

EVALUATION OF MOBILITY OF DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

EVALUATION REPORT

CHARM-EIGHT ∞ (CHARM-EU EXPANSION, INTER-INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS,
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: EVALUATION OF MOBILITY OF DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

This report presents an evaluation of doctoral mobility within the CHARM-EU Alliance, developed in response to the strategic importance of doctoral mobility for internationalisation and to the slower-than-expected growth in doctoral mobility participation observed during the implementation of the CHARM-8 project. Building on three years of practical experience within CHARM-EU, desk research and an institutional self-assessment survey, the report seeks to provide an evidence-informed understanding of how doctoral mobility is currently structured, supported, and constrained across partner institutions, and to identify concrete avenues for strengthening doctoral mobility in a way that is realistic, inclusive, and sensitive to institutional diversity within the alliance.

The report first situates doctoral mobility within broader European policy and academic debates, outlining the role, rationales, and expected benefits of mobility in doctoral education, as well as the key barriers and enabling factors identified in the literature. It then presents the results of an institutional survey mapping doctoral education structures, legal and employment statuses of doctoral researchers, available mobility formats, funding schemes, recognition practices, and administrative arrangements within the alliance.

A central focus of the analysis is the identification of factors that support or hinder doctoral mobility in practice, including financial, academic, legal, administrative, cultural, and personal dimensions. By examining both enabling and constraining conditions, the report highlights general patterns as well as areas of divergence across institutional and national contexts.

Finally, the report synthesises these findings to draw overarching conclusions and to outline implications and strategic considerations for the further development of doctoral mobility within CHARM-EU. Rather than proposing a single model, the report provides a foundation for context-sensitive and coordinated alliance-level approaches that take institutional diversity into account while strengthening shared frameworks for doctoral mobility.

Building on these conclusions, the report formulates a set of recommendations for CHARM-EU that focus on enhancing doctoral mobility through targeted, accessible, and sustainable initiatives. These recommendations prioritise flexible and inclusive mobility formats, improved alignment between doctoral education structures and mobility schemes, clearer guidance and coordination at alliance level, and the strategic use of existing academic networks and infrastructures, with the aim of supporting equitable and meaningful doctoral mobility across the Alliance.

INTRODUCTION

The **development and implementation of doctoral mobility have been a core objective of CHARM-EU since the outset of the Alliance**, reflecting the central role of internationalisation in European University Alliances. As outlined in the original project application, doctoral mobility was envisaged as a strategic instrument to strengthen the international character of doctoral training, deepen research and educational cooperation between partners, and provide doctoral researchers with meaningful international learning and research experiences. Planned mobility formats included long-term study mobility, long-term traineeships with external stakeholders, short-term mobility for networking and skills development, and blended mobility, including participation in Blended Intensive Programmes.

These ambitions were embedded within the broader objectives of the Mobility Work Package (WP5/WP6), which aimed to fine-tune and upscale existing mobility schemes while simultaneously pioneering more systemic and innovative approaches to mobility. This included the development of shared infrastructures such as the CHARM-EU Mobility Portal and the Comprehensive Catalogue of Transnational Learning. Over the first two years of implementation, however, it became increasingly clear that **doctoral mobility presents distinct challenges** compared to student (bachelor and master's-level) or staff mobility. While interest in transnational online learning and other mobility-related initiatives has grown substantially, doctoral mobility numbers have developed more slowly than anticipated. This slower uptake prompted reflection within the doctoral mobility sub-group on whether existing assumptions, based largely on lived experience and isolated institutional practices, were sufficient to guide further development.

As already highlighted in the mid-term reporting phase, the development and implementation of **doctoral mobility actions were significantly hindered by a range of** structural, financial, and institutional **factors, as experienced directly by the doctoral mobility sub-group**. In response, and in order to move beyond lived experience, the dedicated team of WP6 undertook a **structured institutional self-assessment on doctoral mobility**. The survey presented in this report was designed as a diagnostic tool to systematically examine how doctoral mobility is currently structured, supported, and constrained across CHARM-EU institutions.

By capturing institutional perspectives on doctoral education structures, funding mechanisms, recognition practices, administrative arrangements, and perceived enabling and hindering factors, the **self-assessment provides a shared analytical foundation for understanding why demand for doctoral mobility has remained comparatively low and how it might be more effectively supported**. Importantly, **this report builds** not only on desk research and policy analysis, but also **on three years of practical implementation experience within CHARM-EU**, and is intended to inform more targeted, realistic, and context-sensitive approaches that respect institutional diversity while strengthening shared frameworks for doctoral mobility.

DESK RESEARCH

Doctoral education and its internationalisation in Europe

Doctoral education in Europe has undergone significant transformation as a result of the Bologna Process, which sought to harmonise higher education systems across the continent (European Commission, 2024). The Salzburg Principles (2005) further shaped reforms within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), providing key recommendations for modernising the third cycle of higher education (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025). **Mobility became central to these reforms, as the Bologna Declaration placed it at the heart of European higher education policy**, with mobility understood as a foundational action line of both the EHEA and the ERA (Zgaga, 2018). EU-level initiatives such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and Erasmus Mundus further reinforced this orientation toward international cooperation and joint doctoral programmes (Zgaga, 2018; European Parliament & Council of the EU 2003, 2008).

In parallel, **the institutional landscape of doctoral education has changed through the rise of central doctoral schools, organisational structures designed to coordinate training and support for doctoral researchers**, though their roles remain diverse across Europe (EUA-CDE, 2025). Doctoral education has also become more embedded in broader knowledge and innovation systems, as the production of new knowledge is increasingly viewed as a strategic societal resource rather than solely an academic endeavour (Kehm, 2020). Consequently, **doctoral programmes now prepare researchers not only for academic careers but also for a wide range of knowledge-intensive and professional sectors** requiring broader competencies (Golde & Walker, 2006; Kehm, 2020; Union of Skills, 2025). The globalisation of research adds another layer of transformation. International recruitment has become essential for maintaining talent in knowledge-based economies, with around a quarter of doctoral researchers in the EU coming from outside Europe (Jorgensen, 2017). **Doctoral researchers are also increasingly mobile, contributing significantly to international research collaborations**, which in turn raises challenges related to their integration and the development of intercultural skills (Jorgensen, 2017).

Doctoral studies in Europe are defined as supervised, yet independent research training aimed at producing original knowledge and culminating in a doctoral degree, most commonly the PhD (Jorgensen, 2017). According to the Dublin Descriptors, **doctoral graduates are expected to demonstrate the ability to conceive, design and carry out substantial research with scholarly integrity** (EHEA, 2017, as cited in Jorgensen, 2017). Historically, doctoral training followed an academic apprenticeship model in which researchers – **often not considered “students” due to their high level of independence** – worked under the guidance of an experienced researcher, with their results evaluated by senior academics for rigour and originality (Jorgensen, 2017). Despite increasing professionalisation, the core of doctoral work, namely original supervised research, remains unchanged, even as transferable skills training and mobility opportunities have expanded (Jorgensen, 2017).

Within the Bologna Process, **doctoral education was conceptualised as the third cycle of higher education**, including seminars and credit requirements. However, **this approach faced resistance** in several continental European countries **where doctoral researchers were not traditionally viewed as students**, did not pay fees and typically entered doctoral training only after completing a master's degree, often within employment contracts as research staff (Kehm, 2020). This made the third-cycle “study” model more compatible with systems where doctoral education already resembled postgraduate coursework, but less so in systems where doctoral training functioned as the first stage of a research career (Kehm, 2020).

At the same time, public criticism has grown regarding long completion times, high dropout rates, overspecialisation and inadequate supervision in doctoral education (Kehm, 2020). The continental European response has been the rise of “**structured doctoral education**,” which **integrates doctoral training into programmes or schools and supplements dissertation research with systematic curricular components aimed at methodological, theoretical and labour-market-related competences** (Kehm, 2020). This shift has three major consequences: the gradual decline of the traditional master-apprentice model, an increased focus on the overall process of doctoral training rather than solely the final dissertation, and the embedding of doctoral education in dense regulatory frameworks governing rights, obligations and quality assurance (Kehm, 2020; Kehm, 2006).

Internationalisation has become a central marker of quality and prestige in higher education, as institutions are increasingly assessed by the scale of their incoming and outgoing student mobility (Souto-Otero, 2013). It is broadly defined as the **integration of an international or global dimension into the purposes and functions of higher education** (Moran et al., 2021), and its **benefits extend from individual-level gains to institutional and societal advantages** that support global citizenship, employability, and academic quality enhancement (Jones & Killick, 2013, in Moran et al., 2021). A rapidly growing dimension of this process is international academic mobility, which has expanded significantly in volume and impact due to globalisation (Knight & Madden, 2010), and is reinforced by large-scale programmes such as Erasmus, the EU's flagship mobility scheme (Souto-Otero, 2013).

Doctoral education is strongly embedded in this shift. The Bologna Process explicitly positioned mobility and international exchange as core objectives of the third cycle, reaffirmed in the Salzburg Principles (EUA-CDE, 2025). **European universities pursue internationalisation primarily by fostering research collaborations – especially within European University Alliances –** with 67% selecting this as a key strategy, while about half develop joint or double doctorates, co-tutelles and industrial doctorates, support outgoing mobility, or attract international doctoral researchers (EUA-CDE, 2025). Collaboration beyond Europe remains less prominent but still pursued, mainly to enhance research quality through global partnerships (EUA-CDE, 2025). Patterns of mobility in doctoral education reflect this landscape. The DocMob project shows high engagement in joint degrees and cotutelles (64%), short-term mobility (61%), and laboratory internships (49%). Yet, institutional structures to support such collaboration – such as inter-organisational doctoral schools

– remain relatively limited, present “to a great extent” in only 13% of universities (Hasgall et al., 2019). Doctoral education is still predominantly organised at disciplinary or faculty levels, with only a minority basing programmes on cross-cutting themes (Hasgall et al., 2019). While training activities for doctoral researchers are well regulated, they continue to focus primarily on research skills development (Hasgall et al., 2019).

Role and rationales of mobility in doctoral education

International mobility is understood as an integral part of the broader internationalisation of higher education, particularly within graduate training and research (Knight & Madden, 2010). Mobility experiences can take the form of completing a full degree abroad or engaging in short-term activities while remaining enrolled at the home institution, such as **specialised training, data collection, joint research, fieldwork, conferences, networking, or language instruction** (Knight & Madden, 2010). However, the terminology commonly used for undergraduate mobility – such as **study abroad or exchange** – **does not adequately capture the nature of short-term doctoral mobility, which is predominantly research-driven rather than coursework-based** (Knight & Madden, 2010).

Importantly, mobility should not be viewed as a single, isolated decision but as the **outcome of a series of events and choices that unfold across a student’s educational trajectory** (Carlson, 2013; Lörz, Netz & Quast, 2013, as cited in Netz & Jaksztat, 2014). This process-oriented understanding applies even more strongly to mobility during the doctoral phase, which occurs later in individuals’ academic and life pathways and is shaped by cumulative experiences and long-term aspirations (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014).

Mobility has become a central component of doctoral education, as it **contributes significantly to research performance and the circulation of knowledge within and beyond Europe** (Rubio-Pérez et al., 2021). Global processes such as competition for talent, brain circulation, and economic-geopolitical shifts have heightened the relevance of mobility for knowledge production and career advancement (Horta et al., 2021). **International mobility has become the norm among researchers** (Czaika & Orazbayev, 2018), yet the conditions that enable PhD researchers to build research collaborations during temporary stays remain underexplored (Horta et al., 2021). Mobility also functions as a **key channel for knowledge and technology transfer**, especially benefiting scholars from developing countries who gain access to advanced research environments abroad and transfer this expertise home (Bao et al., 2023). Programmes such as Erasmus+ or national mobility schemes promote brain circulation and strengthen international research networks upon return (Bao et al., 2023).

Research consistently shows that **temporary mobility during doctoral studies can provide many of the same benefits as completing a full PhD abroad**, including access to new knowledge and enhanced networking opportunities (Horta et al., 2021). Doctoral researchers are therefore motivated to be mobile because mobility promises access to diverse learning environments,

improved collaboration opportunities, and integration into international research networks (Horta et al., 2021). Motivations are often shaped by **push–pull dynamics** (De Wit, 2008; Lopez-Murillo, 2024), where factors such as **institutional prestige, research quality, language of instruction, cultural proximity, career aspirations, and available scholarships** influence decisions.

Rationales for mobility are multidimensional: they include academic goals such as **attending conferences and workshops, enhancing doctoral researchers' career paths, and gaining life experiences** (Knight & Madden, 2010). These top-ranking motivations (89–95%) highlight the importance of short international visits for improving research quality, networking, and international exposure. Mid-level rationales (72–82%) relate to **core aspects of doctoral work**, including **collaborative research, data collection, accessing foreign supervisors, and seeking employment, reflecting the growing need for participation in international research networks and global scientific problem-solving** (Knight & Madden, 2010). The lowest-ranked motivations – **learning a language and accessing specialised equipment** – were still considered important by a majority of respondents (55–65%), though more discipline-specific. Overall, the results demonstrate that doctoral researchers view mobility as integral to their academic development, career advancement, and broader personal and intercultural growth (Knight & Madden, 2010). Socio-cultural and personal motivations also matter; **researchers seek to broaden their worldviews, develop cross-cultural understanding, and gain new experiences** (Knight & Madden, 2010; Lopez-Murillo, 2024). Economic drivers include **access to career-relevant specialisations unavailable at home and improved employability upon return** (Lopez-Murillo, 2024).

Overall, **the rationales for doctoral mobility reflect a complex interplay of educational, socio-cultural, economic, and personal factors** embedded within wider global processes and individual life trajectories.

