for 2030 that 50% of students should have participated in an international mobility experience by the end of their studies, and BIPs could play a crucial role in achieving this goal.

BIPs are mandatory and integrated into the CHARM-EU MGCS programme from the pilot edition, applicable to every cohort. Additionally, other BIPs across CHARM-EU partner institutions have been successfully implemented. However, our focus in this chapter of the International Mobility Handbook is to share our expertise and experiences, aiming to enhance the implementation of BIPs in Higher Education Institutions. This includes addressing administrative aspects and supporting teaching staff involved in course development, design, and organization.

In general, embedding BIPs into the curriculum offers a more inclusive mobility option for students from underrepresented groups. Short-term mobility is particularly appealing to students with caregiving responsibilities or those who are working, while the recognition of ECTS credits within mandatory modules adds further motivation. This approach alleviates concerns about extending

their studies due to mobility periods outside compulsory courses, helping students avoid potential financial strain.

From a strategic, institutional, and academic perspective, BIPs combine international mobility with innovative teaching methods, presenting an opportunity for modernization and a commitment to quality in academic programs. Additionally, within the academic offerings of higher education institutions, they clearly represent added value. For participants, BIPs provide an experience of international mobility and innovative teaching. This is true even for members of the coordinating university or the host institution of the international mobility activities. Although these members do not partake in international mobility, they still participate in an intercultural, online training activity and the international in-person meeting at the institution, contributing to internationalization at home.

To provide a comprehensive overview of BIP implementation possibilities, we conducted a practice-sharing survey among CHARM-EU partners. This included comparing academic and administrative processes to ensure these guidelines are beneficial for international offices and faculty members alike.

Benefits for the students

- **Expanding academic horizons:** Challenge students to gain a deeper understanding of their field of study and explore new academic perspectives.
- **Acquire digital skills and employability:** Virtual component allows to increase of digital competences and enhanced employability through a better understanding of digital tools and technologies. By blending online and in-person learning, students can gain valuable insights and experiences that will benefit their academic and professional futures.
- **Personal development, social inclusion and cultural immersion:** Engage with new environments to enhance cultural awareness and sensitivity, develop essential nowadays skills, and foster personal growth and tackle real-world problems effectively. Promote teamwork among diverse international participants, fostering intercultural understanding.
- **Critical thinking and problem solving:** Design challenges that require students to analyse situations, brainstorm solutions, and implement ideas collaboratively.
- **Language development:** Improve language skills through immersive experiences and practical use.
- **Networking opportunities:** Build a professional network with colleagues from multiple universities and countries, expanding global connections.

- **Internationalisation at home:** Hosting exchange students from the partner universities offers to local students an internationalisation at home experience. International students contribute unique perspectives, skills, and experiences that add depth to the academic community. Their involvement enriches classroom discussions and encourages students to consider global viewpoints. An internationally diverse campus also motivates local students to seek their own study abroad experiences, creating a dynamic culture of internationalization that benefits both local and international students alike.

These aspects contribute to a rich learning environment that prepares students for future challenges in a globalized world.

Benefits for CHARM-EU

The main benefits for CHARM-EU on implementing BIPs is a feedback loop among the individual and collective institutions of the Alliance based on an opportunity to bring innovation to the academic offer, a chance to improve inclusive policies and a possibility to increase interconnection.

BIPs can serve as a powerful tool for fostering closer networking among stakeholders in specific fields, including researchers, industry professionals, policymakers, educators, and community leaders. Moreover, BIPs enable stakeholders to establish long-term partnerships and networks, which can lead to future collaborations, research projects, funding opportunities, or policy initiatives.

The innovative approach of BIP courses allows a uniquely positioned to address complex social matters, as they transcend national, disciplinary, and institutional boundaries. These programs offer opportunities for transdisciplinary and innovative teaching and learning methodologies, including online collaboration, research-based traineeship, and challenge-based alignment. Through BIPs, transnational and interdisciplinary teams can collaborate to address challenges related to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals or other societal issues identified by countries, regions, cities, or companies.

On the other hand, the inclusion perspective that BIPs offer fully responds to the European Commission's goals to make the Erasmus+ Programme more inclusive and accessible for all students. By offering new and more flexible mobility formats that blend physical and virtual experiences, BIPs aim to reach students from diverse backgrounds, fields of study, and academic cycles. These programs are designed to provide opportunities for students and staff who are unable to participate in long-term mobility. While BIPs create a framework that appeals to a broader student base, higher education institutions (HEIs) must actively promote them to underrepresented groups among mobile students, offering tailored guidance and support where needed. Additionally, BIPs can serve as an introduction to international mobility, offering a shorter, more structured experience for those looking to familiarize themselves with the principles and practicalities of Erasmus+ mobility.

And last, but not least BIPs, with their flexible structure, can enhance collaboration with international partners, businesses, organizations, and local authorities. They also create opportunities for mobility in fields that are often restricted by stringent national regulations and rigid curricula, such as healthcare studies, which have traditionally been underrepresented in internationalization efforts.

Recommendations

1. Planning a BIP

1.1. Promotion of BIP opportunities among CHARM-EU partner institutions

The planning phase should prioritize promoting the opportunity and engaging colleagues through difference channels (e.g., professional communities, networking events, official communication platforms) to identify the needs of prospective stakeholder groups. This will ensure that BIPs are tailored to the interests and requirements of all involved parties, fostering strong collaboration and ensuring the success of the programmes.

1.2. Erasmus+ application

HEI IROs should plan in advance how many BIPs they intend to apply for as coordinators in the yearly Erasmus+ project. It is also advisable to consider how many BIPs the institution is willing to participate in and estimate the total number of outgoing participants that will be funded to ensure that mobility grants fit within the project's overall grant budget.

Consultation amongst the partner universities within an alliance on the list of planned BIPs is a vital process that ensures alignment and coherence across the various institutions involved in. This facilitates the identification of thematic areas that are of mutual interest, helping to avoid duplication of efforts and ensuring that the BIPs complement existing initiatives. This collaborative approach enables the universities to create innovative, interdisciplinary programmes that reflect the diversity of their academic and cultural contexts.

Regarding funding, it is crucial to establish clear communication channels between all partners and stakeholders involved in each BIP. Additionally, there should be effective communication between the IRO and the teaching staff involved in implementing a BIP. This helps monitor the Organisational Support (OS) budget, ensures the minimum number of participants is met, and accounts for mobility grants for BIPs, in addition to grants for long-term mobility programs.

1.3. Selection of BIPs

The selection of BIPs should be based on their educational value and thematic relevance, ensuring they align with potential degree programs and areas of study. Teaching teams interested in participating in a BIP must be familiar with the terms and conditions of Erasmus+. Internal selection procedures are essential to maintain high academic quality and relevance.

2. Preparation and organisation of a BIP

2.1. Consortiums

A BIP consortium must consist of at least three CHARM-EU partners from different EU Member States. However, to ensure the minimum of 10 required participants and to anticipate potential partner withdrawals, it is advisable to include four CHARM-EU partners and potentially also universities from other Members States or third countries associated with the Erasmus+ Programme. Partners can be selected from existing institutional networks or through new strategic partnerships. At this early stage, it is important for teachers and IRO staff to maintain close communication.

2.2. BIPs Embedded in the curriculum

HEIs have offered BIPs as compulsory modules, elective modules, free elective modules, add-on courses, and summer schools. Regardless of the format, BIPs should be embedded in the curricula to ensure credit recognition without the need of extending the students study duration, if possible. This involves defining the learning outcomes and agreeing on assessment criteria allowing students to participate in international experiences.

2.3. Pedagogical aspects

Teachers and trainers from the participating institutions must collaborate to develop and agree on the study cycle, learning outcomes, competencies, teaching methods, and assessment methodologies. They should co-design the sequence, duration, calendar, and content of both the virtual and physical components. Additionally, considerations should be made for participants' access to IT tools, online platforms, internet, language proficiency, and the diverse cultural backgrounds represented in the group.

3. BIPs Call for student application

There are numerous ways to communicate the open call for a BIP to students, and any dissemination method can be effective. However, beyond the basic eligibility criteria, students must be informed in advance about key details, such as the educational components, alignment with the curriculum, schedule, study program, availability of mobility grants, application process, signing the learning agreement, and how to arrange accommodation. Clear communication ensures they understand the benefits, application process, and key dates, helping them make informed decisions about their participation and take advantage of these unique experiences.

4. Development and implementation of BIPs

IROs must ensure compliance with the Erasmus+ inter-institutional agreement and collect the necessary information to report later in the Beneficiary Module (BM). This includes managing mobility grants (calls, nominations, Learning Agreements, Transcripts of Records, and Certificates of Participation).

While teachers are responsible for successfully managing the academic aspects during both the virtual and physical phases, IROs should also facilitate interaction among participants in both formats and assist with practical matters such as accommodation.

5. Final considerations

5.1 Grades and credit recognition

Before implementing the course and signing the learning agreement, it is essential to agree on how credits will be recognized, and which grading system will be used within the program. This should be clearly reflected in the Transcript of Records (ToR).

5.2 Organisational support (OS) funding

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide outlines the allowed expenses for funding. It is recommended that BIP coordinators verify with IROs which expenses are eligible for reimbursement to meet the requirements of the financial report at the end of the project.