Barriers of doctoral mobility

The studies reviewed highlight a complex interplay of barriers and drivers shaping doctoral researchers' decisions to go abroad. Rather than operating in isolation, these constraining and facilitating conditions intersect across financial, academic, personal, cultural, institutional and policy dimensions. Taken together, these factors help explain not only who becomes mobile, but also **how, where and under what conditions doctoral mobility unfolds**. The following list summarises the key constraining factors in detail:

Financial barriers

- **Lack of funds or financial support** – Doctoral researchers often identify insufficient money or support as the top barrier to studying abroad; without adequate funding, mobility is simply not feasible. If universities do not contribute institutional funds, researchers have fewer combined resources for mobility. (Knight & Madden, 2010)

- **Scholarships that do not permit mobility costs** – Funding schemes that cannot be used for travel, fieldwork or research abroad effectively block international components of the doctorate. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Erasmus grant levels considered too low** – A large share of PhD researchers and potential Erasmus participants perceive the grant as insufficient, which discourages participation or limits the length/quality of their stay. (Souto-Otero, 2013)
- **Insufficient Erasmus+ funding for long-term mobility** – While short-term funding is seen as adequate, current schemes are thought too low for sustained, long-term doctoral mobility periods. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Need for more than one scholarship but restrictions on combining awards** – Many doctoral researchers require multiple awards to afford mobility, yet scholarship policies that cap total funding penalise them and limit feasible international stays. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Financial issues for home institutions (insufficient Erasmus+ funds for all levels)** – Universities often lack enough Erasmus+ funding to support bachelor, master and doctoral mobility, so they prioritise lower levels and neglect doctoral mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **National or local funding more attractive than Erasmus+** – Where national/local schemes are more generous, institutions and doctoral researchers may avoid Erasmus+, leading to missed Erasmus-based doctoral mobility opportunities. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Long-term job and salary vs. limited grant** – Doctoral researchers with stable jobs are reluctant to give up salary for a short-term grant, making long-term mobility particularly difficult. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **High costs of living and housing difficulties** – Inadequate financial support and problems finding affordable housing in the destination country hinder mobility. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Facing two rents for short stays** – For short mobilities, doctoral researchers often must pay rent at home and abroad simultaneously, which can make even funded stays unaffordable. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Other financial obligations** – Ongoing obligations such as rent, bills, debts or dependants' costs restrict the ability to allocate money for international mobility. (Knight & Madden, 2010)

Academic & institutional barriers

- **Institutional structural differences** – Variations in doctoral school organisation, regulations, and programme design create friction in organising mobility. These structural gaps complicate alignment and recognition processes. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Fragmented training structures** – Universities operate with different schedules, registration cycles, and training formats. Misaligned terms complicate or shorten possible stays, or cause extra administrative and academic burdens. (Knight & Madden, 2010)

- **Host institution does not offer doctoral-level courses** – Lack of doctoral-level coursework undermines academic value and recognition, especially where structured coursework is expected. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Limited research links** – When programmes, structures, or expectations differ too much, it is hard to design coherent doctoral mobility experiences. Many research areas across partner institutions lack natural or existing collaborations. Even in overlapping disciplines, academic staff do not always view partner institutions as relevant collaborators. Without institutional partnerships, it is harder to identify hosts, ensure recognition, and organise mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020; Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **No foreign university with expertise in student's specific research area** – If relevant expertise doesn't exist abroad (or is perceived not to), doctoral researchers see little academic benefit in mobility. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Difficulty balancing host institution prestige and research fit** – Even when prestigious universities exist, if they don't align with the student's research topic, mobility options become more limited. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Research training tensions and dilemmas** – Conflicting demands within research training programmes can reduce openness to adding time abroad. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Perceived unclear benefits** – In some disciplines or doctoral topics, the added value of mobility is not evident for doctoral researchers. This reduces motivation, especially where research is highly localised or context specific. Non-participants often do not understand the benefits or are ill-informed about Erasmus, which acts as an informational barrier to participation. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020; Souto-Otero, 2013)
- **Low awareness and commitment of faculty towards international experiences** – When faculty do not know the policies or are indifferent to internationalisation, doctoral researchers lack guidance, encouragement, and practical support. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Inconsistent supervisory support** – Supervisors differ in how actively they promote or enable mobility. A supervisor without international networks or interest can block or fail to facilitate research stays abroad. For some doctoral researchers, a major obstacle is persuading supervisors that mobility is worthwhile. (Knight & Madden, 2010; Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Lack of clarity on what counts as "mobility activity" at doctoral level** – Uncertainty whether conferences, visits, research stays or cotutelles are recognised activities can prevent doctoral researchers and staff from planning them. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Inflexible or overly heavy curricula at home universities** – Programmes that are too rigid or workload-heavy make it difficult to integrate a stay abroad without delaying progress. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Insufficient link between research laboratories and international relations office (IRO)** – Weak internal coordination means opportunities and tools for doctoral mobility are underdeveloped or unknown. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)

- **Lack of bridge between Erasmus+ mobility and cotutelles** – Weak linkage between Erasmus+ and joint degree/cotutelle arrangements reduces structured, recognised forms of doctoral mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Nationally oriented dissertation** – Theses with a strong national orientation (data, context, language) can reduce perceived need or feasibility of international stays. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Intellectual property constraints** – Sensitive research areas and industry-linked projects impose IP limitations. These restrictions can prevent doctoral researchers from sharing data or conducting parts of their research abroad. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Difficulties with credit recognition** – If home universities do not recognise international experiences for credit or recognition frameworks are unclear and underused for doctoral training, doctoral researchers risk study delays and may avoid mobility altogether. HEIs struggle to translate research, conferences and other activities into credits, so they may avoid using ECTS, creating uncertainty about recognition. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020; Knight & Madden, 2010; Souto-Otero, 2013)
- **Attachment to current working context and expected backlog after return** – Scholars may fear that a stay abroad will cause work to pile up, and attachment to their lab/job context makes leaving less attractive. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Lack of information** – Both HEIs and doctoral researchers often do not know what is possible, who to contact, or how to proceed, so mobility plans stall. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Lack of orientation and support services** – Universities may lack tailored support structures for PhD mobility, making logistics, recognition and funding more difficult to manage. Support programmes poorly tailored to doctoral needs leave PhDs feeling under-supported. (Knight & Madden, 2010; Moran et al., 2021)

Legal, bureaucratic & programme-design barriers

- **National regulations limiting doctoral status as “students” (e.g. SMS/SMP not allowed)** – In some countries, doctoral researchers cannot legally use certain student mobility schemes, closing off those pathways. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Legislative and regulatory barriers** – National regulations can limit allowable mobility formats or doctoral statuses restricting options. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Bureaucratic obstacles and heavy administrative procedures** – Complicated Erasmus+ procedures and rigid inter-institutional agreements make doctoral mobility cumbersome. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Visa and insurance issues** – Administrative hurdles around visas and insurance are explicitly mentioned as obstacles to doctoral mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Social security issues abroad** – Concerns over insurance, social security arrangements and coverage can discourage mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)

- **Bad timing of mobility procedures for doctoral researchers** – Application timelines and decision windows may not align with doctoral research schedules, making planning hard. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Insufficient time resources to plan or undertake mobility** – Doctoral researchers may not have the time within their programme to add a research stay abroad. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Informational deficits about mobility opportunities** – Not knowing what is available, how to apply, or whom to contact deters mobility planning. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014; Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Lack of experience with organising doctoral mobility at institutional level** – Institutional inexperience results in weak structures, unclear procedures, and limited promotion. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Short three-year doctoral time frame** – Tight completion deadlines constrain the possible length and timing of mobility, often limiting it to very short stays. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **No clear tools or rules to recognise doctoral mobility** – Learning agreements and transcripts are often not tailored to research-based mobility, leading to poor recognition. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Doctoral mobility not organised at institutional level** – While it does happen, lack of institutional frameworks can mean uneven recognition, support and sustainability. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)

Cultural, linguistic, social & psychological barriers

- **Language barriers in daily and academic life** – Poor language proficiency is a major barrier to participation and to selecting particular destination countries. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025, Knight & Madden, 2010; Souto-Otero, 2013)
- **Low confidence in foreign language skills** – Even when actual skills might be adequate, low self-confidence discourages doctoral researchers from applying or travelling. (Souto-Otero, 2013)
- **Discomfort with cultural aspects of living/working abroad** – Doctoral researchers who anticipate cultural shock or discomfort may opt out of mobility opportunities. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Concerns about safety of international travel** – Perceived risks of travel or living abroad can block mobility decisions. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Inability to find support for bringing family members abroad** – Lack of institutional or financial support to relocate family members makes mobility unrealistic for those with dependants. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Ethnicity and cultural expectations** – Cultural expectations associated with ethnicity, age, gender and family status can limit the social acceptability of leaving home. (Knight & Madden, 2010)

- **Reintegration prospects** – For some, worries about returning home and reintegrating remain notable deterrents. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Shift from teacher-centered to autonomous learning causing tension** – International doctoral researchers may struggle to adapt to expectations of independent learning in new systems, causing anxiety and stress. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025)
- **Pedagogy of indifference and minimal support from supervisors** – Cultural expectations of independence combined with limited guidance can initially produce uncertainty, isolation and frustration. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025)
- **Cultural differences in work–life balance and social interaction** – Divergent norms in host countries can make adjustment more difficult and contribute to dissatisfaction or withdrawal. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025)
- **Difficulty finding support groups and friendships** – Struggles to find support groups and friendships that could reduce isolation. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025)
- **Isolation due to lack of structured courses and classmates** – The doctoral structure (few courses, individual research) can lead to feelings of isolation, especially abroad without established networks. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025)
- **Domestic researchers' lack of interest in engaging with internationals** – Doctoral researchers' reluctance to interact with international peers reduces peer learning and social integration for international doctoral researchers. (Moran et al., 2021)
- **'Cultural distancing' between local and international doctoral researchers** – International doctoral researchers experience being perceived as outsiders and as a homogenous group, which reinforces isolation. (Moran et al., 2021)
- **Mental health issues and inability to cope with pressure** – International doctoral researchers report multiple mental health and adjustment issues (isolation, depression, homesickness, discrimination, racism, and stereotyping) which heavily impact wellbeing and sense of belonging. (Moran et al., 2021; O'Reilly et al., 2013)
- **Psychological stress from balancing risks and anxieties** – Social and personal considerations, including managing perceived risks and anxieties can deter mobility. (Souto-Otero, 2013)

Personal barriers

- **Family responsibilities** – Domestic, childcare, and relationship responsibilities may make both long and short mobility phases impractical and costly. Parenthood only negatively affects mobility plans for female doctoral researchers, signalling gendered inequalities. Obligations towards older parents can limit flexibility and willingness to go abroad. (Knight & Madden, 2010; Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Age** – Older doctoral researchers are less likely to plan research stays abroad, consistent with human capital models of migration. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Socio-economic background** – Doctoral researchers from lower social classes are less likely to participate, indicating structural inequality in access to mobility. Those from less

advantaged backgrounds are also channelled into less prestigious programmes, reproducing inequalities. Doctoral researchers from non-academic or less privileged backgrounds show more difficulties in integration and adjustment. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025; Lopez-Murillo, 2024; Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)

- **Gender issues** – Women are less internationally mobile and less integrated into international networks, making mobility opportunities and benefits more limited. Socialized gender roles make it harder for female PhD researchers to balance family and work during mobility, disadvantaging them compared to male peers. (Horta et al., 2021; Schaer et al., 2017)
- **Strong social bonds at home** – Deep friendships or relationships at home reduce willingness to move, particularly for long-term stays. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Employment** – Teaching, clinical work or other roles make it difficult to leave for extended periods without harming one's professional standing. Doctoral researchers needing additional income cannot easily give up work to go abroad, especially for longer stays. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Health status or disability** – Health issues may complicate travel, access to medicines, insurance, and local healthcare, making mobility risky or unmanageable. Concern about suitable healthcare abroad can deter doctoral researchers with ongoing or potential health needs. (Knight & Madden, 2010; Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Lack of motivation and internal support** – Low personal motivation and limited encouragement from within the institution reduce mobility plans. Awareness and engagement with mobility opportunities vary widely across programmes. Limited visibility and competing research obligations reduce participation. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Mobility delaying completion and career start** – Even short-term mobility can be perceived as delaying thesis submission and entry into the job market, making it less attractive. (Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Life-course as a constraint (including ethnicity-based expectations)** – Expectations linked to age, gender, and ethnicity shape family and community norms, which may discourage extended absence. (Knight & Madden, 2010)

Enabling factors of doctoral mobility

A wide range of supportive conditions can facilitate doctoral researchers' participation in international mobility. These **enabling factors operate across individual, institutional, and systemic levels**, creating opportunities that make research stays abroad more accessible, academically meaningful, and personally rewarding. These facilitators help shape the pathways through which doctoral mobility becomes possible and attractive.

Structural drivers

- **Reputation, quality, prestige of HEIs and disciplines** – High-quality and prestigious institutions, and renowned disciplinary groups, make certain destinations attractive.

Prestigious universities attract PhD researchers by offering strong human and technical capital and acting as gatekeepers to collaboration. (Brooks & Waters, 2009; Horta et al., 2021; Jacob & Meek, 2013; Lopez-Murillo, 2024; Souto-Otero, 2013)

- **Existing research in particular fields and networks in destination countries** – Prior research activity and networks in certain countries draw doctoral researchers to those contexts. (Beech, 2015; Lopez-Murillo, 2024)
- **Cultural and geographical proximity of destinations** – Closer cultural and geographic settings can make mobility more attractive and less risky. (OECD, 2004; Lopez-Murillo, 2024)
- **Language of instruction** – English-medium courses attract doctoral researchers because of perceived global value and the concentration of top-ranked institutions. (De Wit, 2008; Baláž & Williams, 2004; Lopez-Murillo, 2024)
- **Career prospects** – Future career and employment prospects are powerful motivators to pursue international doctoral study. (Holloway et al., 2012; Moran et al., 2021)

Financial enablers

- **Scholarships** – Availability of scholarships is key for doctoral researchers to take part in international academic mobility. (Altbach et al., 1985; Knight & Madden, 2010; Lopez-Murillo, 2024)
- **Flexible use of Erasmus+ (SMS, SMP, STA, STT)** – Institutions that strategically combine student and staff mobility options can adapt formats to doctoral needs. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **National and local doctoral mobility schemes** – Generous national/local funding enables well-funded doctoral mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Availability of financial incentives at faculty level** – Faculty-level travel grants and mobility funds increase the probability that doctoral researchers undertake research stays abroad. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Higher funding** – Some doctoral researchers' funding exceeded their needs, showing how adequate grants strongly enable mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)

Academic & institutional enablers

- **Institutional/departmental/disciplinary settings and learning environment** – Supportive environments and positive interactions with colleagues and peers shape doctoral trajectories and can support mobility and learning. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025)
- **International institutional culture** – Departments that are outward-looking and internationally connected have higher likelihood of sending doctoral researchers abroad. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Affiliation to internationally oriented disciplines** – Disciplines with established international norms and collaborations are associated with more doctoral mobility. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Participation in international research projects** – Engagement in international projects opens doors to research stays and collaborative fieldwork abroad. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)

- **Existing institutional collaborations, networks and personal contacts** – Collaborations between institutions make it easier to organise research visits and exchanges. Relationships formed during previous studies can help doctoral researchers find hosts and opportunities abroad. (Ackers, 2005; Netz & Jaksztat, 2014; Puustinen-Hopper, 2005)
- **Frequent, high-quality supervision and positive supervisor relationships** – Supportive supervisors provide guidance, emotional support, aiding both academic progress and emotional wellbeing and practical help in planning and conducting research abroad. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025)
- **Supervision by well-connected scholars** – Supervisors with international networks can broker placements and collaborations, enabling mobility. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Peer and social support systems** – Peers, supervisors and colleagues help mitigate challenges, reduce isolation and facilitate adjustment in the host country. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025; Moran et al., 2021)
- **Informal support from international colleagues** – Informal networks among international doctoral researchers (“shared consciousness”) help them cope with being viewed as outsiders. (Moran et al., 2021)
- **Recognition of diverse backgrounds by professors** – Professors who value doctoral researchers’ diverse experiences contribute to a positive learning environment that supports international doctoral researchers. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025)
- **University staff valuing international doctoral researchers for cultural enrichment and internationalising discussions** – This positive valuation legitimises international presence and strengthens the perceived benefits of mobility for all. (Moran et al., 2021; Clarke et al., 2018)
- **Lecturer/staff mobility as a trigger for doctoral mobility** – Staff teaching mobility introduces external researchers and can stimulate doctoral researchers to follow with their own mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Doctoral mobility integrated from the beginning of the research programme** – When mobility is planned as part of the doctoral trajectory from the start, it becomes more achievable and better recognised (often as a new thesis chapter). (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Short visits (<1 month)** – For doctoral researchers, very short visits offer a realistic compromise, offering more feasible, research-focused mobility options financially and timewise, enabling some international exposure despite constraints. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020; Knight & Madden, 2010)
- **Joint degree programmes and cotutelles** – Joint programmes explicitly embedding mobility create formal frameworks that encourage and structure international doctoral stays. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Doctoral schools, intensive short schools and online platforms (e.g. PhDHub)** – The idea of funding short doctoral courses and creating online platforms to share offers can foster targeted doctoral mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)

- **Recognition tools** – When LA and ToR frameworks appropriately capture research work, they support recognition and legitimize doctoral mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020 – DocMob Handbook)
- **Recognition of mobility as a new thesis chapter or research output** – Seeing mobility as integral to the thesis (e.g. new chapter, publications) motivates participation and institutional support. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)
- **Institutional strategies to rethink and support doctoral Erasmus+ mobility** – IROs using project impulses (like ICM) to redesign promotion, internal organisation and recognition enable more structured doctoral mobility. (Donato & Viry-Michel, 2020)

Social background & personal characteristics

- **Higher social background** – Doctoral researchers from higher socio-economic classes are more likely to have had earlier mobility, which then feeds into later doctoral mobility plans. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014; Lopez-Murillo, 2024)
- **Previous mobility experiences** – Past study- or research-related mobility positively predicts plans for further research periods abroad during the doctorate. (Knight & Madden, 2010; Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Social networks** – Previous teachers, mentors, and peers with mobility experience play a key role in encouraging mobility. (Lopez-Murillo, 2024)
- **Cultural interest and presence of relatives or friends in destination countries** – Personal curiosity and social connections abroad lower perceived risks and increase attractiveness of mobility. (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014)
- **Individual agency and traits** – Psychological characteristics, such as self-efficacy, engagement, curiosity, motivation, sense of belonging, coping skills, support resilience and adaptive capacity, helping doctoral researchers navigate mobility challenges. (Boutiuc-Kaiser & Symeonidis, 2025)
- **‘International thinking’ and global citizenship orientation** – Seeing oneself as “thinking beyond” and aspiring to global citizenship is associated with positive attitudes towards mobility. (Moran et al., 2021; Yemini, 2017)

Outcomes and benefits of doctoral mobility

Across the literature, doctoral mobility emerges as a multifaceted mechanism that generates substantial benefits for individuals, institutions, and wider societies. At the **individual level**, mobility enhances doctoral researchers’ career prospects, research capabilities, and personal development. International study and research experiences are associated with improved employability, higher earnings, and broader professional opportunities (Moran et al., 2021; Varghese, 2008). Participation in international collaborations expands scientific networks and research productivity (Lopez-Murillo, 2024; Jonkers & Cruz-Castro, 2013), while exposure to diverse academic environments strengthens foreign language competence and comparative understanding of higher education systems, both of which are crucial for future academic careers (Enders & Bornmann, 2002; Delicado,

2011). Mobility also fosters profound personal growth – including increased intercultural awareness, global citizenship, and transformative learning experiences – which shape doctoral researchers’ identities, values, and long-term professional pathways (Moran et al., 2021; Yemini, 2017; Teichler, 2004). Furthermore, short-term mobility experiences support the development of globally aware and competitive researchers, enriching doctoral researchers’ personal and academic growth through intercultural experience and engagement in global issues (Knight & Madden, 2010). Empirical work highlights that mobile scholars often produce higher-impact research, maintain broader international networks, and demonstrate stronger engagement in international collaboration after returning home (Bao et al., 2023), although some studies note that mobility does not always translate into increased productivity (Bao et al., 2023). Temporary mobility during the doctoral phase can replicate some of the advantages of completing a PhD abroad, particularly through enhanced exposure, networking, and skill development (Horta et al., 2021), with evidence showing positive outcomes even for specific groups such as women scientists, who tend to publish in higher-quality journals when mobile (Horta et al., 2021). Mobility also has wider social benefits, enabling returning doctoral researchers to contribute to community development, institutional reforms, and broader societal change (Lopez-Murillo, 2024).

At the **institutional level**, doctoral mobility supports universities in building international visibility and establishing sustained academic partnerships. Returning doctoral researchers contribute international perspectives to their home departments and enrich learning environments with comparative insights and new pedagogical approaches acquired abroad (Knight & Madden, 2010; Groves et al., 2018). They also act as carriers of “soft power,” transferring academic norms, research practices, and global knowledge back into their institutions (Brooks & Waters, 2011). For **doctoral schools**, these benefits are particularly significant: mobile doctoral researchers help strengthen international research networks, attract new partnerships, elevate the global reputation of programmes, and contribute to innovation within doctoral training structures. They introduce new research methodologies, pedagogical approaches, and thematic expertise, thereby enhancing the overall academic quality and competitiveness of doctoral education. Doctoral schools further benefit from strengthened supervisory networks, increased opportunities for joint degrees and cotutelles, and heightened capacity to participate in international projects—factors that reinforce the strategic internationalisation of doctoral education (Knight & Madden, 2010; Gérard & Maldonado, 2009).

At the **national and societal levels**, the international mobility of doctoral researchers supports global knowledge exchange and strengthens countries’ innovation systems. Mobile scholars play a key role in connecting national research to global flows of ideas, talent and technologies, contributing to science and technology strategies that rely on international collaboration (Industry Canada, 2007). In many contexts, returning graduates foster social change by engaging in community development, non-profit work, and policy reform, and by applying intercultural values and perspectives in their everyday professional practices (Marsh et al., 2016; Gill, 2010; Paige et al., 2009). Moreover, the transnational networks forged through mobility facilitate ongoing research

collaboration, future student exchanges, and international academic partnerships that benefit both host and home countries (Murakami, 2014; Gérard & Maldonado, 2009).

Overall, **doctoral mobility serves as a powerful catalyst for academic excellence, institutional internationalisation, and societal development**. It contributes to shaping globally minded doctoral researchers, reinforcing the international capacity of doctoral schools, and promoting knowledge circulation across borders, ultimately enriching the ecosystems in which doctoral researchers and their institutions operate.

INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY

This survey was designed to provide a structured, institution-level overview of doctoral mobility within the CHARM-EU alliance, with a particular focus on the **conditions that enable or constrain mobility in practice**, that can be found in Annex 1. The results offer insights across five interrelated focus areas.

First, the survey investigates **doctoral education structures that shape access to mobility funding**, such as the organisation of doctoral programmes, the legal status of doctoral researchers, their formal and informal roles within institutions, and curricular requirements related to international activities. This focus area helps explain structural mismatches between doctoral education models and existing mobility schemes.

Second, the survey maps the **current landscape of doctoral mobility opportunities and practices**. This includes the types of mobility activities supported, the programmes and funding schemes in use, recognition mechanisms, administrative arrangements, and the extent to which doctoral mobility is monitored and strategically encouraged at institutional level.

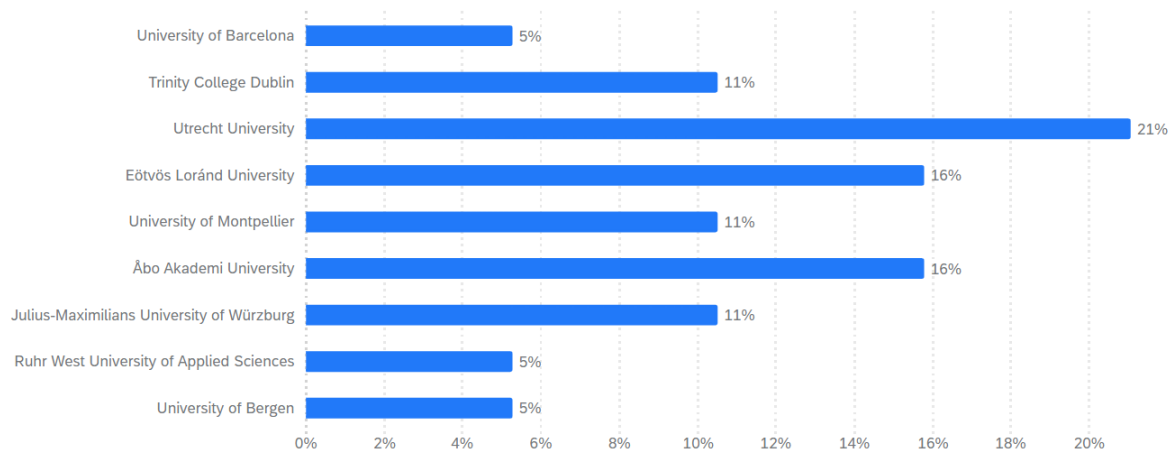
Third, it examines the **availability, adequacy and accessibility of mobility funding** for doctoral researchers. Beyond identifying funding sources, the survey explores how grant levels, co-funding possibilities, and rules on combining funding influence both short- and long-term mobility, highlighting financial enablers and bottlenecks.

Fourth, the survey assesses a broad range of **academic, administrative, legal, cultural and personal factors** in terms of how strongly they support or hinder doctoral mobility. Using a graded scale, institutions were able to indicate not only barriers but also conditions that actively facilitate mobility, allowing for a nuanced, comparative analysis across partners.

Finally, the survey captures **institutional perceptions of alignment and readiness** for doctoral mobility within CHARM-EU. Open reflections highlight perceived strengths, persistent challenges, and priority areas for improvement at institutional, national and European levels, providing a forward-looking basis for strategic development within the alliance.

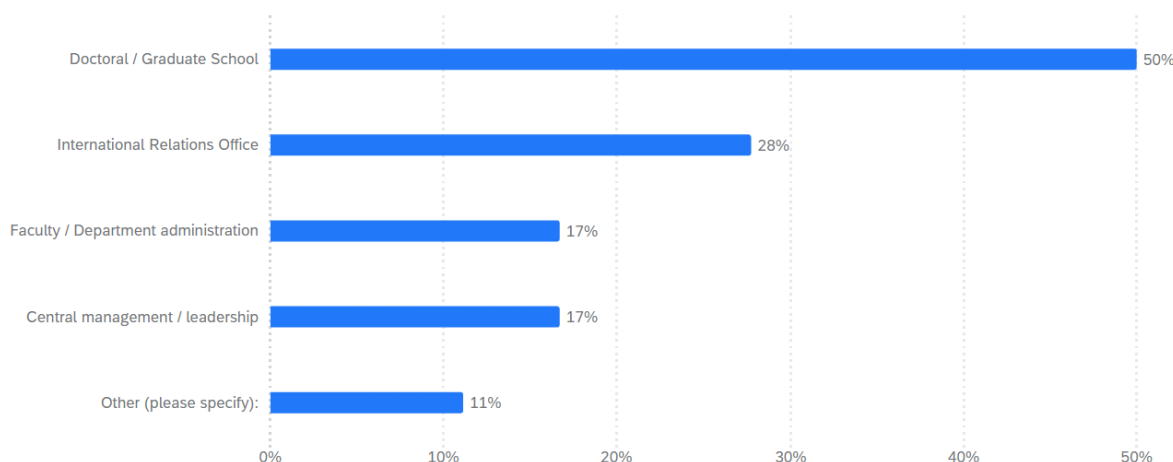
Institutional context

A total of nearly 32 survey responses were received. In order to ensure the robustness and analytical usefulness of the results presented in this report, only responses with a completion rate of at least 90% were retained for analysis. As a result, **19 responses were included** in the final dataset. All CHARM-EU partner institutions are represented, with a minimum of one and a maximum of four valid responses per institution. This filtering approach strengthens the reliability of the findings while maintaining institutional coverage across the Alliance.



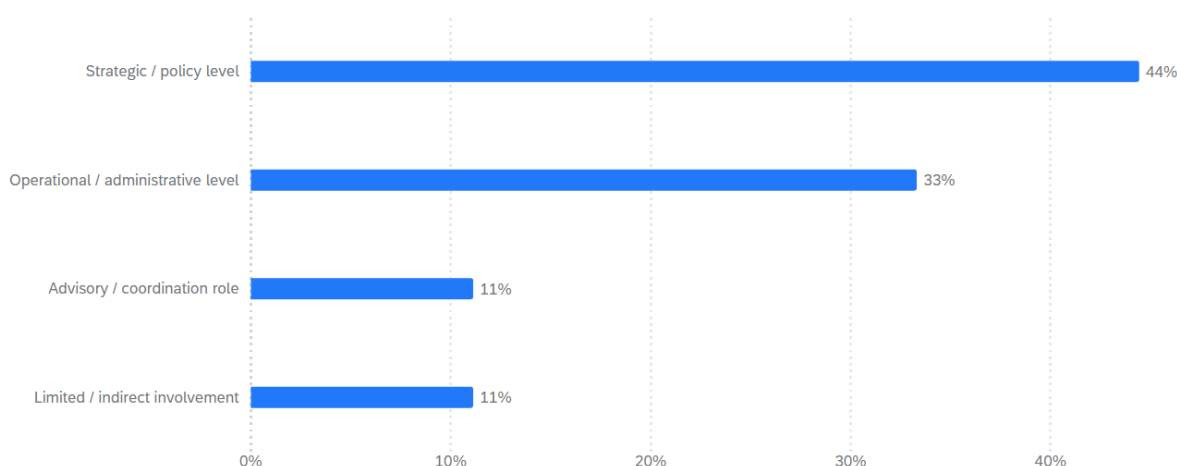
1. Figure - Name of institution

Respondents were asked to indicate their **institutional affiliation**. Half of the respondents (50%) represent Doctoral or Graduate Schools, while 28% are affiliated with International Relations Offices. Faculty or departmental administration and central management or leadership are each represented by 17% of respondents, and 11% indicated affiliation with other institutional units. This distribution reflects the multi-actor nature of doctoral mobility governance, which involves doctoral education structures, international mobility units, and administrative and managerial actors. As such, the respondent profile is well aligned with the survey's institutional focus and supports a comprehensive view of doctoral mobility from multiple organisational perspectives.



2. Figure- Respondent role

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate their **level of involvement in doctoral mobility**. A substantial share (44%) reported working primarily at a strategic or policy level, while 33% are involved in operational or administrative tasks related to mobility. A further 11% indicated an advisory or coordination role, and 11% reported indirect involvement. This mix of strategic and operational perspectives is particularly relevant for interpreting the results, as it allows the analysis to capture both high-level institutional positioning and practical implementation aspects of doctoral mobility.



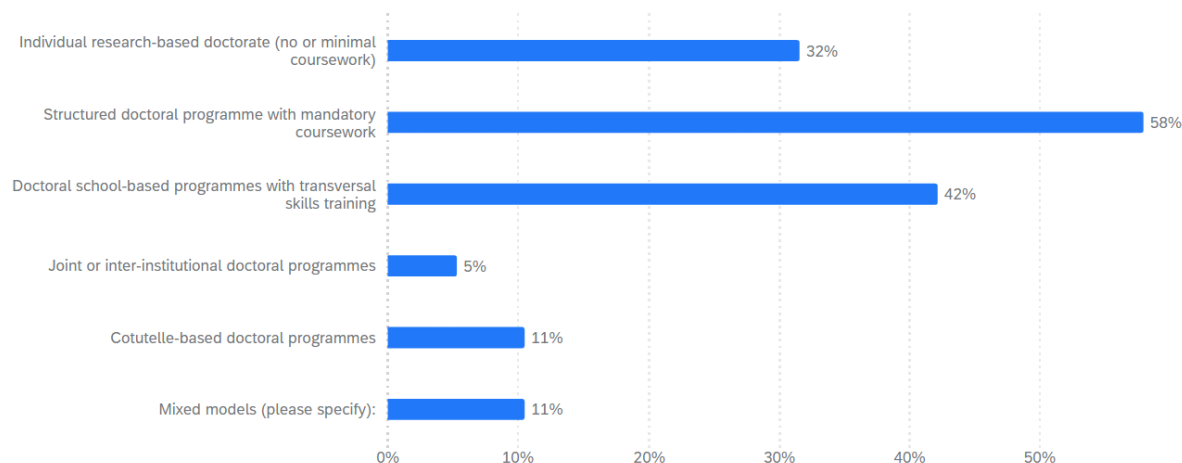
3. Figure- Level of responsibility related to doctoral mobility

Doctoral education features influencing mobility

In the next pillar of the analysis, we focused on identifying those characteristics of doctoral education that, according to our working hypothesis, have a strong influence on the types of

mobility available to doctoral researchers, as well as on the factors that support or hinder their participation in mobility activities. This pillar is closely linked to survey items examining programme structure, curricular logic and the institutional conditions shaping eligibility for and use of mobility schemes.