5.3 Erasmus+ participant report surveys

In addition to the mandatory Erasmus+ participant report surveys, it is advisable to design and implement additional feedback evaluations for students, teachers, and IRO staff. These evaluations can address topics not covered in the standard survey and provide valuable insights to improve future BIPs.

Case studies and best practices

BIPs in the MGCS programme

The CHARM-EU MGCS programme integrates virtual exchange programmes, physical mobility opportunities and as a combination of those, blended mobility into its educational programme. As part of its innovative CHARM-EU Mobility Network, students also have the possibility to experience mid- and short-term physical mobilities that are provided to students individually, in pairs or even in groups not just with their peers, but also with CHARM-EU faculty.

As per definition, Blended mobility is a short programme that contains a virtual and onsite component. Participation at least in one blended mobility is foreseen for the entire programme.

CHARM-EU offers one cross-thematic BIP (MoxMO/XHIBIT), providing students with the possibility to expand their knowledge across study tracks. Blended mobility is a combination of a short from 5 up to 30-day physical mobility and a series of intensive online preparatory and/or follow-up virtual activities which is awarded with at least 3 ECTS up to 6 ECTS, based on the total workload. Based on the curriculum of the master's programme, 1 blended mobility opportunity is available for all students during Phase 2. The content of the blended mobility activity is defined by the Master's Programme Board.

Within the framework of CHARM-EU, BIP's have a number of added values, as they help to gather physically all the students studying in the MGCS programme but at different universities and to provide joint activities for them; to enhance the practical elements of the training through field trips and visiting stakeholders; to improve the communication and collaborative skills of the students; to give a deeper insight to one of the thematic areas of the master programme. BIPs must have either an intense virtual preparation for the participants before the physical part, including individual or team activities of the students or virtual follow-up activities (assessment of the programme, further tasks for the students building on the knowledge gained / skills enhanced during the BIP). Participation at least in one blended mobility is mandatory that is to be funded by the starting university through its Erasmus+ (or complementary) funds. Students who cannot participate in the BIP for valid reasons are offered an alternative programme with similar learning goals.

In order to organise the mobility, Programme Board needs to contact the Academic Council to indicate their BIP needs by the end of September of the corresponding academic year. After the feasibility check provided by the mobility expert team, the organisation of the BIP is the sole responsibility of the organising institution. The help of the JVAO might be required upon individual negotiations. All students of the MGCS programme are entitled for funding for the embedded Blended Intensive Programmes during Phase 2. Funding related to the BIP mobility is provided by the sending ('home') institution through Erasmus+ grants or by the Academic Council through supplementary CHARM-EU grants. Council. The process is supported by the JVAO colleagues upon the request of the Academic Council.

The following BIPs have been implemented within the CHARM-EU MGCS programme:

- Course 2021-2022 (project Erasmus+ 2020)
 - *2021-1-IE02-KA131-HED-000009839-1 – CHARM-EU Dublin Field School: Tap to Rain - Understanding a human-impacted water cycle* (Master: European University Alliance) – TCD coordinator
 - *2021-1-HU01-KA131-HED-000003804-9 – Food security and food safety in the spotlight* (Master: European University Alliance) – ELTE coordinator
- Course 2022-2023 (project Erasmus+ 2021/2022)
 - *2021-1-ES01-KA131-HED-000005436-2 – CHARM-EU: Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability: communication of results and employability* (Master: European University Alliance) - UB coordinator
 - *2022-1-FR01-KA131-HED-000052762-2 – Montpellier Cross-Thematic Mobility (MOXMO)* (Master: European University Alliance) - UM coordinator
- Course 2023-2024 (project Erasmus+ 2022)

- 2022-1-FR01-KA131-HED-000052762-4 – *Montpellier Cross-Thematic Mobility (MOXMO)* (Master: European University Alliance) - UM coordinator
- Course 2024-2025 (project Erasmus+ 2023)
 - Under development - *Dublin Cross-Thematic Mobility (EXHIBIT)* (Master: European University Alliance) - TCD coordinator

Further resources

- [European Commission: Erasmus + Programme Guide 2024](#)
- [European Commission: Higher Education Mobility Handbook](#)
- [European Commission: Blended mobility implementation guide for Erasmus+ higher education mobility KA131](#)
- [CHARM-EU: Interactive Mobility Handbook](#)
- [EAIE Blog: 5 tips for running Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes](#)

MOBILITY AND MICRO-CREDENTIALS

Aims and actions

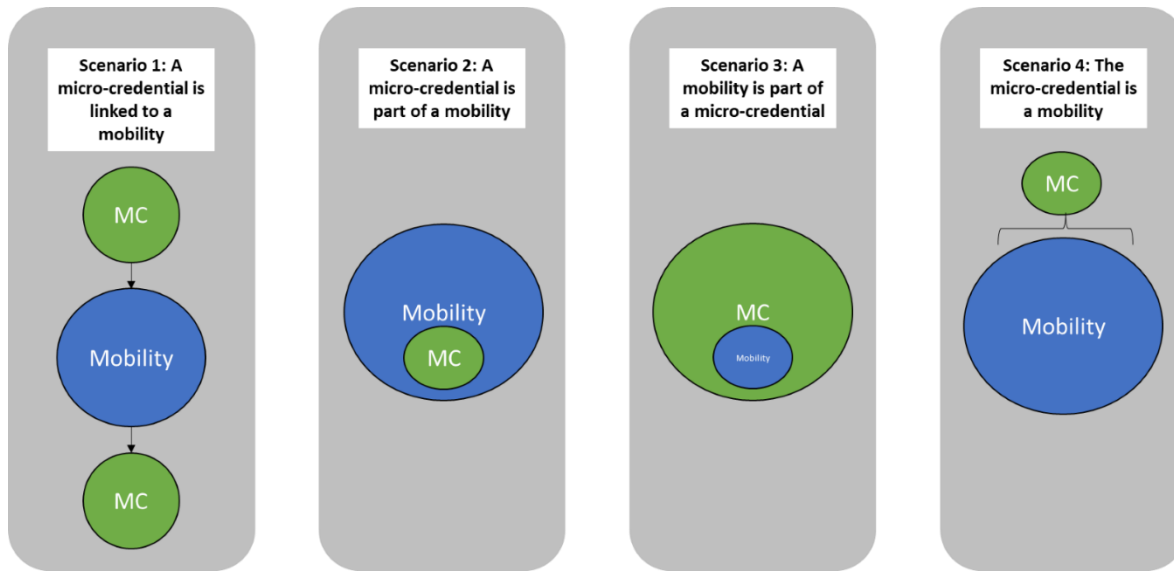
Micro-credentials are a relatively new educational offering where short learning activities are offered, usually with ECTS credits, commonly focused on professional and transversal skills development. Micro-credentials and mobility, within the context of internationalization, is at an early stage of development. However, their potential has been noted, for example, using micro-credentials to give visibility to intercultural and informal soft skills gained through student mobilities, facilitate cross-border recognition of short-term mobility, improve collaboration with digital exchange networks, and as a means for better equity of access for students.

Within the research space, few publications exist on the topic of micro-credentials and mobility. Most publications containing information about these two activities focus on the potential for social or employment mobility, but few if any mention the potential of micro-credentials within the context of the internationalization of higher education. This further supports a gap in knowledge that CHARM-EU can address.

This chapter presents an initial framework linking micro-credentials and mobility. This framework describes four broad ways in which micro-credentials can be linked to mobility components:

- A Micro-credential is linked to a Mobility
- A Micro-credential is part of a Mobility
- A Mobility is part of a Micro-credential
- The Micro-credential is a Mobility

See below for examples of the different options.



Title	Definition	Example
The Microcredential is linked to a Mobility	A microcredential is linked to a mobility component, prefacing or concluding it.	Mary goes from Utrecht to Trinity as part of an Erasmus programme. Before she leaves Utrecht, she takes a preparatory micro-credential about Irish history and culture.
The Microcredential is part of a Mobility	A microcredential takes place within the context of a broader mobility activity.	Mary from Utrecht does a year studying Sociology in Montpellier. While she is there, she also completes a CHARM-EU micro-credential delivered by Trinity.
The Mobility is part of a Microcredential	A micro-credential is developed whereby participants do a mobility as part of the curriculum of the micro-credential.	Mary is a doctoral candidate in Trinity and does a 5 ECTS online microcredential module on transdisciplinary skills. At the end of the didactic activities, she travels to Utrecht for two days to network and exchange learning outcomes with other doctoral candidates who participated in the module.
The Microcredential is a Mobility	The microcredential is designed to constitute a (short) mobility in itself. Or an existing (short) mobility is given a microcredential.	A microcredential is offered for a summer course at the University of Barcelona. Professionals from the field, and staff members working at CHARM-8 HEI's, travel to Spain to take the summer course for their professional development.

The overall aim is to develop and deliver between 120 and 160 ECTS worth of micro-credentials by the end of the CHARM8 project (December 2026). For the first 2 years, we want to explore the way

mobility could contribute to the pedagogical objectives related to micro-credentials. In addition, we want to develop procedures for mobility registration for micro credentials. For the second 2 years, we want to start the implementation of this type of mobility.

Benefits for MGCS students

MGCS students must take part in one or more mobility components during the MSc. They may have up to two semesters abroad (i.e. at another Alliance partner than their starting university) and take part in Blended Intensive Programmes (e.g. MOXMO) in the course of the MSc. A micro-credential on intercultural competence, language proficiency, cross-cultural communication, global leadership, cross cultural adaptation, or living abroad skills could be a beneficial addition to these students' existing mobility options and prepare them for the time abroad.

The micro-credential could address key competencies required in the workforce, thus furthering employability of CHARM-EU students.

Developing a micro-credential (with a mobility component) for this group can be highly tailored to students' needs, as both their MSc programme and their Micro-credential would be coordinated by CHARM-EU.

Since these students are a strategic target group for CHARM-EU (and for each CHARM-EU Alliance partner individually), more may be possible in terms of funding than for other groups.

If the mobility were online (or blended, in the context of a formal BIP), this could contribute to mobility-related KPI's.

Obstacles and considerations for MGCS students

- Motivation of students to take the micro-credential on top of their current workload could be low and needs to be assessed beforehand.
- Resourcing the micro-credential in terms of teaching staff.
- Organising this in the context of the MGCS will lead to additional work for the JVAO, as they are the main point of contact for MGCS students.
- Consideration of CHARM-EU educational principles and how they integrate into its delivery.
- Timing of when to provide the micro-credential. During term time they may be too busy to take part. It may have to be delivered during the summer break prior to the Capstone phase.
- There may be financial obstacles if the micro-credentials were too expensive (as students tend to have limited budgets).

- MGCS students already participate in a number of mobilities over a relatively short time span, and thus have already gained the intercultural benefits a micro-credential with a mobility component could offer. While offering a micro-credential which complements one of those mobilities could be a good idea, offering a micro-credential as a new/separate mobility would seem excessive in their case. (In terms of financial as well as CO2-costs of additional travel.)

Benefits for Bachelor and Master's level students registered within our institutions

- This is a relatively large group, meaning that a greater number of students could potentially benefit from the organization of a micro-credential.
- If the micro-credential is 'attached' to the regular semester-mobilities which are already organized at each CHARM partner institution, then it could improve the mobility experience of the students in question. The micro-credential could offer (increased) networking opportunities with other students going on mobility and enhance specific skills that may be used during the mobility, such as linguistic and intercultural skills.
- The micro-credential could address key competencies required in the workforce, thus furthering employability of Alliance-educated students.
- Students in this target group could benefit from a micro-credential which in itself constitutes a mobility (i.e. as a short-term mobility, or in the form of transnational online learning) as not all students will have had prior experience with international courses or mobilities.
- If the micro-credential were designed to offer CHARM-EU labelled preparation to students who are set to go on a mobility to (both CHARM Alliance and) non-CHARM-EU partners, then this would directly relate to KIPs for Mobility. As the need for CHARM-EU labelled preparation for a broader group of students will already likely lead to the development of preparatory courses, there is a real opportunity to develop these actions led by the educational and mobility expert teams simultaneously.

Obstacles and considerations for Bachelor and Master's level students registered within our institutions

- Students may not have the time to complete a micro-credential in addition to their course work.
- There may be financial obstacles if the micro-credentials were too expensive, as students often have limited financial means.

- Students may not be motivated to do a micro-credential if the content of the micro-credential was not aligned well enough with their mobility.
- Resourcing the micro-credential in terms of teaching staff could prove complicated for this large target group.
- Consideration of CHARM-EU educational principles and how they integrate into the delivery may be more difficult for this group than for MGCS students.

Benefits for doctoral candidates within our Alliance institutions

Doctoral candidates could benefit from collaboration with other institutions for research data collection, networking and professional development. Micro-credentials could scaffold this collaboration.

Doctoral candidates are being encouraged to gain transdisciplinary and intercultural skillsets. A micro-credential addressing both of these skills would be beneficial to them.

Since mobility options for doctoral candidates are currently quite limited, or at least underpromoted, there will likely be developments within CHARM8 to organize more mobility opportunities for this target group. In addition, options for developing a CHARM Joint PhD programme are currently being investigated. A micro-credential could be developed in tandem with any new opportunities, or it could help to make existing opportunities more attractive/worthwhile for this target group.

At some partner institutions, i.e. where PhDs are treated as staff, or where PhDs have funding for travel, doctoral candidates may experience fewer financial obstacles than other target groups (i.e. CHARM students or other Bachelor's and Master's students).

A micro-credential is by definition short. This can prove an obstacle in terms of Erasmus funding for most groups, but doctoral candidates theoretically have more options to receive Erasmus funding for shorter mobility periods (not just blended mobility, but also short-term mobility, and in some countries, they could even get a staff mobility grant).

If a micro-credential for this target group would take the form of a short-term mobility, a blended mobility, or an online course, then any numbers achieved would directly contribute to mobility-related KPIs.

Obstacles and considerations for doctoral candidates within our Alliance Institutions

The varying status of doctoral candidates may mean that there are great differences between the partners in how this target group is treated in terms of support, salary, opportunities granted for travel (funding, but also logistically, i.e. the time available and so on). This may make it more difficult to organize a micro-credential for this target group.

Alliance Partners/National Agencies may differ when it comes to the Erasmus grant opportunities for this group, again due to differing PhD-status (student or employee).

Identifying mobility contacts and communication channels across multiple institutions at a doctoral level can be challenging.

If the micro-credential is expensive, this may be an obstacle for doctoral candidates at partner institutions where those with PhD status do not receive (a high amount of) compensation, and/or have (very) limited budgets for travel and schooling related to their project.

Benefits for Staff within our alliance institutions

- Micro-credentials and mobility for this market is a potential means for internal transformation within our institutions. By training staff on CHARM-EU principles and expertise, through mobilities, we can funnel CHARM-gained experience down to teaching and administrative staff within institutions.
- When staff members who are not already affiliated with CHARM engage with CHARM-organised learning opportunities, and through these with staff from other Alliance Partners, this can help with dissemination goals, and in general further bonds between CHARM institutions.
- Staff mobility is generally very self-directed, and less structured than student mobility. A more structured and well-promoted option for a mobility in the form of a CHARM-organised micro-credential would form a real addition to the mobility opportunities currently available to this group.
- The benefits of this type of micro-credential for the participant may include general professional development, cultural and language skills, knowledge transfer and networking opportunities.
- Staff Mobility is the focus of two sub-topics connected to mobility in CHARM8. Developing further mobility opportunities for staff as micro-credentials, together with the educational expert team, may be beneficial to the goals of both WPs simultaneously.
- Micro-credentials for staff could be clearly formulated as Staff Training, thus participants could apply for Erasmus Staff funding.

Obstacles and considerations for staff within our alliance institutions

- Cost and financial implications of the mobility. Compensation/budgets may be different for each alliance partner, and Erasmus Staff budgets may be limited for some.

- The need to structure the mobility around learning objectives and assessments. Staff may not be motivated to do this. A clear rationale for a micro-credential linked to the mobility is needed.
- Recognition may be more difficult to formalize for staff.

Activities carried out and actions foreseen

There are various ideas for pilots that can be found in the presentation from the CHARM-EU meeting in Dublin and the Exploratory Report: Combining Micro-credentials with Mobility Components within CHARM-EU. One of the ideas that is currently being rolled out is a micro-credential called intercultural preparation. This is designed for students who are going on a mobility and can therefore be followed by both incoming and outgoing students from CHARM-EU institutions. In addition, the course can be open to other students and staff who want to learn about interculturality.

Recommendations

Since the first micro-credentials still being developed, the detailed step-by-step guide is currently under development. However, it is recommended to emphasise that micro-credentials are something different than the online course catalogue. The main area where there can be confusion is for students, as they are a target market for both OCC and MC, especially courses offered online. Therefore, the communication strategy around OCC and MCs needs to be different. Another source of confusion might be the difference between a BIP and a micro-credential. A micro-credential can be part of a BIP, but it is not the same. See 'Aims and actions' for the different types of micro-credentials.

Before you start, it is useful to consider funding for the micro-credential. If there are ECTS awarded for completing the micro-credential, it is more likely that a teacher can receive time and money to work on designing the micro-credential. Another option is awarding edubadges. They are a better fit for, for example, lifelong learning since professionals usually do not need ECTS. When designing a micro-credential with a mobility component it is important to involve a team that consists of both educationalists and mobility experts.

The following aspects are recommended to be considered when designing micro-credentials and mobility actions:

- **Inclusivity:** Shorter mobilities can be viewed as more inclusive, because they offer intercultural learning opportunities to groups for whom a longer mobility is not a good option. This may include participants who have a disability, participants with limited economic means, or participants who are caregivers (i.e. who cannot be away from home for an extended period).

- Sustainability: Shorter mobilities cost more resources relative to the gains of the mobility. Longer mobilities can be considered more sustainable relative to the environmental impact of the trip (in terms of CO2 costs), especially when participants opt for air travel.
- Networking: If the micro-credential is 'attached' to the regular semester-mobilities which are already organized at each CHARM partner institution, then it could offer (increased) networking opportunities with other students going on mobility and enhance specific skills that may be used during the mobility, such as linguistic and intercultural skills. Doctoral students could benefit from collaboration with other institutions for research data collection, networking and professional development. For staff, the benefits of this type of micro-credential may include general professional development, cultural and language skills, knowledge transfer and networking opportunities.
- Pedagogical aspects: The learning outcomes of micro-credentials will have to be assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.
- Credit recognition: A micro-credential can be recognized in ECTS or for example a digital learning badge. Other aspects of [credit recognition](#) can be found here.