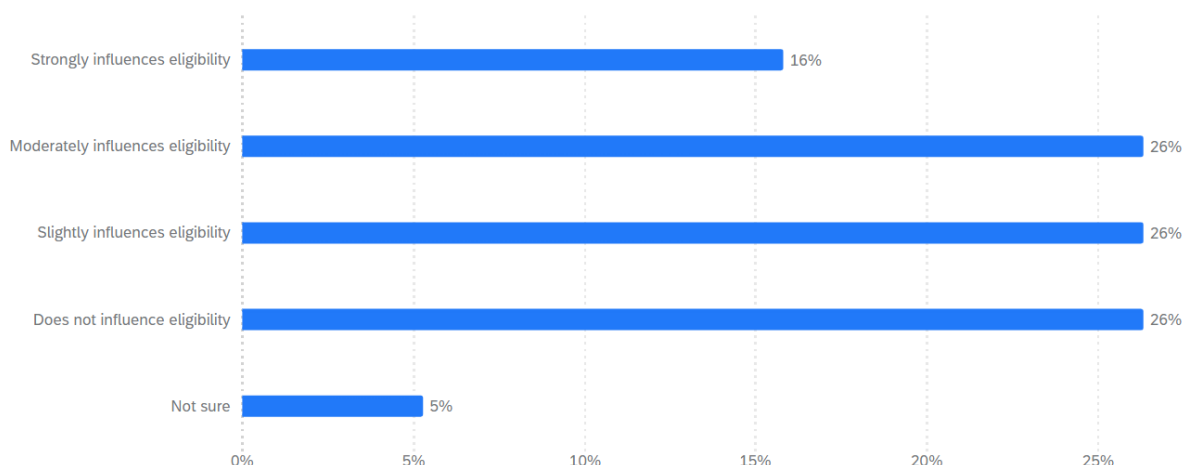
First, respondents were asked to identify the **dominant model of doctoral programmes** at their institution. A majority (58%) reported structured doctoral programmes with mandatory coursework, while 42% indicated doctoral school-based programmes with transversal skills training. These programme models tend to facilitate doctoral researchers' participation in structured learning activities abroad, such as semester-based courses, short intensive courses or summer schools, which are more easily aligned with existing mobility schemes and recognition practices. At the same time, 32% of respondents reported the presence of individual research-based doctoral programmes with no or minimal coursework. This finding is particularly relevant, as the course-based logic underpinning Erasmus+ student mobility (SMS) is less compatible with such programmes, potentially limiting access to certain mobility formats. In addition, 11% of respondents indicated the availability of cotutelle-based doctorates, and a further 5% reported joint or inter-institutional doctoral programmes. These programme types typically embed mobility more explicitly within the doctoral trajectory, often making international mobility an inherent rather than optional component of doctoral education.



4. Figure- The dominant models for the institutions

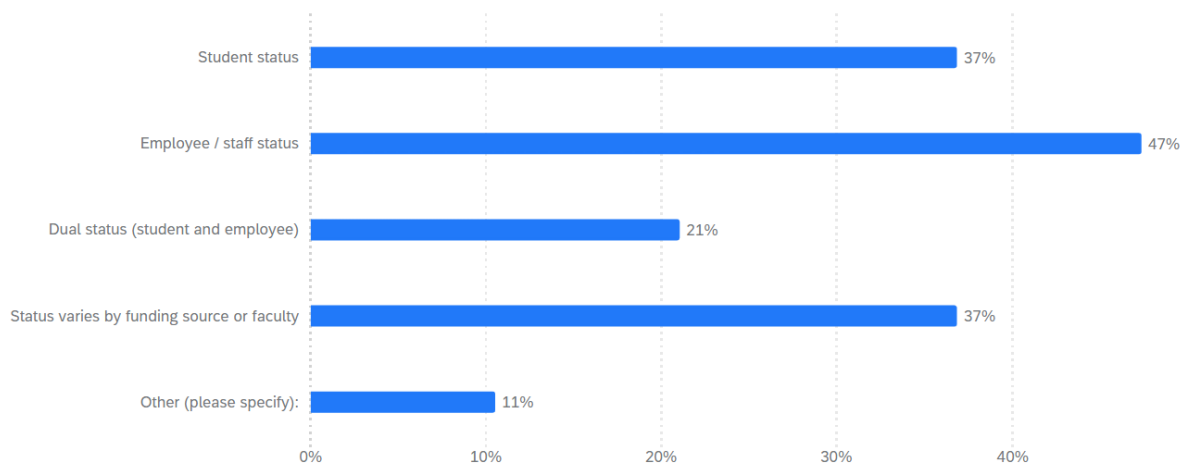
Respondents were also asked to assess the extent to which **the structure of doctoral programmes influences access to doctoral mobility opportunities**. The responses indicate a highly differentiated picture: 16% of respondents consider programme structure to have a strong influence, while 26% report a moderate influence and a further 26% a slight influence. At the same time, 26% of respondents indicated that doctoral programme structure does not influence access to mobility opportunities, and 1% were unsure. These findings suggest that there is no shared institutional

understanding across the Alliance regarding the role of programme structure in shaping doctoral mobility. While for a majority of institutions programme design is seen as at least a partial enabling or constraining factor, a substantial proportion perceives mobility as largely independent from doctoral programme structures. This divergence points to underlying differences in how doctoral mobility is embedded in or detached from doctoral education frameworks, with important implications for the alignment of mobility schemes with doctoral programme design.



5. Figure- Impact of Doctoral Programme Structure on Mobility Access

Understanding the **legal status of doctoral researchers** was a critical element of the analysis. According to the responses, 47% of institutions indicated that doctoral researchers primarily hold employee status, while 37% reported student status. In addition, 37% noted that legal status depends on the funding scheme under which the doctoral candidate is enrolled, and 21% indicated the existence of a dual status combining student and employee roles. Only 11% reported other forms of legal arrangements. This diversity is highly significant, as legal status directly determines eligibility for different doctoral mobility grants. In particular, neither the strong promotion of semester-based doctoral mobility nor the availability of short-term doctoral mobility grants necessarily provides a comprehensive solution for doctoral mobility, as these schemes are not accessible to doctoral researchers with employee status. For this group, Erasmus+ staff mobility for training (or teaching for other purposes) may represent an alternative; however, these schemes differ substantially in both duration and focus from mobility formats designed for longer-term course-based competence development, or sustained participation in scientific work under supervision. As a result, the legal status of doctoral researchers emerges as a key structural factor shaping not only access to funding, but also the qualitative nature of mobility experiences available to them.



6. Figure - The predominant legal status of doctoral researchers

The results indicate that **doctoral researchers frequently hold multiple formal roles** alongside their doctoral enrolment. Teaching responsibilities are the most common, reported by 58% of respondents, followed by research assistant or project-based roles (47%). Nearly half of respondents (47%) also indicated that doctoral researchers hold no formal role beyond enrolment, highlighting considerable diversity in employment arrangements. Administrative or service roles and other roles were each reported by 16% of respondents, suggesting that a smaller but notable proportion of doctoral researchers engage in additional institutional tasks, which may influence their opportunities to participate in doctoral mobility.

Responses show a mixed assessment of how **formal roles influence doctoral mobility**. While 28% of respondents indicated that the question was not applicable, among those who perceived an effect, supportive influences slightly outweighed limiting ones. A combined 44% reported that formal roles either slightly (22%) or moderately (11%) support mobility, with an additional 11% indicating strong support. At the same time, 28% of respondents reported that formal roles limit mobility to some degree, either slightly (17%) or moderately (11%), underscoring the ambivalent role of employment-related responsibilities.

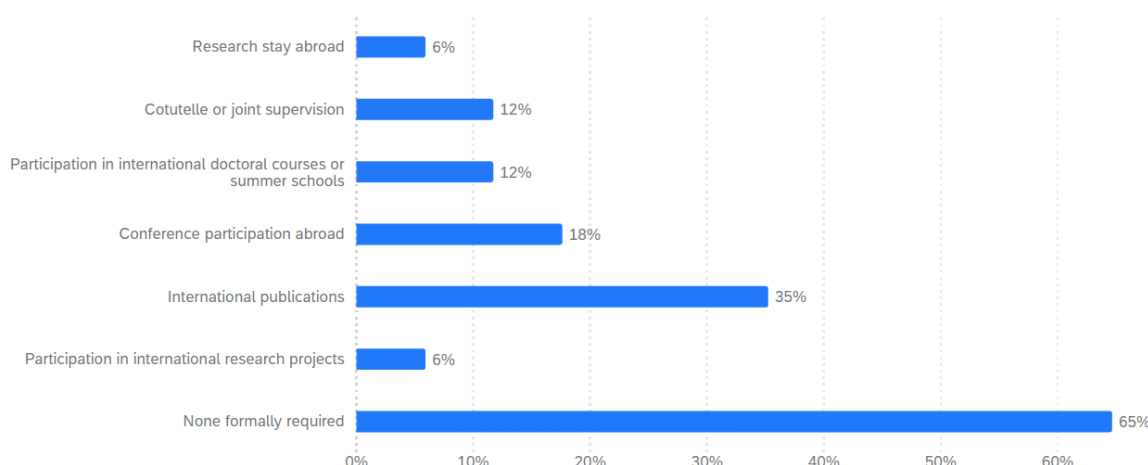
Informal or “hidden” expectations were clearly identified as a relevant factor. While 37% of respondents reported that no such expectations exist, an equal proportion (37%) explicitly confirmed their presence, and 26% were unsure. Qualitative responses point to **expectations of physical presence, continuity in teaching, laboratory, or project responsibilities, and mandatory in-person milestones** as key informal constraints shaping mobility opportunities.

Doctoral mobility appears to be encouraged, though often in a **moderate** rather than strong form. Almost half of respondents (47%) indicated that mobility is encouraged to some extent, while 16% reported strong encouragement. At the same time, 21% characterised the institutional stance as

neutral, and 16% reported that mobility is rarely encouraged. These findings suggest that encouragement exists but is not uniformly institutionalised or prioritised.

Formal curricular requirements related to mobility are largely absent. Half of the respondents (50%) reported that doctoral programmes do not include such requirements, while 39% indicated that requirements vary by programme. Only 11% reported the presence of optional mobility-related curricular elements, and none identified mandatory requirements, pointing to a fragmented and largely informal integration of mobility into doctoral curricula.

The data shows that **most international activities are not formally required.** A clear majority (65%) indicated that no international activities are formally prescribed within doctoral programmes. Among the minority where requirements exist, international publications were most frequently mentioned (35%), followed by conference participation abroad (18%). Activities typically associated with longer-term mobility, such as research stays abroad (6%) or participation in international research projects (6%), were rarely reported, indicating limited formalisation of extended doctoral mobility.



7. Figure- Required international activities in doctoral programmes

Curricular requirements appear to play a limited role in facilitating access to doctoral mobility funding. A substantial majority of respondents (65%) reported that such requirements do not facilitate funding access. Only 18% indicated that they clearly support access, and 12% perceived some facilitative effect, while 6% were unsure. This suggests a weak structural link between programme design and mobility funding opportunities.

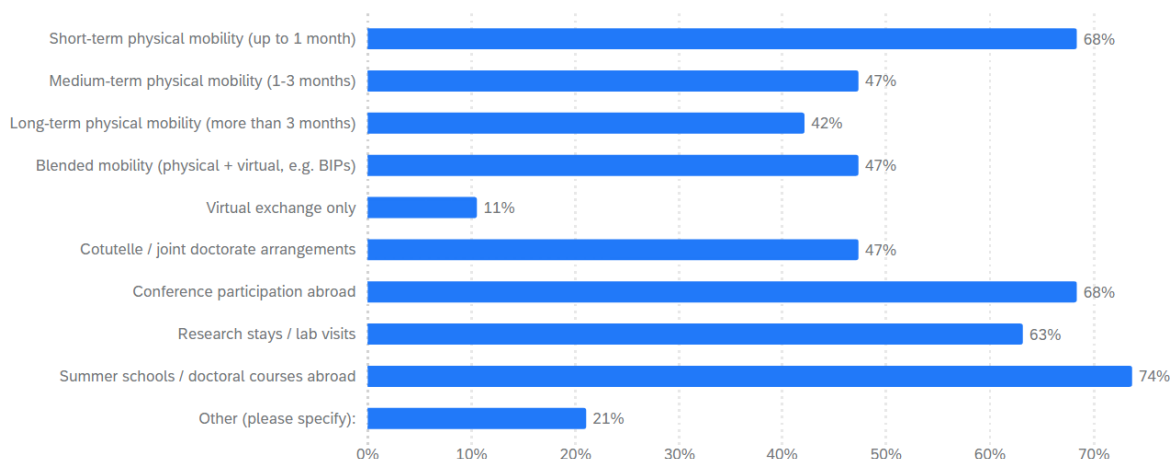
Informal practices are widely used to compensate for the absence of formal curricular requirements. Half of respondents (50%) confirmed that supervisor agreements, ad hoc approvals, or similar informal arrangements are employed to enable mobility. At the same time, 28% reported

that such practices are not used, and 22% were unsure, indicating uneven reliance on informal mechanisms across contexts.

Overall, the findings reveal a context in which **doctoral mobility is valued but insufficiently embedded in formal structures**. While **teaching and research roles are widespread and sometimes supportive of mobility, they also introduce constraints**, particularly through expectations of physical presence. The **absence of consistent curricular requirements** and the **weak link to funding contribute to reliance on informal practices**, resulting in uneven access to mobility opportunities, especially for extended research stays abroad.

Types of doctoral mobility supported and funding opportunities

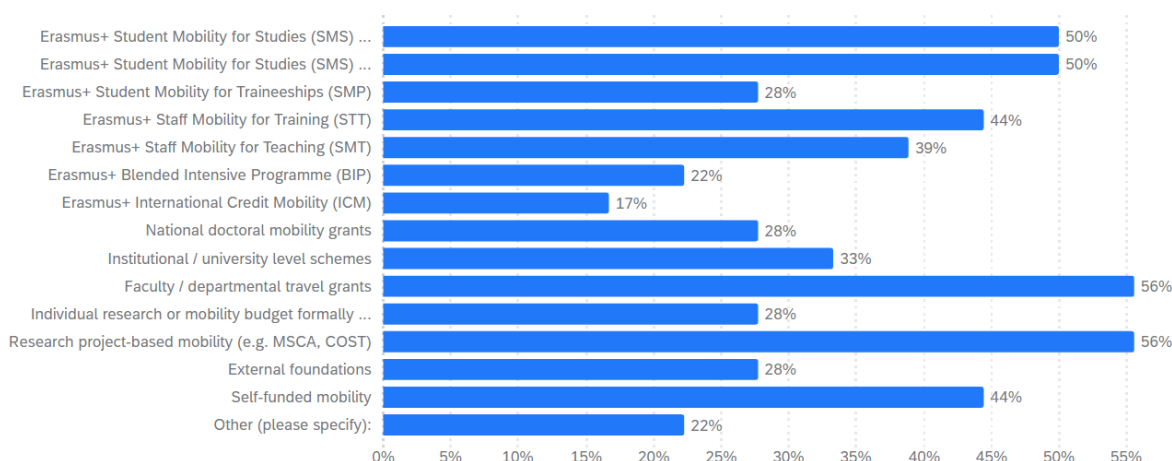
Institutions report supporting a **broad range of doctoral mobility formats**, with a clear emphasis on shorter and event-based forms. Short-term physical mobility of up to one month and conference participation abroad are the most widely supported options, each reported by 68% of respondents. Medium-term physical mobility (1-3 months), blended mobility formats, and cotutelle or joint doctorate arrangements are each supported by 47% of institutions. Support for long-term physical mobility exceeding three months is somewhat less widespread (42%). In contrast, virtual exchange-only formats receive limited institutional support (11%), indicating a **strong continued preference for physical mobility**.