Case studies and best practices

Currently there are CHARM colleagues from the Knowledge Creation Team (KCT) working on a CHARM-EU [Intercultural preparation](#) course. For this course it is possible to award micro credentials. The developments and lessons learned will be followed closely.

Further resources

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Tinsley, B., Cacicio, S., Shah, Z., Parker, D., Younge, O., & Luke Luna, C. (2022). Micro-credentials for Social Mobility in rural postsecondary communities: A landscape report. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED622550>

Libing Wang. 2022. Micro-credentials: An important part of a bigger ecosystem. <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/micro-credentials-important-part-bigger-ecosystem>

DOCTORAL MOBILITY

Aims and actions

Mobility during studies offers numerous benefits for all involved. Doctoral researchers gain from international experiences, expanded networks, and improved language skills. Supervisors and universities can foster innovative projects through the exchange of knowledge and research ideas, while the university itself enhances its international visibility and reputation. Additionally, supervisors should encourage doctoral candidates to go abroad, as it offers significant benefits for both. Doctoral researchers expand their research skills and networks by bringing together expertise from complementary (disciplinary and interdisciplinary) research activities at the collaborating universities, while supervisors gain from new insights and international collaborations, enhancing both the quality of the dissertation and the universities international reputation.

The CHARM-EU Alliance is aimed at increasing mobility and boosting cooperation between universities, which includes mobilities within doctoral studies. By encouraging collaboration across different institutions, CHARM-EU wants to create a more integrated and inclusive academic environment. This goal comes with several challenges. Each university has its own structure, influenced by different funding, accreditation systems and labour laws. These differences create hurdles in administration (or management) and in promoting collaboration within the institutions, which is why this chapter in the mobility handbook serves as support for all related questions.

In 2023 a survey on doctoral studies across the partner institutions was conducted and analysed. We can conclude the following: The number of doctoral candidates within CHARM-EU (excluding Hochschule Ruhr West) is estimated at around 17000 (status: 2023). Doctoral programmes are structured differently at the partner universities. In some, doctoral studies are conducted by individual schools, in others by faculties and/or centralised graduate schools. Most CHARM-EU universities have some compulsory and optional modules/activities for doctoral candidates. As doctoral candidates are primarily concerned with their research projects, they tend to participate in mobilities such as conferences, summer schools and traineeships/research stays in collaborating or supporting laboratories rather than semester-long stays.

Possibilities for doctoral mobility would be:

- Blended Intensive Program (BIP)
- Network meetings
- Job shadowing
- Lab rotations
- Co-supervision of the doctoral research requiring mobility

CHARM-EU has started several important activities. One of the main actions is planning a Blended Intensive Program (BIP) for doctoral candidates. The CHARM-EU team on “Educational Concepts and

Offers” takes care of the content. The “Mobility” - CHARM-EU team looks at how to communicate about the BIP within universities, particularly through specific institutions focusing on doctoral candidates within universities and through faculty management. The “Mobility” - CHARM-EU team will also organize info sessions to get as many people as possible involved. Furthermore, CHARM-EU offers 3 online courses (spring semester 2025) for doctoral candidates under the umbrella of the Transnational Online Learning (TOL).

Recommendations

In order to effectively carry out the activities mentioned above, a clear and structured step-by-step plan is essential that is under development. A summer school format has been suggested, and to make sure it works well, a detailed checklist will be made. This checklist will help participants with the necessary administrative and financial steps and will show where BIPs can be offered. Options for developing a CHARM-EU Joint doctoral program are currently being investigated.

Furthermore, it is recommended to collect courses the partner universities offer on doctoral level and to share them between the graduate schools of the universities. Therefore, these courses can be transferred into short programs which are comparable and can be used for TOL as an example. An advantage would be that the doctoral candidates could network with others in similar research areas and get a certificate for their participation. This implies that graduate schools need to be contacted about courses and events.

Moreover, it is advisable to create a comprehensive summary of CHARM-EU doctoral mobility opportunities, including outreach to doctoral schools for promotional materials. Additionally, it is recommended to compile available traineeship and research position offers from doctoral schools. This traineeship or research work should not necessarily extend for half a year; instead, hosting it for a few weeks could be considered. Such an arrangement would create a win-win situation for both parties. Doctoral researchers can network with peers and gain valuable insights into working in an intercultural environment, while graduate schools benefit by increasing their international candidate numbers and securing additional funding. Obtaining permission to leave the home institution for such initiatives is typically straightforward, though securing funding can sometimes be a challenge.

Organizing a doctoral network meeting focused on transferable skills, such as project management or time management, is also a practical idea. While these topics are often well-covered by universities, gaps may exist at the local level, and certain content could be particularly enriched by a transnational approach. This area is especially suited to online or hybrid formats. Such courses can be designed to accommodate a larger audience, as disciplinary background plays a less critical role. Consequently, these activities have the potential to engage “high numbers” of participants and could be implemented as part of intra-CHARM initiatives.

Inclusivity is a key factor in creating doctoral BIPs. Practical steps will be taken to make sure these programs are open to all doctoral candidates, no matter their background or circumstances. The goal is to create a learning environment that is inclusive and supportive of different needs. Efforts should be made to ensure that all doctoral candidates could participate in mobility programs. For university-specific support, please contact your local Inclusivity Office.

Doctoral researchers whose mobility is funded through SMS ERASMUS may be eligible for a ['fewer opportunities'](#) supplement. Additionally, ERASMUS offers support for mobility with children and/or family, including financial assistance. Depending on individual circumstances, either short- or long-term mobility may be more appropriate. Short-term mobilities should be made available, particularly for those who are unable to participate in long-term mobility for various reasons.

The following aspects are recommended to be considered when designing micro-credentials and mobility actions:

- Sustainability: Sustainability is also an important consideration, especially when it comes to mobility. The challenge is to balance sustainable mobility with the need for short-term physical mobility. Virtual mobility options are being considered as a sustainable alternative, raising the question of whether the sustainability aspects of doctoral mobility should be assessed differently from those of undergraduate students. ERASMUS-funded mobilities can also receive a [Green Travel bonus](#). Please note that this bonus may vary depending on the country and project year. Doctoral candidates who travel sustainably (without using a car or airplane; carpooling is allowed) may be eligible for an additional travel day.
- Networking: Networking is vital for CHARM-EU's success. Efforts will be made to get both doctoral candidates and academics involved in the BIP, especially when the content matches their research interests. Collaboration with other stakeholders will be encouraged, and a timeline for blended mobility programs for doctoral candidates will be set up. Also, factsheets and other resources will be provided to explain CHARM-EU's role and goals.
- Pedagogical aspects: The pedagogical aspects of travel and doctoral BIP formats will be carefully considered to ensure the content is innovative and multidisciplinary. Preparing for virtual exchanges will involve creating appropriate tools and teaching strategies, complemented by training seminars to equip teachers for success in these programs. IT requirements and tools will also be addressed to support these efforts.
- Credit recognition: Credit recognition is another important area, considering the differences in how BIPs and related events are evaluated and recognized across universities. The Alliance will investigate the different ERASMUS opportunities that can support these efforts. In some universities, participation might be recognized in the diploma supplement, though it might not carry ECTS credits.

Case studies and best practices

Best practices of summer school for doctoral candidates:

- Utrecht Summer School: In Utrecht as part of their [summer school](#), there are courses offered focusing on PhD's. There are modules both on skills and specific academic topics and have run for decades. The registration data year over year shows the interest in both types for doctoral candidates.
- Budapest Summer University: <https://www.elte.hu/en/summer-university>

Within the [TORCH](#) Project, CHARM-EU developed a methodology to build up a common science agenda, based on a participatory process for creating multidisciplinary academic teams to define scientific priorities aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (see more details at <https://zenodo.org/records/10581039>”).

To further improve mobilities within the Alliance, case studies, best practices, and tools will be reviewed, especially focusing on identifying structured doctoral studies that could be brought into CHARM-EU but haven't been implemented yet. It is recommended to gather input from all partners on best practices for doctoral studies.

Further resources

For more information and support, resources will be made available both at the consortium level and within each institution. This will include detailed descriptions on the CHARM-EU website, links to different graduate schools, and other relevant resources to help participants navigate the program.

INTERCULTURAL PREPARATION

Aims and actions

The intercultural preparation will provide training for students and staff going on a mobility period (all study levels and categories, to any destination, also to non-CHARM-EU universities). The idea is to prepare the students and staff for their exchanges and raise awareness about interculturality. The course will not replace any academic courses in the field of intercultural communication.

The Knowledge Creation Team (KCT) meetings started in spring 2024. The meetings mainly consisted of brainstorming and presenting different ideas for the content of both the light and the extended versions of the course. A smaller core team worked on the light version of the Intercultural preparation during summer and early autumn. The light version was finalized in October 2024 and published on CHARM-EU's webpage in November. The outcome was presented at the CHARM-EU Annual Conference in early November and a couple of weeks later in the Newsletter. The KCT continues the work in autumn 2024 and spring 2025 to prepare the extended version.

The light version of Intercultural preparation

The light version, "[Understanding and Navigating Interculturality: A short online preparation course](#)" is approximately 1 hour, recorded and linked to the CHARM-EU web page. This would give the students and staff the opportunity to watch the video whenever they have time. It will consist of several parts;

1. Develop awareness of cultural differences and commonalities
2. Share and reflect on examples and challenges of intercultural encounters
3. Develop self-awareness regarding cultural values, norms and beliefs
4. Navigate cultural differences effectively

The structure of the Intercultural preparation consists of a particular attention to "rich points", also known as critical incidents, the DIVE model (i.e., description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation), aimed at postponing judgement, and Kolb's learning circle. The main idea is to understand cultural structures that include (but are not limited to): time, space, verbal and non-verbal communication, categorization, and stereotyping, among others.

This introductory lecture is published in November 2024 on the CHARM-EU web site.

The extended version of Intercultural preparation

In 2025, an extended version of the Intercultural preparation will be offered alongside the short version. The extended version will consist of three parts;

1. The preparation of students and staff that will be mobile in aspects of a) intercultural learning, b) intercultural reflection and c) intercultural competences.

The first part will build on the light version (the video) mentioned above but be a bit longer.

2. The participants will complete a survey both before and after the mobility period to see how they are scoring on the Intercultural aspects.
3. Before and during the mobility period the participants will have reflective assignments, reflecting upon their experiences while abroad.

The teachers

Both the short version and the extended version of the Intercultural preparation are planned and offered by academics in intercultural communication and similar disciplines at the CHARM-EU universities. The academics are members of the Knowledge Creation team (KCT) for developing the light version and the extended version of the course.

Benefits for CHARM-EU

- The participants will get a unique chance to follow a course offered by CHARM-EU teachers;
- The participants will become aware of the CHARM-EU;
- The International Relations Offices will be able to offer the Intercultural preparation to all outgoing and incoming students in addition to the practical information given to them;
- In addition, the CHARM-EU staff members going on teacher or staff exchanges can also follow the Intercultural preparation as well as all the students who are not even planning to go on an exchange but are interested in cultural awareness and want to find out more;
- The Erasmus coordinators will be able to mention the Intercultural preparation in the Erasmus+ final reports;
- The KCT members are also eager to explore collaborative opportunities in curriculum development, research, and innovation.

Recommendations

- Establish the foundations
 - o Establish a KCT: Contact the CHARM-EU managers for nominations of members to the KCT;

- Contact the Student Council for nominations of students for the KCT, in order to secure the student voice is being present at each phase of the development process;
- Identify an educationalist to be leading/co-leading the KCT work to support the planning of the agendas, meeting coordination and evaluation of the actions
- Prepare the final setup for the Executive Board and Academic Council to support the approval of the KCT;
- Create the intercultural preparation content
 - Hold regular KCT meetings to brainstorm about the content
 - Have a smaller core team to work on the product, as navigating a bigger team might hinder the efficiency of the teamwork, since it is hard to align the schedules, perspectives, etc.
- Launch the intercultural preparation online
 - Share the intercultural preparation through the official CHARM-EU channels.
Further recommendations on dissemination and promotion will be available later.

Case studies and best practices

- If the KCT consists of many members, the meetings may get the format of brainstorming and presenting different ideas to start with
- The KCT consists of academics with lots of teaching, and it is difficult to find dates for meetings suitable for all members
- Set up a smaller core team after a number of brainstorming meetings to speed up the work with the final product
- For the extended part, establish smaller teams to work together on different chapters
- An additional outcome is the common interest among the KCT members to look for future research collaboration opportunities
- Planning of a Networking event for the KCT members to finalize the extended version of the Intercultural preparation and to look for funding instruments for future research collaboration

Further resources

- The course can be accessed here: <https://charm-eu.eu/intercultural-communication-short-course/>

TRANSNATIONAL ONLINE LEARNING

Aims and actions

Transnational Online Learning (TOL) courses provided by CHARM-EU partner universities target students who are interested in expanding their academic portfolio and gaining international learning experience. As of the spring semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, CHARM-EU universities started providing access to a certain set of their hybrid or online courses for the students at the partner universities. This way, students get first-hand transnational experience without physical mobility. The credits of the online courses can be recognized in line with the standard procedures of the home university.

Although TOL activities are included in the mobility workgroup's portfolio, their complexity led to the development of a separate work programme and concept note. This initiative was assigned to a team of delegates with specialized expertise distinct from traditional, physical mobility. A pilot version of TOL was implemented during the spring semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, followed by a more refined, second pilot in the fall semester of 2024/2025.

Benefits for the students

By joining the transnational courses offered by the CHARM-EU partner universities, students can:

- Participate in an international learning experience, studying alongside peers from diverse countries, backgrounds, and disciplines;
- Gain experience in international collaboration and connect with other students from around Europe;
- Participate in online courses which gives them flexibility to attend from their own home or university;
- Earn credits and enhance their academic portfolio in exciting and innovative courses;
- Get access to courses that are not available at their home institution;
- Increase their future career opportunities by improving their skills and competencies in key areas of employment need;
- Learn from acknowledged professors and lecturers from prestigious universities of the CHARM-EU Alliance;
- Experience learning online at a CHARM-EU partner university as a potential stepping stone to future physical mobility.

Benefits for CHARM-EU

There are numerous benefits for the CHARM-EU Alliance, as it:

- Is a powerful tool for enhancing internationalisation at home;
- Provides transnational learning opportunities for a significantly larger number of students;
- May indirectly encourage increased physical mobility, as participants in transnational online courses could be more inclined to pursue mobility opportunities in the future;
- Boosts the visibility of universities offering online courses;
- Enriches the transnational teaching experience and broadens the educational methodologies of instructors;
- Strengthens collaboration among CHARM-EU partner institutions.

Obstacles and challenges

Some obstacles and challenges hinder the development of the CHARM-EU transnational online learning system, including:

- Motivating academics to offer online courses and encouraging students to engage in online learning, particularly when most courses are traditionally held on campus.
- Registering online students in the Study Administration System of the host university.
- Providing online students with access to the host university's Learning Management System, which is typically tied to the university's identification system.
- Offering practical advice and guidance for transnational online learning students.
- Managing hybrid courses, where local students participate in-person while partner institution students join online, ensuring interactive participation from all students.
- Addressing intercultural challenges and the specific difficulties associated with online learning.
- Ensuring the availability of necessary equipment and tools for hybrid courses (e.g., hybrid classrooms).
- Recognizing credits earned through online courses.

Recommendations

1. Establish the foundations

Develop a collaborative framework for Transnational Online Learning (TOL): Establish or extend a **Multilateral Interinstitutional Agreement** among Alliance partners to solidify commitment to TOL initiatives. This agreement should ensure program continuity and a framework for shared resources, legal compliance, and the facilitation of online and hybrid courses across institutions. Such an agreement will provide a stable foundation for inter-university cooperation, supporting both institutional autonomy and collaborative responsibilities. The MIIA covers a range of important areas that correspond to a specific article within the agreement:

- **Purpose of the Agreement:** Establishes the objectives of the transnational online learning (TOL) initiative, including offering credit-bearing and non-credit online modules, exchanging best practices, supporting virtual student exchange, and enabling mutual recognition of completed courses.
- **Tuition fee waiver:** Ensures that receiving institutions waive tuition fees for online exchange students, who remain registered at their home universities, promoting accessibility and inclusivity in the program.
- **Status of exchange students:** Defines the status of TOL students as non-award students at receiving institutions, meaning they do not seek formal degrees but participate in specific modules for credit as host students.
- **Selection and course registration:** Outlines the process for selecting students for TOL participation, requiring initial nomination by the home institution, with the receiving institution making the final enrolment decision.
- **Study program and accreditation:** Details the credit recognition process, including requirements for Learning Agreements, conditions for course access, and issuance of official transcripts for completed modules. Ensures that credits gained are eligible for transfer based on each home institution's policies.
- **Student responsibilities:** Establishes that online exchange students must adhere to the policies, rules, and regulations of the host institution. Clarifies intellectual property rights for course materials, setting boundaries on usage and distribution to protect content developed within the Alliance.
- **Local regulations:** Recognizes that grading, eligibility, and examination decisions follow the regulations and established practices of each institution, with local laws governing exam board decisions.

- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Compliance:** Ensures data protection in line with GDPR, providing guidelines for secure handling and sharing of student and staff data across institutions.
- **Renewal, termination, and amendment of the Agreement:** Outlines the agreement's renewal and termination terms, providing procedures for extending the agreement or allowing an institution to withdraw while ensuring that ongoing exchange activities for enrolled students are not disrupted.