8. Figure - Types of doctoral mobility supported

Patterns of actual mobility use largely mirror institutional support but further **highlight the dominance of short-term and conference-based mobility**. Conference participation abroad is the most frequently used option, reported by 78% of respondents. Short-term physical mobility (up to one month) is also widely used (61%). Research stays or laboratory visits are reported by 39%, while medium-term mobility (17%) and blended mobility (17%) are used far less frequently. Long-term physical mobility (11%) and cotutelle arrangements (6%) remain relatively rare in practice, despite being formally supported by a notable share of institutions.

Doctoral mobility funding relies predominantly on Erasmus+ schemes. Both short-term and long-term Erasmus+ Student Mobility for Studies (SMS) are reported by 50% of respondents, making them the most commonly available funding sources. Erasmus+ Staff Mobility for Training (STT) is also frequently used (44%), followed by Staff Mobility for Teaching (SMT) (39%). Erasmus+ Student Mobility for Traineeships (SMP) supports doctoral mobility in 28% of cases, while Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP) (22%) and International Credit Mobility (ICM) (17%) are less commonly available. These results point to a strong dependence on Erasmus+ frameworks, with fewer alternative or complementary funding streams.



9. Figure- Doctoral mobility funding

Institutional funds to complement Erasmus+ grants are available primarily on an ad hoc basis. While only 11% of respondents reported systematic institutional co-funding, 42% indicated that such support is provided occasionally or on a case-by-case basis. At the same time, 26% reported that no institutional co-funding is available, and 21% were unsure. This suggests that institutional financial support is uneven and often lacks formalisation.

Most institutions allow doctoral researchers to combine multiple funding sources, though often with restrictions. A majority of respondents (58%) reported that funding can be combined but subject to certain conditions, while 16% indicated that combination is allowed without restrictions. Only 5% reported that combining funding sources is not permitted, although a notable 21% were unsure, pointing to limited transparency or communication regarding funding rules.

Assessments of funding sufficiency reveal a mixed picture. While 42% of respondents considered available funds to be mostly sufficient, 21% viewed them as only partly sufficient. More than a quarter (26%) assessed available funding as largely insufficient, highlighting persistent financial barriers to doctoral mobility. A further 11% indicated that funding sufficiency could not be assessed.

Perceptions of alignment between doctoral education structures and available mobility funding are moderate at best. While 26% of respondents reported that structures are mostly aligned with

funding schemes, a larger share (37%) described alignment as only partial. 16% characterised alignment as poor, and 21% considered it not assessable. These findings suggest structural mismatches that may limit the effective use of available mobility funding.

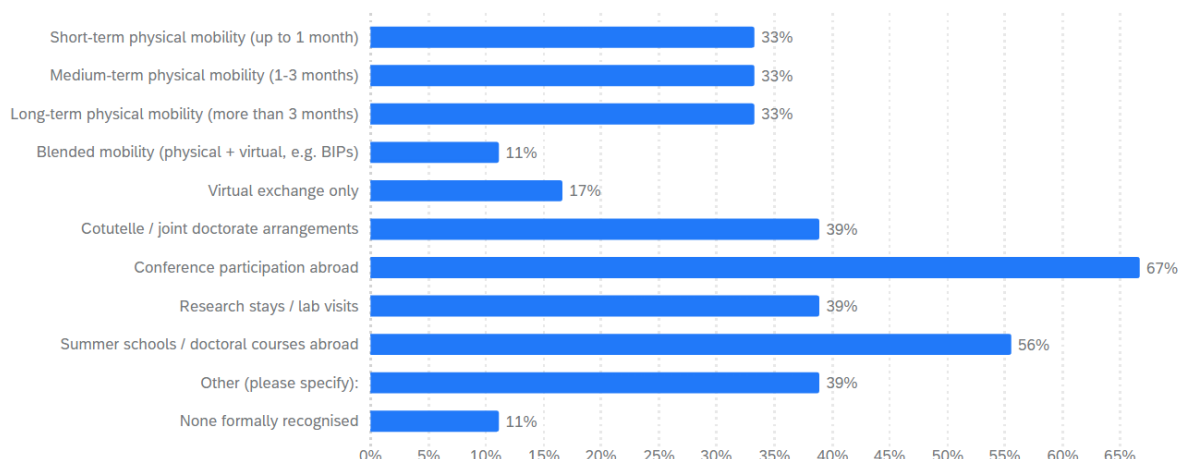
Overall, the findings show that although a **range of funding mechanisms for doctoral mobility is formally available**, their **effectiveness is limited by structural fragmentation and weak institutional integration**. Doctoral mobility funding relies predominantly on Erasmus+ schemes, particularly Student Mobility for Studies, with relatively few alternative or complementary funding sources in place. **This reliance is especially problematic when taking into account the diverse legal statuses of doctoral researchers and the resulting differences in eligibility for funding**. Moreover, institutional co-funding is largely provided on a case-by-case basis rather than through systematic arrangements, contributing to uneven access to mobility opportunities among doctoral researchers.

Although **most institutions allow the combination of multiple funding sources**, this is **typically subject to restrictions and unclear conditions**, which may reduce flexibility and discourage longer or more complex mobility arrangements. Assessments of funding sufficiency further reveal a divided landscape: while a plurality of respondents consider available funds mostly sufficient, a substantial proportion perceive them as partly or largely insufficient to meet doctoral mobility needs.

Finally, the **only partial alignment between doctoral education structures and available mobility funding schemes suggests that financial instruments are not fully embedded within doctoral programme design**. As a result, funding opportunities often support short-term or event-based mobility more effectively than extended research stays. Taken together, these findings point to a need for more coherent funding strategies, clearer institutional frameworks, and stronger integration of mobility funding within doctoral education structures to enable more equitable and sustainable doctoral mobility.

Academic recognition

The results show that **formal recognition of international activities within doctoral programmes is uneven and strongly biased** towards specific mobility formats. **Conference participation abroad** is by far the most widely recognised activity, reported by 67% of respondents. Cotutelle or joint doctorate arrangements follow at 39%, indicating that structured, long-term international cooperation is formally acknowledged in a substantial minority of cases. Short-term, medium-term, and long-term physical mobility are each recognised by 33% of respondents, suggesting that duration alone does not significantly differentiate recognition practices. In contrast, blended mobility formats (11%) and virtual exchange-only activities (17%) receive limited formal recognition, pointing to a continued preference for physically anchored forms of international engagement.



10. Figure- Formally recognised international activities

Doctoral mobility is most commonly recognised as part of formal doctoral training requirements, reported by 50% of respondents. Recognition through ECTS credits and recognition as a research output or thesis chapter are each reported by 39%, indicating that academic recognition mechanisms extend beyond purely administrative acknowledgment in a notable share of institutions. However, 22% of respondents reported that doctoral mobility is recognised only informally, and an equal proportion (22%) indicated that no formal recognition exists at all. These findings reflect substantial variation in how mobility outcomes are formally embedded within doctoral education frameworks.

The use of ECTS at doctoral level for mobility purposes remains limited. While only 6% of respondents reported that ECTS is commonly used, half of the respondents (50%) indicated that it is possible but rarely applied in practice. A further 33% reported that ECTS is not used at doctoral level, and 11% considered the question not applicable. This suggests that, although ECTS-based recognition is formally available in some contexts, it does not function as a central or systematic mechanism for recognising doctoral mobility.

Formal tools to structure and recognise doctoral mobility are inconsistently applied. Half of the respondents (50%) reported that no formal tools, such as learning agreements, are used for doctoral mobility. Where such tools are applied, 28% indicated that they are adapted to research mobility, while 22% reported the use of tools primarily designed for taught programmes. This indicates that existing recognition instruments are often not fully aligned with the specific characteristics of doctoral-level research mobility.

Qualitative responses further highlight the ambiguity surrounding the concept of recognition. Several respondents noted **uncertainty about what constitutes formal recognition**, while others emphasised that conference participation and international courses are primarily recognised through training-hour requirements rather than through mobility-specific frameworks. In some

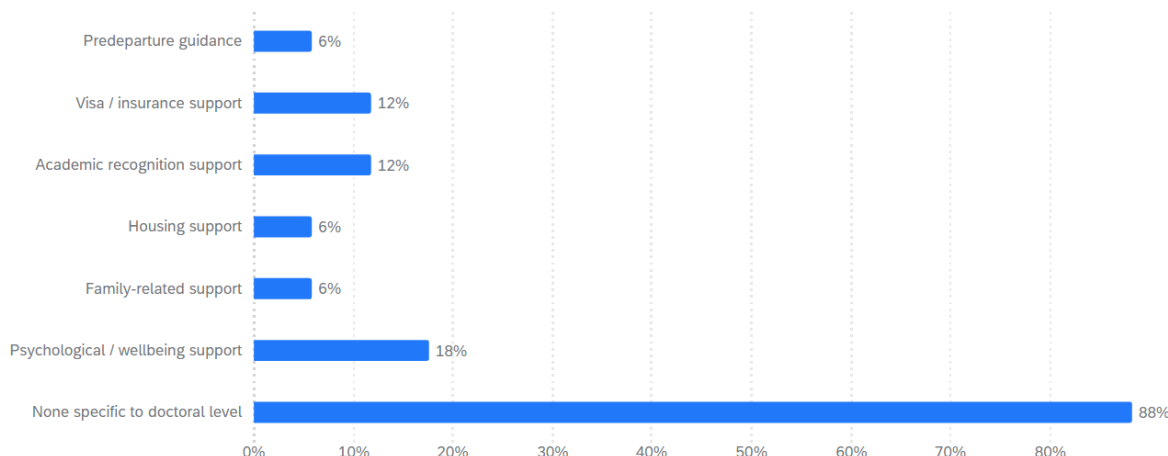
cases, virtual conferences substitute for physical mobility, particularly where mobility is formally required but structurally constrained. Other responses pointed to the **absence of formal regulations altogether**, reinforcing the fragmented and often implicit nature of recognition practices.

Administrative organisation, support and monitoring

The **management of doctoral mobility** is distributed across multiple institutional units, indicating a **decentralised governance structure at most of the universities**. The International Relations Office plays the most prominent role, reported by 68% of respondents, followed closely by faculties or departments (63%) and doctoral or graduate schools (53%). Supervisors are identified as the primary or sole actors in 32% of cases, highlighting the significant responsibility placed on individual academics. Research offices are involved less frequently (26%), while other units were mentioned by 32% of respondents. Overall, these findings point to a multi-actor governance model with varying degrees of coordination and clarity.

The data suggests **considerable variation in the existence and clarity of procedures governing outgoing doctoral mobility**. Clear and well-documented procedures for outgoing doctoral mobility remain the exception rather than the norm. Only 17% of respondents reported having well-documented procedures in place. A larger share indicated that procedures exist but are fragmented (33%), while an equal proportion (33%) described mobility processes as mostly informal. A further 17% reported the absence of any clear procedures. This distribution suggests that doctoral mobility is often managed through ad hoc arrangements rather than through standardised institutional frameworks.

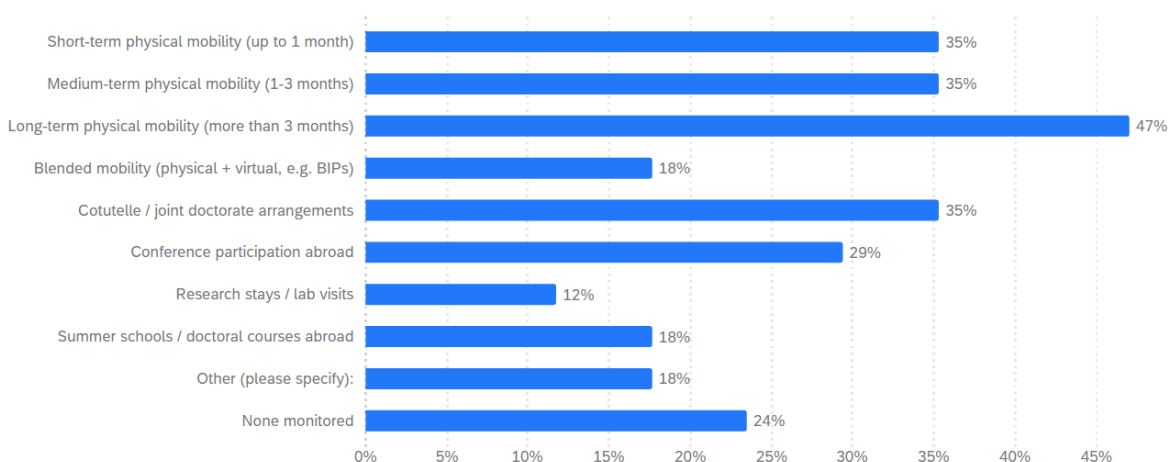
Dedicated support services tailored specifically to doctoral researchers are largely lacking. An overwhelming majority of respondents (88%) indicated that no support services are provided at doctoral level beyond those available to other groups. Where targeted services exist, they are limited in scope: psychological or wellbeing support was reported by 18%, visa or insurance support and academic recognition support by 12% each, and predeparture guidance, housing support, and family-related support by only 6% of respondents respectively. These findings highlight a substantial gap in institutional support structures for doctoral mobility.



11. Figure - The dedicated support services for doctoral researchers

Institutional capacity to track doctoral mobility is limited and uneven. Only 18% of respondents reported that doctoral mobility numbers are monitored systematically. The majority (59%) indicated that monitoring is partial or based on estimates, while 24% reported that mobility is not tracked at all. This suggests that reliable data on doctoral mobility remains scarce at institutional level, limiting evidence-based policy development.

Where monitoring does occur, it focuses primarily on longer-term and structurally embedded mobility formats. Long-term physical mobility (more than three months) is most frequently monitored (47%), followed by short-term and medium-term physical mobility (each 35%) and cotutelle or joint doctorate arrangements (35%). Conference participation abroad is included in monitoring by 29% of respondents, while blended mobility (18%) and research stays or laboratory visits (12%) are less commonly tracked. These patterns indicate **selective monitoring practices that do not capture the full diversity of doctoral mobility activities.**



12. Figure - Types of mobility included in monitoring

Overall, the findings reveal that the **administrative organisation of doctoral mobility is characterised by decentralisation, limited procedural clarity, and scarce institutional support structures**. While multiple units are involved in managing mobility, responsibilities are often fragmented and heavily reliant on individual supervisors. The **lack of dedicated doctoral-level support services and systematic monitoring** further constrains strategic development. As a result, doctoral mobility remains difficult to manage coherently, assess comprehensively, and embed sustainably within institutional frameworks.

Overview of the hindering and enabling factors of doctoral mobility

General patterns across factors

The analysis of hindering and enabling factors reveals a clear overarching pattern. Enabling conditions are most strongly associated with the **academic and institutional ecosystem** surrounding doctoral education – such as supervision quality, international networks, research collaborations and institutional culture – while the most significant barriers emerge where doctoral mobility intersects with **financial constraints, personal life circumstances, and legal or administrative frameworks**.