2. Set up a sub-working group for TOL

- **Organize a specialist TOL Sub-working group:** Form a dedicated TOL sub-working group with representatives from each partner institution. Each representative should have experience in some of the areas like online learning, internationalisation and IT. To tailor support, start by distributing a questionnaire about each institution's needs and readiness for TOL, which will help in setting specific goals and identifying resources.
- **Hold regular coordination meetings:** Schedule ongoing meetings to discuss essential elements, such as data needs, IT infrastructure, and academic support. Invite representatives from IT, administration, and academic affairs to contribute to solving institutional and cross-institutional challenges.
- **Establish IT protocols and processes:**
 - **Short-term and long-term solutions:** As transnational online learning is a completely new action at the majority of HEIs, there are not available ready-made solutions. To develop user-friendly systems with complex functions in transnational environment takes long time, probably a couple of years. Therefore, it is advisable to start with simpler IT solutions, offering only the most important functions.
 - **Data management and IT compatibility:** Work through the differences in Student Information Systems (SIS) and Learning Management Systems (LMS) used by each institution and explore solutions like eduGAIN for unified logins.
 - **Standardized student registration and data sharing:** Ensure student data is smoothly transferred and managed within each institution's SIS, so TOL students have easy access to courses and necessary information.
- **Distribute responsibilities at the Alliance level:** Define specific alliance-wide tasks.
- **Define responsibilities at the institutional level:** Each institution should manage the following tasks to support TOL implementation:
 - **Systemic support on the institutional level:** Secure strategic support from institutional leadership (represented by EUA director), engage key local stakeholders such as academic staff, vice-rector for education /

internationalisation, IT teams, communication office and administrative personnel (including the IROs and Education Departments) , and obtain authorization to address challenges effectively, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities, active involvement of all parties, and the flexibility to resolve issues efficiently.

- **Learning platform access and processes:** Ensure that the institution has a clear process for TOL students to access their LMS, understanding that some systems require initial SIS login or special configurations for TOL access.
- **Providing administrative and technical support for academic staff:** Ensure staff are prepared to help TOL students with technical issues, course access, and program requirements.
- **Promoting TOL courses and opportunities for students:** Share information about TOL courses through various channels, such as webpage, newsletters, direct messages and social media.
- **Supporting students in application:** Offer guidance on the application process, course requirements, and academic support.

3. Ensure Faculty participation

- **Create a Call for Faculty:** Prepare a Call for faculty participation, requesting the below details:
 - accredited as a core or as an elective course in a BA/BSc, MA/MSc or PhD programme at your university (students gain credits from the course) or
 - additional / optional courses where students get certificate for the participation (including the number of hours spent with the course), for which students might gain credits;
 - delivered in English, French, German or Spanish;
 - course materials are available online in an LMS (Moodle, Teams, Canvas, etc.);
 - either fully online (all students are online) or hybrid (regular students are offline, virtual exchange students are online at the same time);
 - delivered either synchronously or asynchronously;
 - interactive (seminars are preferred to lectures, where students have an opportunity to interact with the course materials, the instructor, and the other students in the class, for example during international group projects, Moodle forums or breakout rooms);
 - preferably designed and delivered in a way that it capitalises and/or reflects on the international and intercultural diversity of the participating students;

- in any study field (courses applying the CHARM [educational principles](#) get priority);
- certain study fields might get priority such as Sustainability and Climate Change; Transversal skills; Technology and STEM; Entrepreneurship, innovation, and business; European values, culture, and language
- **Promote the opportunity for Faculty:** Issue a formal call for faculty across all partner institutions to contribute courses to the Transnational Online Learning (TOL) catalogue. Faculty from all disciplines are encouraged to offer courses at the BA/BSc, MA/MSc, or PhD levels, or later short programs for post-graduate students. Promote the call through direct outreach, university networks, and targeted communications, ensuring faculty with relevant expertise are reached. Include clear submission guidelines and highlight the benefits of participation.
- **Offer incentives and professional development:** As part of the Call and the promotion, motivate faculty by emphasizing the benefits of involvement in the initiative under the CHARM-EU Alliance, such as:
 - Expanding their academic reach to a diverse and international group of students.
 - Enhancing their teaching portfolio with cross-cultural exchange experiences.
 - Gaining professional recognition and opportunities to enhance their academic reputation.
 - Access to specific university-level funds or other institutional incentives, as seen in the pilot at ELTE.
- **Provide support and resources:** Offer robust support during the preparation and throughout the implementation of the TOL courses to participating faculty by organizing:
 - **Preparatory training sessions:** Focus on CHARM-EU's pedagogical principles, transnational teaching methods, and best practices for online education.
 - **Guidance on course design:** Emphasize interactive and inclusive teaching strategies, such as international group projects, forums, or breakout rooms, which capitalize on the intercultural diversity of the participating students.
 - **Consultation opportunities:** Provide one-on-one or group sessions, as well as written guidance during the preparation and the implementation of TOL courses to help faculty adapt their course materials and delivery to TOL requirements, as well as to manage administrative and technical issues.
 - **Financial incentives (if possible):** Provide additional financial compensation if your institution has the necessary financial opportunities for that. The decision needs to be done on a local, institutional level.

4. Create and publish the Course Catalogue

- **Select courses for publication in the Course Catalogue:** Once submissions are received, evaluate the courses against the defined criteria, ensuring alignment with CHARM-EU's priorities. Selection should consider:
 - Balance among partner institutions to ensure diverse representation.
 - Prioritization of courses in study fields such as Sustainability, Transversal Skills, Technology and STEM, Entrepreneurship, and European Values.
 - Inclusion of courses that reflect the CHARM-EU educational principles, such as interactivity and intercultural diversity.

- **Create a centralized Course Catalogue:** Develop a dedicated section on the CHARM-EU website to host the Transnational Online Learning (TOL) course catalogue. The catalogue should provide detailed information, including:
 - Course titles and descriptions.
 - Delivery institution, faculty, department/subject, instructor(s)
 - Study level, study field, CHARM-EU priority field, study loads (ECTS credits).
 - Short and detailed descriptions, including the learning objectives, teaching and learning methods.
 - Course requirements, available languages, places available, assessment methods, final certification.
 - Course delivery (e.g., synchronous or asynchronous) and modality (e.g., online, hybrid).
 - Learning Management System in Use.
 - Start and end date, contact hours per week, weekly teaching days/hours, assessment date, time zone

- **Secure approval and finalize content:** Coordinate with partner institutions to verify that course details, eligibility requirements, and administrative procedures are accurate and up to date before publication.

- **Coordinate publication timing:** Work closely with the CHARM-EU Communication and IT teams to ensure the catalogue is published promptly, in line with the academic calendars of each institution. Give students sufficient time to explore options and complete their submissions.

- **Ensure accessibility and inclusivity:** Ensure the Course Catalogue is easily accessible to all students across partner institutions.

5. Ensure the participation of Students in TOL

- **Develop or adjust the current student application process:** Create a simple application procedure to make it accessible and student friendly.
 - **Learning agreement and credit transfer:** Students can apply via an online form, accompanied by a Learning Agreement (LA) that follows the structure of an Erasmus+ mobility agreement but with reduced requirements. The LA should be specific to one course and require minimal information, ensuring quick processing.
 - Provide flexibility in institutional requirements for completing the LA. For example, some universities, like UU, allow alternate approval processes.
 - Highlight that credit transfer may not be applicable for all universities involved in the procedure. Ensure that in case the credit transfer is feasible, it follows the standard procedures of the student's home institution and may not apply for final-semester students due to timing constraints.
 - **Application deadlines and decisions on acceptance:** Agree on the application and feedback deadlines, in line with the academic calendar of the participating institutions. Ensure you will have enough time to give feedback on applications, allowing students sufficient preparation time before the courses commence.
 - **Prepare an application form.** The data collected through the form should produce a data sheet that can be accessed from the partner institutions for further data management. Please keep in mind the GDPR regulations for handling data accurately.
- **Supplement the Course Catalogue with additional information:**
 - Highlight the benefits and opportunities for students by emphasize the advantages of TOL, such as:
 - Engage in a global learning experience by collaborating with students from diverse countries, backgrounds, and academic disciplines.
 - Develop intercultural competencies through international collaboration and build connections with peers across Europe.
 - Enjoy the flexibility of participating in online courses, which can be attended from the comfort of their home or university.
 - Earn academic credits while expanding their portfolio with innovative and dynamic courses.

- Access courses that are not available at their home institution, broadening their academic horizons.
 - Enhance future career prospects by developing skills and competencies in high-demand employment sectors.
 - Learn from esteemed professors and lecturers at prestigious institutions within the CHARM-EU Alliance.
 - Experience learning online at a CHARM-EU Alliance university as a potential stepping stone to future physical mobility.
- **Consider best timing of publication and promotion:** Learn from past experience and adapt promotion timing to avoid overlaps with busy academic periods. WP16 should collaborate with institutional communication teams to ensure the call reaches students effectively, extending deadlines if needed to accommodate student interest.
 - **Publish the Call for students:** Ensure that the new Course Catalogue is published online and is ready to be promoted through the Call for students. Provide clear instructions on application and its deadline.
 - **Promote the Course Catalogue:** Use multiple communication channels, such as social media, newsletters, LMS announcements, and university events, to reach a broad student audience. The CHARM-EU Communication team should coordinate a unified promotional campaign, leveraging the CHARM-EU platform for visibility.
 - **Support students during the process:** Provide support through email or one-on-one consultations to ensure the smooth application process.