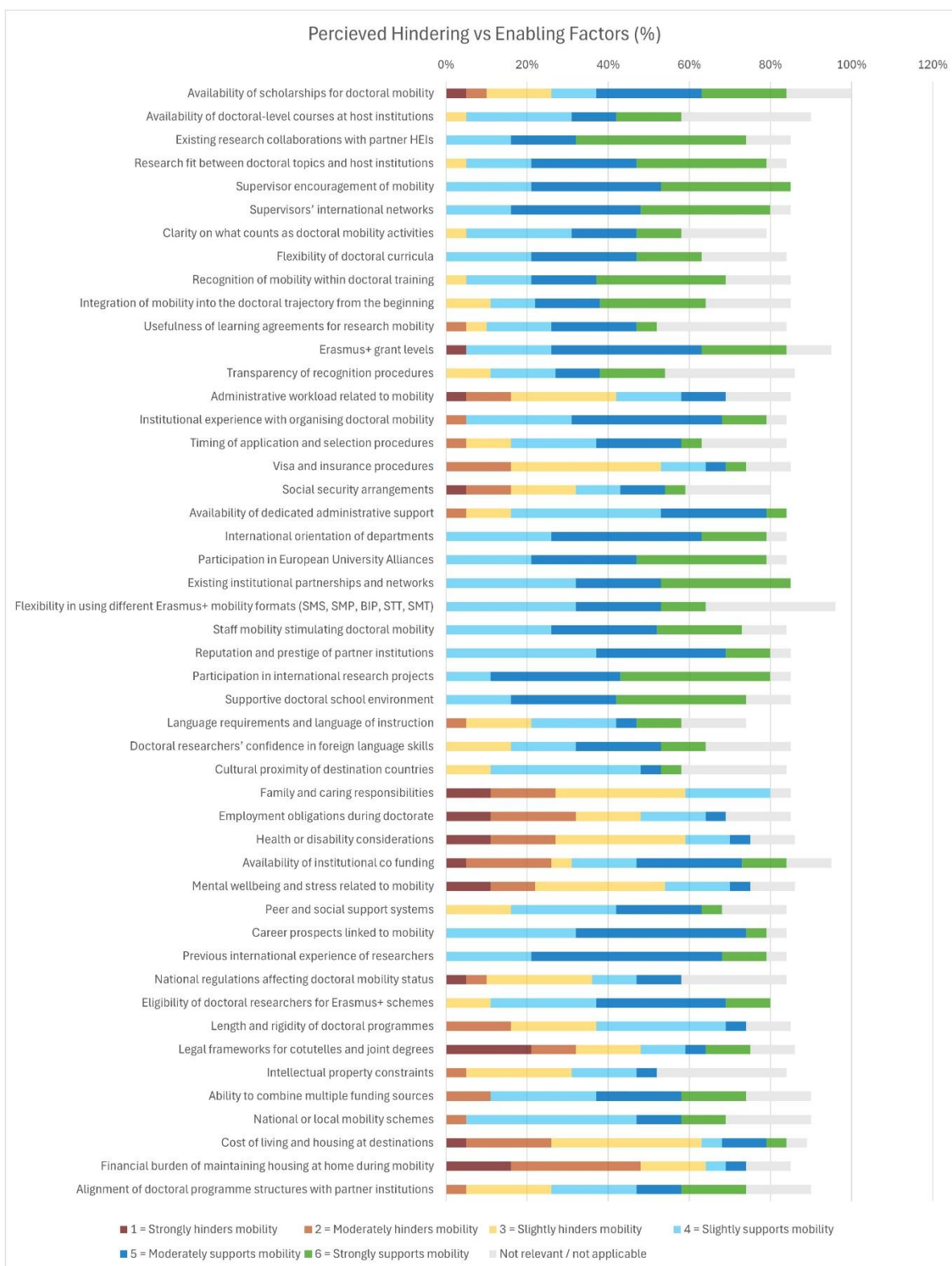
Across the dataset, factors related to academic capital and institutional embeddedness are predominantly rated as supporting doctoral mobility, whereas factors linked to lived realities (housing, employment, family responsibilities) and regulatory compliance (visa, social security, legal status) tend to be experienced as hindering. This distinction suggests that while the academic rationale and motivation for doctoral mobility are generally well established within CHARM-EU institutions, structural and practical constraints continue to limit the realisation of mobility in practice.

The results indicate that the factors influencing doctoral mobility can be grouped into several interrelated clusters, each affecting mobility in distinct ways.

1. **Institutional culture and networks** emerge as the most consistently enabling cluster, with international orientation, partnerships, European University Alliance participation and research projects forming a strong “soft infrastructure” for doctoral mobility.
2. **Academic and institutional environment factors** are predominantly enabling, with supervision quality, research fit, and existing collaborations providing a strong foundation for mobility; however, uneven integration of mobility into doctoral programmes and unclear definitions of doctoral mobility limit their full potential.
3. **Financial factors** show a mixed profile: while Erasmus+ grants, scholarships and national schemes can enable mobility, financial barriers – especially housing costs and the need to maintain accommodation at home – remain the most decisive constraints, revealing a misalignment between funding design and real cost structures.
4. **Personal, social and cultural factors** also display a polarised pattern, where career prospects and previous international experience support mobility, but family

responsibilities, employment obligations, health considerations and wellbeing concerns strongly constrain participation.

5. **Recognition and administrative processes** represent a key bottleneck, as administrative workload and visa, insurance and social security procedures frequently hinder mobility, while dedicated administrative support and institutional experience can significantly mitigate these barriers.
6. **Legal and regulatory factors** are among the most consistently hindering at the aggregate level, as national regulations, cotutelle frameworks and contractual conditions often limit feasible mobility pathways, despite the formal eligibility of doctoral researchers for Erasmus+ schemes.



13. Figure - Overview of hindering and enabling factors

A notable feature of the results is the relatively high share of “Not relevant / not applicable” responses across several factors. These responses should not be interpreted only as missing data, but rather as indicators of **structural diversity across institutions and national contexts**. In some cases, high “Not relevant” rates could point to the uneven existence or institutionalisation of specific tools (such as learning agreements tailored to research mobility), while in others they reflect differences in legal frameworks, programme models or disciplinary profiles. As such, variation itself constitutes an important finding, underlining the heterogeneity of doctoral mobility conditions within the alliance.

Most important enabling factors

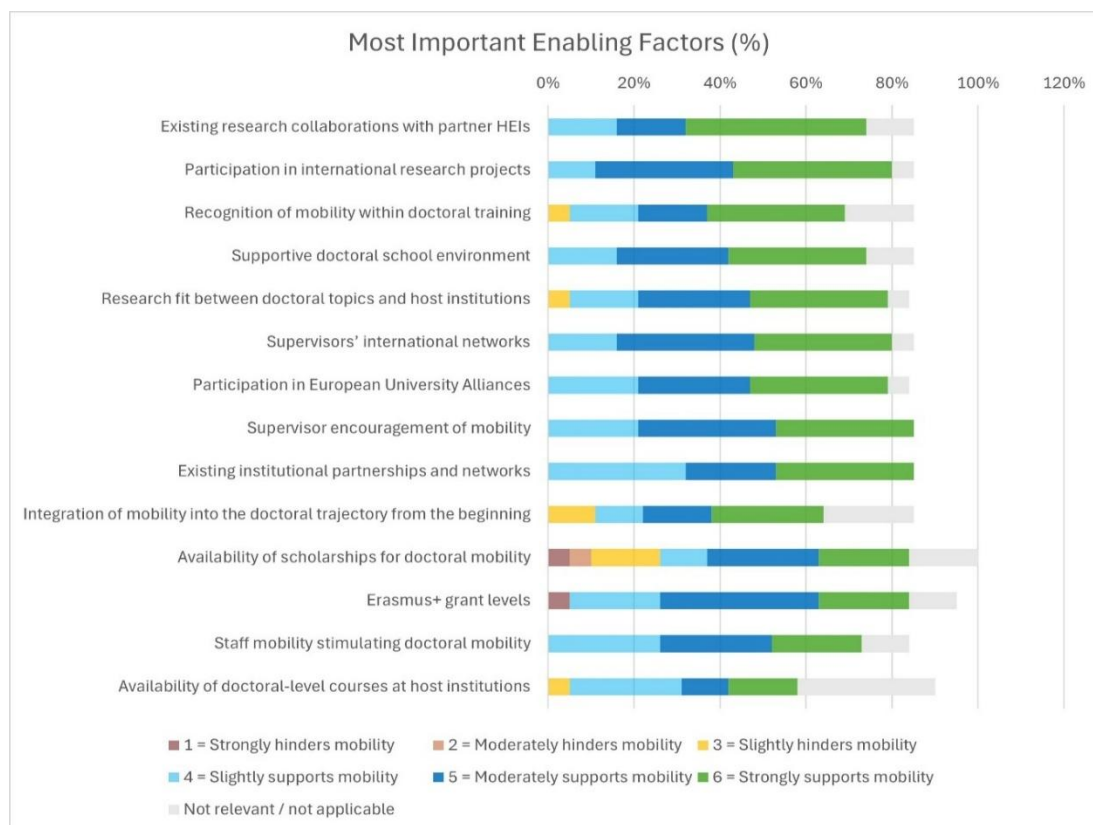
Several factors emerge as consistently enabling doctoral mobility across CHARM-EU partner institutions, with the strongest effects concentrated at the **institutional and academic level**. Most prominently, **supervisor encouragement of mobility** and **supervisors’ international networks** are almost universally rated as strongly or moderately supporting mobility, with only negligible proportions of respondents perceiving these factors as hindering. This finding highlights the **pivotal role of supervisors as gatekeepers, brokers, and legitimising actors in doctoral mobility**. Supervisors with strong international networks are better positioned to identify suitable host institutions, facilitate access to research environments abroad, and integrate mobility into the doctoral research agenda. Moreover, explicit encouragement from supervisors appears to play a critical role in normalising mobility within the doctoral trajectory, reducing uncertainty, and reinforcing its academic value.

Beyond the individual supervisory relationship, broader **institutional and departmental conditions** also emerge as key enablers. **Existing institutional partnerships and networks**, together with the **international orientation of departments**, are consistently rated as supporting doctoral mobility. The chart shows a strong concentration of responses in the higher end of the support scale for these factors, indicating that mobility is most easily realised where international collaboration is already embedded in institutional practice. Similarly, **participation in international research projects** stands out as one of the strongest enabling factors overall. This suggests that doctoral mobility is most effective when it is anchored in concrete research cooperation, where mobility serves clear scientific objectives and builds on pre-existing professional relationships rather than being organised as a stand-alone activity.

The data further indicates that **institutional frameworks that legitimise and embed mobility** strengthen these enabling effects. A **supportive doctoral school environment** and **recognition of mobility within doctoral training** are generally perceived as enabling, although with some variation across institutions. Where such frameworks are in place, mobility is more likely to be understood as a legitimate and valued component of doctoral education rather than an optional or disruptive add-on. Similarly, **participation in European University Alliances** appears as a meaningful enabling factor, suggesting that alliance-based cooperation provides additional visibility, trust, and structured pathways that can facilitate doctoral mobility between partner institutions.

Factors related to the **formal integration of mobility into doctoral programmes** show a more differentiated pattern. **Integration of mobility into the doctoral trajectory from the beginning** is largely perceived as supportive, but with a higher dispersion of responses and a notable share of “not relevant / not applicable” answers. This indicates that while early integration can strengthen mobility outcomes where it is implemented, it is not yet a standard feature across all institutions or programmes. Likewise, the **availability of doctoral-level courses at host institutions** is perceived as enabling in some contexts but less relevant in others, reflecting the fact that many doctoral mobilities are primarily research-based rather than course-driven.

At the **individual level**, the results point to a reinforcing set of motivational and experiential factors. **Career prospects linked to mobility** are widely perceived as strongly supporting doctoral mobility, suggesting that institutions observe a clear connection between international experience and perceived employability, academic career development, and professional visibility. In addition, **previous international experience** emerges as an important enabling factor, indicating a cumulative effect whereby doctoral researchers who have already participated in international mobility are more confident, better informed, and more inclined to engage in further mobility during their doctorate. These findings suggest that individual-level readiness for mobility is not evenly distributed but shaped by prior exposure and perceived returns.



14. Figure - Most important enabling factors

Responses to the open-ended question on the strongest enablers of doctoral mobility further reinforce and nuance the quantitative results, highlighting the central role of **supervision, research-driven mobility, and institutional support structures**. Across institutions, respondents consistently emphasise the importance of **supervisor encouragement, supervisors' international networks, and research group collaborations** as primary drivers of mobility. Doctoral mobility is frequently described as emerging organically from the needs of the research project, with mobility periods planned jointly by the doctoral candidate and supervisor in order to access specific laboratories, collaborators, or research infrastructures abroad. In such cases, mobility is often funded directly through research projects and supplemented by Erasmus+ grants or local doctoral school funding, particularly for conference participation.

In addition to supervision and research logic, respondents underline the enabling role of **institutional frameworks and support mechanisms**. These include the availability and **clear communication of funding opportunities**, formal Erasmus+ exchange agreements explicitly covering third-cycle mobility, dedicated mobility programmes, and well-established international partnerships, including cotutelle and joint PhD agreements. Several responses point to the importance of **administrative and training support provided by international offices and doctoral or graduate schools**, which helps doctoral researchers navigate funding, recognition, and procedural requirements. More broadly, the **general acceptance of mobility as an integral and legitimate component of doctoral education**, especially in the form of conference participation, is described as a strong cultural enabler that reduces contestation and facilitates uptake. Taken together, the open-ended responses confirm that doctoral mobility is most effectively enabled when research-driven motivation, supportive supervision, accessible funding, and clear institutional support structures converge.

The results demonstrate that doctoral mobility is most effectively enabled when **institutional-level conditions and individual-level incentives operate in combination**. Strong supervision, well-embedded research collaborations, and internationally oriented institutional cultures – supported by clear communication of funding opportunities and accessible administrative support – create an environment in which individual motivations, such as career aspirations and prior international experience, can translate into actual mobility. Conversely, where these institutional and procedural enablers are weak, fragmented, or poorly communicated, even highly motivated doctoral researchers may struggle to realise mobility opportunities.

Most important hindering factors

The survey results indicate that the most pronounced hindering factors for doctoral mobility are concentrated in a limited number of **high-impact structural and individual-level areas**, which together shape the practical feasibility of mobility regardless of academic motivation or institutional openness. These barriers are characterised by a strong concentration of responses in the “strongly” and “moderately hinders mobility” categories, with only marginal proportions of respondents perceiving these factors as supportive.

At the **structural and institutional level**, financial and regulatory constraints emerge as particularly decisive. Most notably, the **financial burden of maintaining housing at home during mobility** stands out as one of the most consistently hindering factors across institutions. The chart shows a dominant share of responses rating this factor as strongly or moderately hindering mobility, with only a very small proportion indicating any supportive effect. This finding points to a **structural mismatch between the design of existing mobility grants and the lived financial realities of doctoral researchers**. Even where mobility funding is available, the inability to suspend housing-related obligations at home creates a substantial barrier, particularly for doctoral researchers with limited income security or contractual flexibility.

Closely related to this, broader **cost-of-living pressures** associated with mobility further compound financial barriers. While not all institutions rate these costs equally, the overall pattern suggests that financial feasibility remains a central constraint, especially for longer-term mobility or mobility to high-cost destinations. Together, these results highlight that financial barriers are not merely about grant availability, but about the cumulative financial exposure associated with mobility.

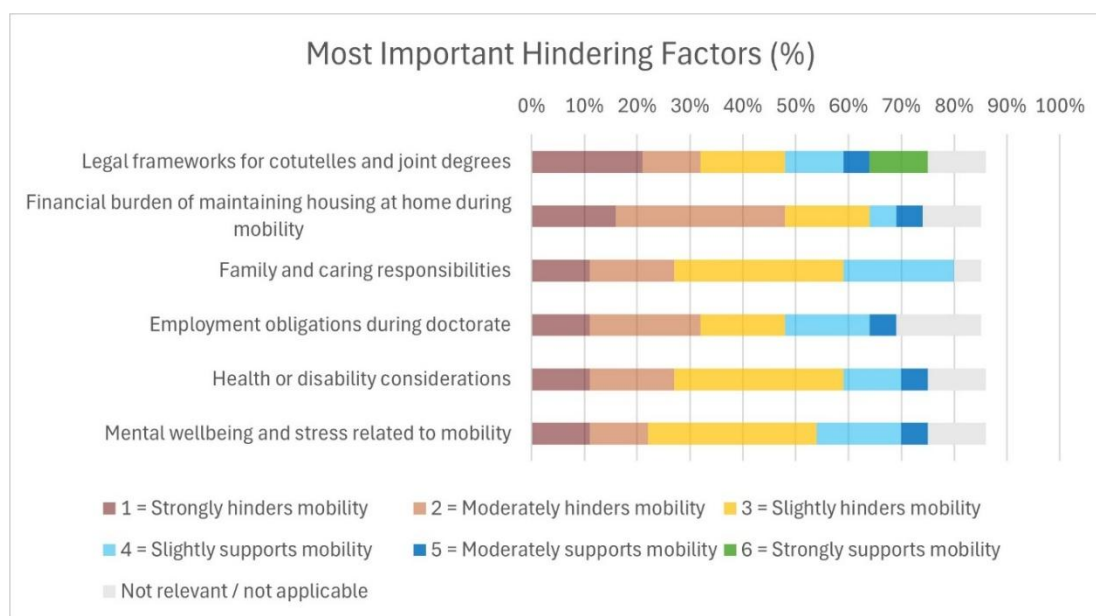
Another prominent structural barrier concerns **legal frameworks for cotutelles and joint degrees**. This factor shows a substantial proportion of responses in the hindering categories, combined with a notable share of “not relevant / not applicable” responses. This pattern suggests that while cotutelle and joint degree arrangements can theoretically provide structured mobility pathways, their legal and administrative implementation remains complex and uneven across contexts. Where such frameworks are underdeveloped or legally burdensome, they can actively discourage institutions and doctoral researchers from pursuing these forms of mobility.