6. Allocate places and manage student data

- **Standardize data collection and management:** Implement a unified data collection process across all partner institutions to manage student data securely and allocate course placements. This process should include methods for tracking student registration, course participation, and credit transfers.
- **Ensure transparent communication of results:** Inform students of their application status promptly and provide guidance on subsequent steps. Offer support for navigating institutional processes, ensuring a smooth transition for students to their TOL courses.

7. Run courses and support participation in TOL

- **Conduct pre-participation surveys:** Gather insights on student expectations and motivations through pre-course surveys to tailor support and enhance the learning experience.
- **Onboard students efficiently:** Offer onboarding support to help students navigate the LMS, understand course requirements, and access technical support when needed.

- **Provide continuous support and resources:** Ensure ongoing support for both students and faculty, addressing technical, administrative, or pedagogical challenges as they arise. Facilitate communication between students and instructors to maintain engagement and promote intercultural learning.
- **Evaluate course outcomes post-participation:** Conduct surveys for both students and faculty after the courses conclude to gather feedback on their experiences, including the challenges and successes. Use these insights to refine and improve future TOL offerings. Also review the participants

Case studies and best practices

The first TOL pilot, part of CHARM-EU's mobility scheme, was led by ELTE with AAU as co-lead in the 2023/2024 academic year. After identifying the need for specialized expertise in online learning, a sub-working group was formed, including representatives from five partner universities (AAU, ELTE, UB, UM, UU), with education and IT expert teams also contributing.

The group developed a concept note and a corresponding work program and defined the structure of a course catalogue. Following a call for faculty, 66 courses were proposed, with ELTE contributing 55 and AAU 5, UM 4, UU 2. To ensure balance, ELTE evaluated its courses and selected the top 10, forming the basis of the pilot course catalogue, which was approved by key governance bodies and published online.

A student call for proposals was issued alongside the course catalogue, featuring a simplified application process modelled on Erasmus+ Learning Agreements. The call was promoted intensively by the communication team through CHARM-EU's social media channels, newsletter, and a dedicated section on the CHARM-EU website. Partner universities conducted their own promotional campaigns, including university-level information sessions. Despite the suboptimal timing just before Christmas, the call generated interest, resulting in 150 applications.

The team furthermore used different research tools aimed to gather insights and incorporate lessons learned into the next iteration of the pilot. Pre-participation and post-participation surveys for students, focusing on their motivations for joining and their experiences, were developed. The surveys shows that many students are driven by a desire to gain international experience, improve their English skills, and engage with prestigious universities. Others seek career advancement, enhanced CVs, and professional credentials. Flexibility in balancing coursework with personal and professional responsibilities is key, with students valuing the chance to experience international education from home. Students expect these courses to provide access to expertise and content not available at their home universities, thus enriching students' academic portfolios and broadening their opportunities. Overall, this initiative is expected to support academic and professional development, helping students gain new skills, build intercultural connections, and boost confidence. Furthermore, a follow-up survey for academics was developed and its results will be analysed in conjunction of the responses from the second round of pilot.

Further resources

Transnational online learning at other European University Alliances:

- ATHENA: <https://athenauni.eu/courses/>
- EDUC: <https://courses.educalliance.eu/>
- ENGAGE.EU: <https://www.engageuniversity.eu/online-exchange-initiative/>
- EUGLOH: <https://www.eugloh.eu/courses-trainings/>
- EUNICE: <https://eunice-university.eu/courses/>
- EuroTeQ: <https://euroteq.eurotech-universities.eu/course-catalogue/>
- SEA-EU: <https://sea-eu-moocs.eu/>
- T4EU: <https://transform4europe.eu/course-offer-at-bachelor-level/>
- UnaEuropa: <https://www.una-europa.eu/study>
- UNIC: <https://unic.eu/en>

STAFF MOBILITY

Aims and actions

Individual staff mobility is strongly encouraged within the CHARM-EU Alliance, recognizing its potential to enrich both academic and non-academic staff through a variety of professional development opportunities. By leveraging the Erasmus+ KA 131 programme, CHARM-EU partners facilitate staff mobility for teaching and training purposes, with funding available through Erasmus+ for eligible participants.

To make the most of this opportunity, CHARM-EU universities offer their staff access to training sessions, peer learning activities, job shadowing, and other collaborative initiatives within the Alliance. These experiences not only develop technical expertise but also foster a deeper sense of international cooperation and understanding. This mobility is designed to promote both field-specific and cross-sectional competencies such as inclusion, diversity, and interdisciplinary learning.

By facilitating such mobility, CHARM-EU aims to strengthen its network of universities and provide staff members with transformative experiences that can be applied both in their professional roles and in broader institutional collaborations.

An essential tool for staff mobility within CHARM-EU is the information sheet on staff mobility, accompanied by an application form which provides clear guidelines on how to start planning staff mobilities within the Alliance. This document includes a writable form, which can be used to submit individual interests and requests for mobility. In the future, this process will be streamlined further through a web-form on the CHARM-EU website, simplifying access and increasing engagement.

To encourage mobility and ensure that staff are aware of available opportunities, the CHARM-EU Alliance also conducts data collection on staff mobility. This helps to share information about initiatives such as International Staff Weeks or Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs), providing staff with the necessary details to make informed decisions about potential opportunities. Additionally, by gathering data on staff participation in mobility activities, CHARM-EU can better promote future offerings and tailor them to the specific needs of staff across partner institutions.

It's important to note that while the Erasmus+ funding for the CHARM-EIGHT project does not cover the costs for individual staff mobility, each partner university is encouraged to use their Erasmus KA 131 funds to support mobility within the Alliance. This ensures that staff have access to the same level of financial support as they would for other mobility activities funded through Erasmus+.

Through the coordination provided by mobility expert team of CHARM-EU, staff mobility efforts are closely connected with the Erasmus KA 131 funding mechanisms of each university, ensuring that the process is efficient and aligned with institutional goals. The coordinating team serves as a communication hub, offering guidance on procedures, funding eligibility, and the range of opportunities available. This framework helps streamline the administrative side of staff mobility,

making it easier for staff to access opportunities and for CHARM-EU to maintain effective communication across its partner universities.

Benefits for teaching / academic staff (Staff mobility for teaching)

This Erasmus+ activity allows teaching staff to teach at one of the CHARM-EU partner HEIs. Staff mobility for teaching can be in any subject area/academic discipline. A teaching mobility (usually 1 week) offers academic staff the opportunity to:

- familiarize oneself with the curriculum and teaching methods of the partner faculty;
- connect with teaching staff of the partner university to share best practices, strengthen the cooperation and exchange knowledge in the individual field of expertise;
- develop foreign language skills;
- learn about the cultural aspects of the partner university;
- form contacts for future research projects;
- participate in the teaching of the MGCS programme, i.e. by temporarily joining a project or contributing to a blended intensive programme (BIP).

Academic staff interested in teaching in the CHARM-EU MGCS programme can find more information on the vision, teaching methods or options of collaboration in the previous version of this handbook and [Innovative Mobility Matrix](#).

Benefits for non-academic staff (Staff mobility for training)

This Erasmus+ activity supports the professional development of the universities' teaching and non-teaching staff in the form of training events abroad (excluding conferences) and job shadowing/observation periods/training at a partner HEI, or at other relevant organisations abroad.

The aims are to:

- offer international training opportunities for administrative, technical and academic staff among Alliance members
- share knowledge and best practices among the CHARM-EU partners
- provide opportunities for its staff to build communities and forge connections for further projects in teaching, learning, administration, and student services.
- share knowledge about CHARM-EU, both as a project and as institutions set in their individual cultural and academic traditions

For more information for both academic and non-academic staff mobility, you can refer to the Staff mobility factsheet (to be shared on the official CHARM-EU website).

Benefits for CHARM-EU

Within CHARM-EU, the objectives of staff mobility for teaching and training are to:

- allow students who do not have the possibility to participate in a mobility scheme, to benefit from the knowledge and expertise of academic staff from higher education institutions (and from invited staff of enterprises in other European countries);
- promote exchange of expertise and experience on pedagogical methods and curriculum design;
- create long-term links between CHARM-EU institutions and (possibly at a later stage) with external stakeholders;
- motivate students and staff to become mobile and to assist them in preparing a mobility period;
- exchange best practices and learn from another;
- strengthen relations among CHARM-EU staff between various units and on many levels to raise awareness of the project support internal dissemination and internal transformation of CHARM-EU partner institutions.

Due to limited Erasmus+ funds, staff mobility in CHARM-EU currently focusses on mobility among the 9 institutional CHARM-EU partners. However, including external HEI or industry partners is a goal of CHARM-EU and should be developed in the future.

Recommendations

All regulations set by the Erasmus+ KA 131 programme for staff mobility apply to CHARM-EU as well. Mobility is funded according to these rules by the sending CHARM-EU partner. This also includes the regulations on diversity and the ERASMUS+ support for underrepresented groups as well as issues of sustainability or digitalisation.

The Multilateral Inter-institutional Agreement signed by all CHARM-EU partners already allows for staff mobility for teaching and training. Any additional or already existing bilateral agreement between faculties of CHARM-partners should also be taken into account and used for mobility within CHARM-EU. In fact, CHARM-EU encourages setting up additional IIAs since they lead to closer ties and commitment between faculties.