At the **intersection of institutional structures and individual circumstances**, **employment obligations during the doctorate** emerge as a significant hindering factor. The chart indicates that a majority of respondents perceive employment-related commitments as constraining mobility, reflecting the reality that many doctoral researchers hold teaching, research, or externally funded positions that are difficult to pause or relocate. These obligations often tie doctoral researchers physically and contractually to their home institution, limiting their capacity to engage in extended mobility even when academic opportunities exist.

At the **individual level**, several life-course and wellbeing-related factors strongly constrain doctoral mobility. **Family and caring responsibilities** are among the most consistently hindering factors, with a large share of respondents indicating that these responsibilities strongly or moderately limit mobility opportunities. This finding underscores that doctoral mobility decisions are embedded in broader social and familial contexts, and that expectations of physical mobility may disproportionately affect doctoral researchers with dependants or caring roles.

Similarly, **health or disability considerations** and **mental wellbeing and stress related to mobility** are widely perceived as hindering factors. The chart shows that these dimensions are rarely seen as supportive and frequently rated as moderately or strongly hindering. This highlights the

psychological and health-related costs associated with mobility, including uncertainty, disruption of support networks, and increased stress. These factors may not always be visible in institutional mobility statistics, but they play a critical role in shaping individual decisions and capacities to engage in mobility.



15. Figure - Most important hinderling factors

Responses to the open-ended question on the most significant barriers to doctoral mobility largely reinforce the patterns identified in the quantitative analysis, while adding important contextual detail. **Funding constraints** emerge as the most frequently cited barrier, particularly in relation to longer research stays abroad, where available mobility grants are often insufficient to cover travel, accommodation, and higher living costs. Several respondents explicitly point to the limited availability of dedicated mobility funding and the additional financial burden associated with extended mobility periods, confirming that financial feasibility remains a central obstacle beyond short-term or conference-related mobility.

In parallel, respondents repeatedly highlight **time-related and administrative barriers**, including the length and complexity of legal, administrative, and financial procedures, as well as the time investment required from doctoral researchers themselves. Teaching obligations, workload linked to doctoral programmes, and broader employment responsibilities are frequently mentioned as constraining factors, particularly for longer stays abroad. **Supervisory support** also appears as a **differentiated barrier**: while some institutions report strong encouragement, others note a lack of stimulation or even implicit discouragement from supervisors, which can significantly limit mobility planning. Personal and family circumstances further compound these challenges, especially when mobility involves accompanying family members.

Several responses also point to **institutional-level shortcomings**, such as limited resources to communicate mobility opportunities, lack of clarity about what types of mobility are possible, and, in some cases, a perceived institutional reluctance to prioritise doctoral mobility within Erasmus+ frameworks. At the same time, a small number of respondents report that no major barriers exist in their context, describing doctoral mobility as fully embedded in research project planning and funded primarily through research grants. Notably, even these responses suggest that mobility could be further strengthened through targeted incentives, simplified funding schemes, and enhanced alliance-level research collaboration (e.g. joint summer schools, training platforms, and shared research infrastructures). Overall, the open-ended responses confirm that barriers to doctoral mobility arise from the **cumulative interaction of financial, administrative, supervisory, and personal constraints**, rather than from a single limiting factor.

Taken together, the hindering factors identified through both the survey and the open-ended responses point to a clear conclusion: while **academic motivation, strong supervision, and institutional openness are essential preconditions for doctoral mobility, they are not sufficient on their own to ensure participation**. Financial exposure – particularly in relation to housing and longer stays abroad – combined with contractual obligations, administrative and legal complexity, and life-course constraints such as teaching responsibilities, family situations, and wellbeing considerations, forms a set of interrelated structural and individual barriers that can outweigh otherwise supportive academic environments. Addressing these challenges therefore requires not only more adequate and flexible funding schemes, but also clearer communication of opportunities, reduced administrative burden, greater flexibility in employment and teaching arrangements, and targeted institutional support mechanisms that acknowledge the diverse personal and contractual realities of doctoral researchers.

Summary

The results indicate that the factors influencing doctoral mobility can be grouped into several interrelated clusters, each affecting mobility in distinct ways.

1. **Institutional culture and networks** emerge as the most consistently enabling cluster, with international orientation, partnerships, European University Alliance participation and research projects forming a strong “soft infrastructure” for doctoral mobility.
2. **Academic and institutional environment factors** are predominantly enabling, with supervision quality, research fit, and existing collaborations providing a strong foundation for mobility; however, uneven integration of mobility into doctoral programmes and unclear definitions of doctoral mobility limit their full potential.
3. **Financial factors** show a mixed profile: while Erasmus+ grants, scholarships and national schemes can enable mobility, financial barriers—especially housing costs and the need to maintain accommodation at home—remain the most decisive constraints, revealing a misalignment between funding design and real cost structures.

4. **Personal, social and cultural factors** also display a polarised pattern, where career prospects and previous international experience support mobility, but family responsibilities, employment obligations, health considerations and wellbeing concerns strongly constrain participation.
5. **Recognition and administrative processes** represent a key bottleneck, as administrative workload and visa, insurance and social security procedures frequently hinder mobility, while dedicated administrative support and institutional experience can significantly mitigate these barriers.
6. **Legal and regulatory factors** are among the most consistently hindering at the aggregate level, as national regulations, cotutelle frameworks and contractual conditions often limit feasible mobility pathways, despite the formal eligibility of doctoral researchers for Erasmus+ schemes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overarching conclusion for CHARM-EU

The survey results provide a comprehensive and nuanced picture of doctoral mobility within the CHARM-EU Alliance. A central conclusion of the report is that **doctoral mobility is embedded very differently across doctoral education models**. While structured doctoral programmes with coursework and training components tend to align more easily with existing mobility schemes and recognition practices, individual research-based doctoral models often remain weakly connected to formal mobility frameworks. The survey reveals no shared understanding across the alliance regarding the extent to which doctoral programme structure influence access to mobility opportunities. This divergence points to underlying differences in how mobility is conceptualised – either as an integral component of doctoral education or as an activity largely external to programme design – with direct implications for the alignment of mobility schemes, funding instruments, and recognition mechanisms.

These structural differences are further compounded by the **heterogeneous legal status of doctoral researchers** across CHARM-EU institutions. Doctoral researchers may hold student status, employee status, dual status, or a status dependent on the underlying funding scheme, each associated with different rights, obligations, internal regulations, and eligibility criteria for mobility funding. As a result, access to mobility opportunities is uneven not only across institutions but also within them. Student-oriented mobility schemes, particularly Erasmus+ Student Mobility for Studies, do not adequately address the needs of doctoral researchers with employee status, while staff mobility schemes differ substantially in scope, duration, and academic focus. This legal heterogeneity shapes not only access to funding but also the type and quality of mobility experiences that doctoral researchers can realistically undertake.

The funding analysis reinforces this conclusion. Although a range of funding mechanisms is formally available, mobility funding relies heavily on Erasmus+ schemes and is often complemented by institutional resources only on a case-by-case basis. Differences in institutional Erasmus+ budgets –

particularly with regard to staff mobility – mean that not all CHARM-EU partners are equally positioned to promote the same mobility formats. At Alliance level, this creates a critical constraint: **mobility models that are not accessible under comparable conditions across all partners risk reinforcing inequalities rather than fostering inclusion.**

Administrative organisation, recognition practices, and monitoring further illustrate the fragmented nature of doctoral mobility governance. Responsibilities are distributed across multiple units, procedures are often informal or weakly standardised, recognition mechanisms remain uneven and frequently symbolic, and systematic monitoring of doctoral mobility is rare. While flexibility can be an asset, the cumulative effect of fragmentation places a heavy burden on individual doctoral researchers and supervisors and limits the Alliance’s capacity to develop doctoral mobility strategically and equitably.

The results also suggest that CHARM-EU institutions already possess strong academic and cultural foundations for doctoral mobility. In particular, the findings underscore the pivotal role of supervisors as key gatekeepers, brokers, and legitimising actors, whose support can either facilitate or constrain doctoral mobility. **This highlights the importance of engaging not only individual doctoral researchers but also academic staff, as supervisors’ attitudes, incentives, and capacity to support mobility directly shape doctoral researchers’ opportunities and decisions.** On top of that, the main constraints lie in **structural, financial and regulatory conditions** that limit feasibility. The high degree of variation across factors indicates that **context-sensitive and modular approaches** are needed. Alliance-level efforts may therefore be most effective when focusing on shared tools, templates and guidance where appropriate, while recognising that national legal frameworks and institutional models require differentiated solutions.

Implications and suggestions for CHARM-EU

Considering these findings, a key strategic implication for CHARM-EU is that doctoral mobility cannot be addressed through a single, uniform model. Instead, alliance-level action should acknowledge the diversity of doctoral education structures, legal statuses, and funding capacities, while selectively building shared solutions where meaningful common ground exists.

First, the Alliance should explicitly recognise diversity in doctoral programme models and legal statuses as a structural starting point for mobility development. Rather than assuming that existing student- or staff-based mobility schemes can be universally applied, CHARM-EU could systematically map how different doctoral programme types and contractual arrangements across partners enable or constrain mobility. This mapping would provide an evidence-based foundation for differentiated alliance-level approaches and help avoid promoting mobility formats that are misaligned with local legal, curricular, or employment frameworks.

In addition to targeting doctoral researchers, CHARM-EU should **explicitly involve supervisors and academic staff in the design, promotion, and implementation of doctoral mobility initiatives.** Given their central role as gatekeepers, brokers, and legitimising actors, supervisors’ awareness, incentives, and capacity to support mobility are critical in shaping doctoral researchers’

participation. Alliance-level actions could therefore include dedicated guidance, peer exchange, recognition mechanisms, and support tools for supervisors to strengthen their engagement with doctoral mobility.

Second, alliance-level doctoral mobility initiatives should be carefully targeted and modular. One strategic direction is to identify and prioritise the *lowest common denominator* of mobility formats – those that are accessible regardless of doctoral programme structure, legal status, or credit recognition requirements. Short-term, not necessarily credit-bearing mobility formats, such as **doctoral summer schools, intensive training weeks, research-methods workshops, and network-based collaboration formats as well as micro-credentials**, appear particularly promising in this regard. These initiatives can focus less on disciplinary coursework and more on transversal skills, research collaboration, career development, and peer networking, while remaining compatible with both student- and employee-based funding schemes.

In this context, CHARM-EU could draw inspiration from existing initiatives such as the **TORCH programme**, particularly its systematic mapping of technical and experimental platforms across partner universities. By extending this approach to doctoral education, the Alliance could create a shared overview of research infrastructures, laboratories, data centres, libraries, and specialised facilities available across CHARM-EU institutions. This would enable the design of targeted, infrastructure-based doctoral training initiatives open to all partners, simultaneously increasing the visibility of existing resources and stimulating research-driven doctoral mobility.

Third, CHARM-EU could prioritise mobility formats that minimise disruption to local obligations, acknowledging that many doctoral researchers combine research with teaching, project work, or administrative duties. Short, intensive, or blended mobility formats may offer a pragmatic compromise, enabling international engagement without extended absence from home institutions and reducing conflicts with employment responsibilities. In this regard, the **active use of Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)** represents a particularly promising format, allowing for a combination of virtual collaboration and short physical stays.

Relatedly, **hybrid and blended doctoral-level courses offered through Transnational Online Learning (TOL)** could be strategically leveraged to enhance physical mobility. Where feasible, doctoral researchers could be offered the option to physically attend host institutions delivering these courses, while retaining virtual participation as an alternative. This dual approach would broaden access, accommodate diverse personal and contractual situations, and strengthen collaborative research and learning across the alliance.

Fourth, doctoral mobility initiatives should be promoted in a way that is sensitive to institutional contexts and differing funding capacities. Rather than assuming uniform access to specific Erasmus+ or institutional funding schemes, CHARM-EU could prioritise co-designed programmes with clearly defined and widely accessible funding pathways. Transparent guidance on eligibility, recognition, and administrative procedures would allow mobility formats to be promoted in a

targeted manner that aligns with partners' legal, financial, and organisational conditions. This is particularly important given that not all partners have equal Erasmus+ budgets or the same capacity to support staff mobility.

Within this framework, broader promotion of **Erasmus+ short-term doctoral mobility or staff-mobility for training**, where applicable, should be complemented by strategic planning of courses, workshops, and trainings. In line with the **Salzburg Principles**, alliance-level initiatives could place a strong emphasis on transversal skills development and efficient resource sharing. Trainings focusing on specific methodologies, software, tools, or innovations that offer clear research advantages – such as digital methods or specialised analytical techniques – are particularly well suited to alliance-level delivery. While offering formal courses can also be valuable, their fit with diverse doctoral programme structures should be carefully assessed.

Fifth, CHARM-EU could further strengthen structured research-based mobility pathways, including the broader and more strategic use of co-tutelle arrangements where institutional willingness and legal feasibility exist. To support this, the Alliance could develop simplified internal documentation templates and procedural guidance for co-tutelles, reducing administrative burden while respecting national regulations. At the same time, mobility initiatives should build not only on transdisciplinary connections—which can sometimes remain superficial—but also on **disciplinary common ground**, where collaboration can develop more organically. Joint workshops and thematic events organised around shared research interests, such as those supported by the CENTRAL Network, offer useful models in this respect.

Finally, the findings point to the need for stronger alliance-level coordination tools. Shared templates, guidance notes, and examples of good practice for doctoral mobility planning, recognition, and support could significantly reduce uncertainty for doctoral researchers, supervisors, and administrative units alike. While national legal frameworks and institutional autonomy must be respected, common reference points can enhance transparency, support supervisors and doctoral schools, and strengthen the visibility and legitimacy of doctoral mobility within CHARM-EU.

Overall, by adopting a differentiated and context-sensitive approach – combining targeted alliance-level initiatives with respect for institutional diversity – CHARM-EU can move towards a doctoral mobility model that is both realistic and transformative. Such a model would not only accommodate the varied legal, structural, and personal conditions of doctoral researchers, but also actively support high-quality research collaboration, skills development, and long-term academic and professional trajectories across the Alliance.

ANNEXES

Survey On Doctoral Mobility Procedures, Criteria and Opportunities at CHARM-EU Universities

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your contribution is highly appreciated and essential to developing a shared, evidence-informed understanding of doctoral mobility across CHARM-EU partner universities.

The survey aims to (1) map existing doctoral mobility opportunities, funding schemes, recognition practices and support mechanisms at institutional and national levels, and (2) identify financial, academic, administrative, cultural and regulatory factors that enable or hinder the mobility of doctoral researchers, with particular attention to mobility within the CHARM-EU alliance.

The survey is addressed to heads and coordinators of Doctoral /Graduate Schools, colleagues working in International Relations and Mobility Offices (IROs), and research or academic support units involved in doctoral mobility. It has been designed to be as focused and pragmatic as possible, while still capturing meaningful institutional differences, thus completion is expected to take approximately 20-30 minutes.

All responses will be treated confidentially and will contribute to the further development and improvement of doctoral mobility initiatives within CHARM-EU.

DATA PROTECTION:**1. Data joint controllers**

- *University of Barcelona: General Secretary. Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 585, 08007 Barcelona, secretaria.general@ub.edu*
- *Trinity College Dublin: Secretary's Office, West Chapel/House 10, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland, secretar@tcd.ie*
- *Utrecht University: UU-Joint Virtual Administration Officer, charm@uu.nl*
- *Eötvös Loránd University: Rector's Cabinet CHARM-EU Office. 4/R Múzeum ktr., Budapest, H-1088, Hungary. charm-eu@rk.elte.hu*
- *University of Montpellier: Université de Montpellier – 163 rue Auguste Broussonnet – 34090 Montpellier – presidence@umontpellier.fr*
- *Åbo Akademi University, Domkyrkotorget 3, 20500, Åbo, Finland: charm@abo.fi*

- Julius-Maximilians University of Würzburg, Sanderring 2, 97070, Würzburg, Germany, info@uni-wuerzburg.de
- Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences, Duisburger Straße, 100, 45479 Mülheim an der Ruhr, praesidentin@hs-ruhrwest.de
- University of Bergen, 5020 Bergen, Norway, post@uib.no

2. Purpose

Gather information about the doctoral mobility systems and procedures of the CHARM-EU Alliance member universities.

3. Rights

Right of access, right to rectification, right to erase your data, right to object, right to request data portability and restriction of processing.

4. Additional information

For further information, you can read the following privacy statement: <https://bit.ly/4py1Oil>

If you have any comments on the survey, please contact charmobility@rk.elte.hu

We appreciate your thoughtful input and thank you in advance for your contribution!

Sincerely,
The CHARM-EU Team

PART A – Mapping existing doctoral mobility practices

Institutional context

1. Name of institution
 - ☐ University of Barcelona
 - ☐ Trinity College Dublin
 - ☐ Utrecht University
 - ☐ Eötvös Loránd University
 - ☐ University of Montpellier
 - ☐ Åbo Akademi University
 - ☐ Julius-Maximilians University of Würzburg
 - ☐ Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences
 - ☐ University of Bergen
2. Respondent role (select all that apply)
 - ☐ Doctoral / Graduate School
 - ☐ International Relations Office
 - ☐ Faculty / Department administration
 - ☐ Central management / leadership
 - ☐ Other: _____

3. Your level of responsibility related to doctoral mobility
 - ☐ Strategic / policy level
 - ☐ Operational / administrative level
 - ☐ Advisory / coordination role
 - ☐ Limited / indirect involvement

Doctoral education features influencing mobility

4. Which of the below options best describes the dominant model for doctoral programmes at your institution? (select all that apply)
 - ☐ Individual research-based doctorate (no or minimal coursework)
 - ☐ Structured doctoral programme with mandatory coursework
 - ☐ Doctoral school-based programmes with transversal skills training
 - ☐ Joint or inter-institutional doctoral programmes
 - ☐ Cotutelle-based doctoral programmes
 - ☐ Mixed models (please specify): _____
5. To what extent does the structure of doctoral programmes influence access to doctoral mobility opportunities?
 - ☐ Strongly influences eligibility
 - ☐ Moderately influences eligibility
 - ☐ Slightly influences eligibility
 - ☐ Does not influence eligibility
 - ☐ Not sure
6. What is the predominant legal status of doctoral researchers at your institution? (select all that apply)
 - ☐ Student status
 - ☐ Employee / staff status
 - ☐ Dual status (student and employee)
 - ☐ Status varies by funding source or faculty
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
7. Which formal roles do doctoral researchers typically hold at your institution? (select all that apply)
 - ☐ No formal role beyond doctoral enrolment
 - ☐ Teaching responsibilities
 - ☐ Research assistant or project-based roles
 - ☐ Administrative or service roles
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
8. To what extent do these formal roles influence the feasibility of undertaking doctoral mobility?
 - ☐ Strongly limit mobility
 - ☐ Moderately limit mobility
 - ☐ Slightly limit mobility

- ☐ Slightly support mobility
 - ☐ Moderately support mobility
 - ☐ Strongly support mobility
 - ☐ Not applicable
9. Are there informal or "hidden" expectations that affect doctoral researchers' ability to undertake mobility?
- ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
 - ☐ If yes, please briefly describe (e.g. expected physical presence, continuity of teaching, lab responsibilities):
10. Is doctoral mobility actively encouraged?
- ☐ Yes, strongly
 - ☐ Yes, to some extent
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Not at all
11. Do doctoral programmes include formal curricular requirements related to mobility activities?
- ☐ Yes, mandatory
 - ☐ Yes, optional
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Varies by programme
12. Which international activities are formally required within doctoral programmes? (select all that apply)
- ☐ Research stay abroad
 - ☐ Cotutelle or joint supervision
 - ☐ Participation in international doctoral courses or summer schools
 - ☐ Conference participation abroad
 - ☐ International publications
 - ☐ Participation in international research projects
 - ☐ None formally required
13. Do these curricular requirements facilitate access to doctoral mobility funding?
- ☐ Yes, clearly
 - ☐ To some extent
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
14. Are informal practices used to substitute for formal curricular requirements (e.g. supervisor agreements, ad hoc approvals)?
- ☐ Yes

- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Types of doctoral mobility supported and funding opportunities

15. Which types of doctoral mobility are formally supported at your institution? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Short-term physical mobility (up to 1 month)
- ☐ Medium-term physical mobility (1-3 months)
- ☐ Long-term physical mobility (more than 3 months)
- ☐ Blended mobility (physical + virtual, e.g. BIPs)
- ☐ Virtual exchange only
- ☐ Cotutelle / joint doctorate arrangements
- ☐ Conference participation abroad
- ☐ Research stays / lab visits
- ☐ Summer schools / doctoral courses abroad
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

16. Which mobility options are most frequently used by doctoral researchers? (select maximum 3)

- ☐ Short-term physical mobility (up to 1 month)
- ☐ Medium-term physical mobility (1-3 months)
- ☐ Long-term physical mobility (more than 3 months)
- ☐ Blended mobility (physical + virtual, e.g. BIPs)
- ☐ Virtual exchange only
- ☐ Cotutelle / joint doctorate arrangements
- ☐ Conference participation abroad
- ☐ Research stays / lab visits
- ☐ Summer schools / doctoral courses abroad

17. What funding sources are available to support doctoral mobility? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Erasmus+ Student Mobility for Studies (SMS) short-term doctoral mobility
- ☐ Erasmus+ Student Mobility for Studies (SMS) long-term mobility
- ☐ Erasmus+ Student Mobility for Traineeships (SMP)
- ☐ Erasmus+ Staff Mobility for Training (STT)
- ☐ Erasmus+ Staff Mobility for Teaching (SMT)
- ☐ Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (BIP)
- ☐ Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (ICM)
- ☐ National doctoral mobility grants
- ☐ Institutional / university level schemes
- ☐ Faculty / departmental travel grants
- ☐ Individual research or mobility budget formally allocated to doctoral researchers
- ☐ Research project-based mobility (e.g. MSCA, COST)
- ☐ External foundations

- ☐ Self-funded mobility
- ☐ No dedicated funding available
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

18. Are institutional funds available to complement Erasmus+ grants?

- ☐ Yes, systematically
- ☐ Yes, occasionally / case-by-case
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

19. Are doctoral researchers allowed to combine multiple funding sources for mobility?

- ☐ Yes, without restrictions
- ☐ Yes, with restrictions
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

20. In your view, are available funds sufficient to meet doctoral mobility needs?

- ☐ Fully sufficient
- ☐ Mostly sufficient
- ☐ Partly sufficient
- ☐ Largely insufficient
- ☐ Not assessable

21. Overall, how well aligned are doctoral education structures at your institution with available doctoral mobility funding schemes?

- ☐ Very well aligned
- ☐ Mostly aligned
- ☐ Partly aligned
- ☐ Poorly aligned
- ☐ Not assessable

Academic recognition

22. Which international activities are formally recognised within doctoral programmes?
(select all that apply)

- ☐ Short-term physical mobility (up to 1 month)
- ☐ Medium-term physical mobility (1-3 months)
- ☐ Long-term physical mobility (more than 3 months)
- ☐ Blended mobility (physical + virtual, e.g. BIPs)
- ☐ Virtual exchange only
- ☐ Cotutelle / joint doctorate arrangements
- ☐ Conference participation abroad
- ☐ Research stays / lab visits
- ☐ Summer schools / doctoral courses abroad

- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ None formally recognised

23. How is doctoral mobility recognised at your institution? (select all that apply)

- ☐ ECTS credits
- ☐ Recognition as part of doctoral training requirements
- ☐ Recognition as a research output / thesis chapter
- ☐ Informal recognition only
- ☐ No formal recognition

24. Is the use of ECTS at doctoral level possible for mobility?

- ☐ Yes, commonly used
- ☐ Yes, but rarely used
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

25. Are learning agreements / equivalent tools used for doctoral mobility?

- ☐ Yes, adapted to research mobility
- ☐ Yes, but designed mainly for taught programmes
- ☐ No formal tools used

Administrative organisation, support and monitoring

26. Which units are involved in managing doctoral mobility? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Doctoral / Graduate School
- ☐ International Relations Office
- ☐ Research Office
- ☐ Faculties / departments
- ☐ Supervisors only
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

27. Are there clear procedures for outgoing doctoral mobility?

- ☐ Yes, well documented
- ☐ Yes, but fragmented
- ☐ Mostly informal
- ☐ No

28. Are there dedicated support services for doctoral researchers? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Predeparture guidance
- ☐ Visa / insurance support
- ☐ Academic recognition support
- ☐ Housing support
- ☐ Family-related support
- ☐ Psychological / wellbeing support
- ☐ None specific to doctoral level

29. Can your institution track doctoral mobility numbers?

- ☐ Yes, systematically
☐ Partly / estimates only
☐ No

30. Which types of mobility are included in monitoring? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Short-term physical mobility (up to 1 month)
☐ Medium-term physical mobility (1-3 months)
☐ Long-term physical mobility (more than 3 months)
☐ Blended mobility (physical + virtual, e.g. BIPs)
☐ Virtual exchange only
☐ Cotutelle / joint doctorate arrangements
☐ Conference participation abroad
☐ Research stays / lab visits
☐ Summer schools / doctoral courses abroad
☐ Other (please specify): _____
☐ None monitored

PART B – Evaluation of factors supporting or hindering doctoral mobility

For each statement, please indicate to what extent it **supports or hinders** doctoral mobility at your institution.

Scale:

- 1 = Strongly hinders mobility
 2 = Moderately hinders mobility
 3 = Slightly hinders mobility
 4 = Slightly supports mobility
 5 = Moderately supports mobility
 6 = Strongly supports mobility
☐ Not relevant / not applicable

Financial factors

- Availability of scholarships for doctoral mobility
- Erasmus+ grant levels
- Flexibility in using different Erasmus+ mobility formats (SMS, SMP, BIP, STT, SMT)
- Availability of institutional co-funding
- Ability to combine multiple funding sources
- National or local mobility schemes
- Cost of living and housing at destinations
- Financial burden of maintaining housing at home during mobility

Academic and institutional environment

- Alignment of doctoral programme structures with partner institutions
- Availability of doctoral-level courses at host institutions

- Existing research collaborations with partner HEIs
- Research fit between doctoral topics and host institutions
- Supervisor encouragement of mobility
- Supervisors' international networks
- Clarity on what counts as doctoral mobility activities
- Flexibility of doctoral curricula
- Recognition of mobility within doctoral training
- Integration of mobility into the doctoral trajectory from the beginning

Recognition and administrative processes

- Usefulness of learning agreements for research mobility
- Transparency of recognition procedures
- Administrative workload related to mobility
- Institutional experience with organising doctoral mobility
- Timing of application and selection procedures
- Visa and insurance procedures
- Social security arrangements
- Availability of dedicated administrative support

Institutional culture and networks

- International orientation of departments
- Participation in European University Alliances
- Existing institutional partnerships and networks
- Staff mobility stimulating doctoral mobility
- Reputation and prestige of partner institutions
- Participation in international research projects
- Supportive doctoral school environment

Personal, social and cultural factors (as observed institutionally)

- Language requirements and language of instruction
- Doctoral researchers' confidence in foreign language skills
- Cultural proximity of destination countries
- Family and caring responsibilities
- Employment obligations during doctorate
- Health or disability considerations
- Mental wellbeing and stress related to mobility
- Peer and social support systems
- Career prospects linked to mobility
- Previous international experience of researchers

Legal and regulatory context

- National regulations affecting doctoral mobility status
- Eligibility of doctoral researchers for Erasmus+ schemes
- Length and rigidity of doctoral programmes
- Legal frameworks for cotutelles and joint degrees
- Intellectual property constraints

PART C – Open reflection

32. What are the strongest enablers of doctoral mobility at your institution?

☐ Open text

33. What are the most significant barriers of doctoral mobility at your institution?

☐ Open text

34. What changes (institutional, national or European level) would most improve doctoral mobility within CHARM-EU?

☐ Open text

GLOSSARY

Note: There are diverse perspectives on certain terms across partner institutions. The definitions below are not intended to be definitive or absolute; they serve as guiding descriptions to support a shared understanding of the types of responses expected in this survey.

Term	Definition / Description	Clarifications / Notes
CHARM-EU	A European University alliance of nine universities collaborating to build a transformative, inclusive, and challenge-driven university model.	Member universities: University of Barcelona; Trinity College Dublin; Utrecht University; University of Montpellier; Eötvös Loránd University Budapest; Åbo Akademi University; Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg; Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences; University of Bergen.
Doctoral studies	The full range of doctoral-level studies offered by an institution (e.g. Ph.D., D.L.A., D.Lit., D.Ed.).	Excludes professional degrees that confer a doctoral title upon completion (e.g. law, medicine) but includes research-based doctoral programs in these fields where applicable (e.g. Ph.D. in Law or Medicine).
Doctoral researchers	Individuals engaged in doctoral studies, including both curriculum-led doctoral programs and individually supervised doctoral paths.	Includes doctoral researchers with either student status, employee status, or a combination of both.
Doctoral mobility	Physical, virtual, and blended mobility activities undertaken during doctoral studies.	May include conferences, laboratory visits, research stays, methods courses abroad, transversal skills training, fieldwork, summer schools, and similar activities. Further clarification may be required regarding what constitutes virtual mobility (e.g. participation of host-country members in the virtual component of a BIP).
Institutional support mechanisms for mobility	Institutional structures that provide administrative, organizational, and/or financial support for doctoral mobility.	Includes institutional boards and offices (e.g. Doctoral Office, International Office, Doctoral School, Program Board), as well as relevant national agencies and foundations.
Financial support mechanisms for mobility	Funding sources that financially support the mobility activities of doctoral researchers.	Examples include Erasmus+, Erasmus Short-Term Doctoral Mobility, local or institutional grants, national grants, foundation grants, and personal funds.

Term	Definition / Description	Clarifications / Notes
Short-term mobility	Mobility activities taking up to one month (minimum 5 days, maximum 30 days).	
Medium-term mobility	Mobility activities ranging between 1 and 3 months.	
Long-term mobility	Mobility activities exceeding 3 months.	
Blended mobility	Mobility formats combining physical and virtual elements.	Examples include Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) and similar hybrid arrangements.

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