Since the Erasmus+ budget of the CHARM-institutions differs and vary, all staff interested in mobility should be advised to contact their home Erasmus or International Office for information on the

application process. Universities may have fixed application deadlines, may require approval of the superior or HR-department, or may reject applications due to exhausted funds.

Any staff interested in a mobility should inform themselves about the options and contacts at a potential CHARM-EU host institution through the CHARM-EU website and the website of the potential host university. If interested in an individual job shadowing, the staff person should endeavour to find a suitable unit and contact at the partner university on his/ her own at first. If this endeavour proves to be unsuccessful, the staff may contact the CHARM-EU Manager for assistance, using the form "[Expression of Interest in Individual Staff Mobility](#)" (available as writable pdf by the CHARM-EU managers or the CHARM-EU website). The information on this form gives insight into the staff's personal background and proposed learning outcome and will help the CHARM-EU Manager forward this request to the appropriate unit in his /her university.

CHARM-EU is all about networking and connecting staff and students among its partners. If you or your staff are looking for opportunities, the Alliance provides and promotes various joint activities and networking events for its members.

- Staff interested in group events should check the official CHARM-EU website and contact their home universities' International Office or CHARM-EU office for information on activities such as networking events and International Weeks
- Staff interested in individual job shadowing at a CHARM-EU institution should contact the respective partner directly or ask their CHARM-EU Manager for assistance
- For the MGCS programme: Teaching Staff Mobility is an integral part of the curriculum, since teaching responsibility is shared among the CHARM-partners. Staff interested in teaching in the MGCS should contact the CHARM-Manager of their home university for more information. Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) offered as part of the MGCS programme are a good opportunity for participating in project- and challenge-based teaching activities. Check out the [Interactive Mobility Handbook](#) for more information on options to temporarily join in for teaching activities.
- Once staff have established relations, they should contact their home International Office or Erasmus Office for possible funding of the visit through the Erasmus+ programme.
- Staff should be made aware that funds are limited and that each partner university might have specific calls for applications or regulations for participation – best check in advance!
- To receive Erasmus+ funding, the Erasmus+ regulations set by the EU must be followed, i.e. individual Training and / or Teaching Agreements describing the content of the visit have to be drawn up and signed before the visit, a minimum number of teaching or training hours are required, participants must report on their activity upon return home.

Member universities and their Erasmus+ offices are encouraged to use the general Erasmus+ tools such as BIPs, STT and STA to the advantage of CHARM-EU, for example by:

- Prioritising staff mobility to a CHARM-EU partner in their calls;
- Prioritising participation of a CHARM-EU partner university when selecting participants for your International Week or BIP to strengthen the connection within the CHARM-EU Alliance;
- Offering flexible deadlines for staff applications (i.e. set aside a certain budget for staff mobilities to CHARM-EU institutions to be used outside your regular calls);
- Developing or actively participating in a BIP for staff training (teaching and / or training) with other CHARM-EU partners;
- Advertising CHARM-EU staff weeks, BIPs or individual job shadowing for teaching or training among your faculty and staff, i.e. on your website, in your newsletters or social media posts by using testimonials of former participants;
- Encouraging staff to participate in staff weeks offered by CHARM-EU partners. As an example for involving teaching staff in an existing CHARM-EU teaching project, check out the [MoXMo](#) project of the University of Montpellier;
- Using your Erasmus+ funds to invite company contacts into a staff training, lectures or teaching projects of CHARM-EU.

Case studies and best practices

Erasmus+ funded staff mobilities:

- Individual staff mobility for training: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7161378397892292608/>
- UiB Erasmus staff week: <https://www.uib.no/en/smw>
- UB Hackathon for staff: <https://charm-eu.eu/hackathon-in-barcelona-how-to-better-integrate-inclusivity-and-interculturality-into-the-learning-process/>

Non-Erasmus+ funded staff mobilities:

- Networking events – coordinated by the Networking expert team:
 - o Engineering schools meeting: <https://charm-eu.eu/inaugural-european-engineering-schools-and-masters-days-held-successfully/>
 - o Applied Data Science meeting: <https://charm-eu.eu/event/networking-event-applied-data-science-days-2024/>

- CHARM-EU R&I Days (1st Edition) – Building Multidisciplinary Research Proposals: A Co-Creation Workshop to Address the Water Global Challenges: <https://charm-eu.eu/event/charm-eu-ri-days-2023-1st-edition/>
- Libraries meeting: <https://charm-eu.eu/elte-hosts-the-charm-eu-libraries-networking-meeting/>
- Language schools meeting: <https://charm-eu.eu/shaping-the-future-of-language-teaching-innovation-and-collaboration-in-charm-eu/>

Further Information

For further information on Erasmus+ staff mobility in general contact your Erasmus+ or International Office, check out the website of the European Union.

Sources of information on Staff Mobility within CHARM-EU are provided on the CHARM-EU website, on your home university's website and by your CHARM-EU manager of your home institution.

CREDIT RECOGNITION

Aims and actions

The process of credit recognition can still be a challenge for some partners and their students, and therefore CHARM-EU aims to make the process smoother and easier for all involved parties.

Improving the processes around credit recognition promotes transparency and efficiency, planning an exchange period becomes simpler and finding suitable universities with realistic studies is made easier.

Programmes who have a mobility window encourage students to think of mobility as part of their programme rather than an option.

To meet this goal, the CHARM-EU Alliance aims to:

- Facilitate the integration of mobility window into the study programmes;
- Exchange best practices concerning credit recognition;
- Compare existing study programmes to facilitate credit recognition.

By exchanging best practices between partners of our current processes, we can identify common development needs and incentives for faculties, academic staff and students.

What is credit recognition?

Credit recognition is when credits and studies that have been conducted at another university or higher education institution are counted and recognized within the degree at the home university.

An individual learning agreement is made before the mobility takes place, which lays out the courses that will be studied during mobility and how they will be recognized academically within the degree upon successful completion. The learning agreement is a 3-way contract between home university, host university and student.

In the context of Erasmus+ an online learning agreement is created and signed digitally by all 3 parties before the exchange takes place. The learning agreement can be updated during the studies too, if studies/courses have changed. The online learning agreement will, in the near future, be connected via EWP to aid automatic recognition of courses between institutions.

There are multiple ways to facilitate credit recognition, and one way is by having a mobility window.

What is a mobility window?

A mobility window is a period within the degree, a semester or an academic year, when mobility is recommended and encouraged. The mobility window will typically be a time when less or no obligatory courses are offered, and when students can go on a mobility.

Introducing a recommended mobility window to study programmes can promote mobility and facilitate credit recognition. Other incentives of a mobility window are that programmes or faculties can decide when the mobility window should take place so obligatory studies or internships will not be missed, this will in turn lead to students being able to plan mobilities within studies at the beginning of their degree program.

Having a mobility window in a programme does not mean that mobility is obligatory for that programme, it is simply the recommended time that students in that programme should go on a mobility due to the teachings of that programme.

Comparison of existing study programmes

Mobility agreements are often made between subjects or faculties at universities, which means that universities often have similar teaching, courses, and modules within that subject. Having these similarities facilitates credit recognition and makes the mobility planning process much easier. Academics and staff often become aware of which partner universities offer which courses and can also begin to suggest specific universities.

Benefits for CHARM-EU

- The process of credit recognition between CHARM-EU universities will be made easier and smoother and in return faster.
- Faith and trust between CHARM-EU partners allows for an easier credit recognition process.
- The introduction of mobility windows in all programs at all CHARM-EU universities results in smoother planning of mobilities.
- Comparison of study programmes of CHARM-EU partners strengthens faith between partners and allows and enables simpler credit recognition.

CHARM-EU has conducted kick-off session followed by a best practice sharing session concerning credit recognition and mobility windows in November 2023. All partners completed a detailed online form sharing their processes, challenges, and initiatives regarding both credit recognition and mobility windows.

This best practice sharing allowed partners to identify common themes across all institutions, for example, the similarities in our processes, the challenges that all face, the individual challenges and the incentives.

Partners are now responsible for implementing recommended mobility windows in all programmes and planning an information session for faculty staff in charge or credit recognition.

Recommendations

- CHARM-EU institutions to implement best practices that were shared between institutions.
- CHARM-EU institutions implement a mobility window for all programmes.
- Identify programmes at CHARM-EU universities where the programme structure does not support 30 ECTS of exchange studies to be included in the degree.
 - o Investigate potential solutions for such programmes to enable credit recognition from exchange studies, e.g., identifying universities which have similar courses which can be counted as obligatory courses within the degree, more flexibility, restructure of the degree programme, etc.
- Involve faculty and programme staff in credit recognition processes more. Raise awareness of similar programmes and courses at partners universities to ease credit recognition in some programmes.
 - o Target certain faculties or programmes first that currently face challenges with credit recognition.

Case studies and best practices

Utrecht University works together with Wageningen University and Eindhoven University in the Netherlands to allow students to register for each other's courses, by one click of a button. They have eliminated all administrative issues, and the courses will be recognized. For more information click [here](#).

Further resources

For further information on credit recognition, contact your Erasmus+ or International Office, and check out the [website of the European Union](#).