

ENLIGHT IMPACT AWARDS 2025 Call for Nominations

INTRODUCTION

[ENLIGHT](#) is a European University Alliance to promote equitable quality of life, sustainability and global engagement through Higher Education transformation. ENLIGHT brings together ten research-intensive universities from ten European countries (University of the Basque Country, University of Bern, University of Bordeaux, Comenius University Bratislava, University of Galway, Ghent University, University of Göttingen, University of Groningen, University of Tartu, Uppsala University).

Impact is at the core of the [European University Alliance ENLIGHT](#) mission. One of ENLIGHT's key objectives is to **promote a culture of impact both within and beyond its partner universities**, by developing good practices of impact-directed management, integrating impact into higher education, research, innovation and societal engagement.

In ENLIGHT we understand **IMPACT** as the **effects or changes** we can see (demonstrate, measure, capture), **beyond academia** (in society, economy, environment) which happen because of an activity in the higher education environment (caused by, contributed to, attributable to). Impact is intrinsically linked to *transformation* and to transformative initiatives, programmes, projects, activities developed in the university context. Impact may look and operate slightly differently across disciplines, and for fundamental versus applied research, but ultimately is about connecting academia to changes in the real world¹.

ENLIGHT IMPACT AWARDS

Building on the successful experience of its first two editions, the **ENLIGHT IMPACT AWARDS 2025** seek to **recognize and give visibility to ENLIGHT partner universities' INITIATIVES that are EXEMPLARS IN PLANNING FOR AND ACHIEVING IMPACT**.

A maximum of **six ENLIGHT IMPACT AWARDS** will be presented; including, ideally and if possible, one AWARD in each of the six [ENLIGHT flagship domains](#):

- Climate change
- Culture and Creativity
- Digital revolution and digitization
- Energy and circular economy
- Equity
- Health and well-being

Applications are invited from **teams** at ENLIGHT universities, which **must be nominated by their university through a locally defined internal selection process** (*see selection procedure, eligibility and selection criteria sections for further details*). The representatives of the awarded teams will be identified as **ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors** and become members of the ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors Network².

¹ Definition adapted from Bayley, J., Phipps, D. (2019). "Institutional Healthcheck Workbook". Emerald Publishing.

² You can meet our ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors here: <https://impact.enlight-eu.org/ambassadors>

The ENLIGHT Impact Awards will be presented during the **ENLIGHT Impact Conference** at the University of Groningen on the 27th and 28th March 2025. The ENLIGHT Impact Conference will bring together international impact experts and practitioners and will be the setting in which **the ENLIGHT Impact Awards will be recognised and celebrated.**

THE ENLIGHT IMPACT AMBASSADORS

The ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors are the representatives of the awarded teams. The awarded teams can be composed of academics (teachers or researchers) of all levels of seniority (from R1 to R4, according to [EURAXESS definition](#)) and areas of expertise, but also management and support staff from ENLIGHT partner universities. Together, in a joint team effort, they should demonstrate how they have embedded impact into their initiative and how this will ultimately contribute to bring about change in one (or more) of the six above mentioned [ENLIGHT flagship domains](#).

Independently of their field of expertise, discipline focus, seniority and position at the university, the ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors are enthusiastic and outspoken supporters of impact in the university context. Besides their contribution to impact, they should show a genuine interest and motivation to commit to and be part of the [ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors Network](#). They should be able to communicate effectively and have their voice heard among international peers.

ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors will not have executive tasks or assignments within the Alliance, but will function as a sounding board and as **“role models”** for the academic community within and beyond the ENLIGHT Alliance. More specifically, and with the support of the ENLIGHT impact task force, the ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors will:

- **Inspire**
Act as “role models” to other academics, management and support staff; showcasing and giving testimony on their initiative’s impact pathway.
- **Reach out**
Raise awareness about the importance of impact; engaging in outreach activities; participating in mutual learning and exchange of experiences and insights; connecting with ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors Network, ENLIGHT impact task force and beyond; contributing thus to improve impact literacy across ENLIGHT and beyond.
- **Promote**
Promote ENLIGHT impact work and acting as impact multipliers across different fields of knowledge and regional, national and international networks; supporting and providing advice to ENLIGHT impact task force in the execution of its different tasks (e.g. identification of sources to the [ENLIGHT impact repository](#); contribution to the impact training programmes; etc.)

Level of engagement

It is envisaged that the time commitment of the ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors to the ENLIGHT over the course of the 2025/2026 period will be limited but can vary depending on the Impact Ambassadors’ availability and the time that they are in the position to dedicate. A typical commitment over the course of a year could be as follows:

- **1-2 online meetings** a year to support/advice ENLIGHT impact task force in its activities;

- **1-2 international workshops/ conferences** a year to reach out and promote ENLIGHT and its universities impact approaches. These workshops/conferences could be identified by either the awarded ENLIGHT impact ambassadors or ENLIGHT impact team. ENLIGHT payment of workshops/ conferences attendance is conditional on prior consent by the ENLIGHT impact team;
- **Give feedback on ENLIGHT impact activities and outputs.**

WHAT IS IN IT FOR YOU?

Each ENLIGHT Impact Award recognises the exemplar impact work of the successful team awardees. More concretely, it provides:

- **Increased visibility** to your initiative, its impact approach and pathway, through the [ENLIGHT website](#), the [ENLIGHT impact repository](#) with the Ambassadors' Impact Stories, the [ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors webpage](#), ENLIGHT social media, international workshops and conferences (e.g. [ENLIGHT Impact Conferences](#));
- **Financial support to attend relevant international workshops/ conferences.** These workshops/conferences could be identified by either the awarded or ENLIGHT impact teams. ENLIGHT payment of workshops/ conferences attendance is conditional on prior consent by the ENLIGHT impact team and valid for one representative per awarded team over the course of the 2025/ 2026 period;
- The possibility of being part of a **wide-reaching network** of impact ambassadors of other ENLIGHT universities, in close contact with the ENLIGHT impact task force and with the possibility of connecting also with the ENLIGHT Expert Network on Research Impact and other impact networks where ENLIGHT is represented (e.g. FOREU thematic sub-group on impact led by ENLIGHT, AESIS network for Advancing and Evaluating the Societal Impact of Science, etc.);
- The possibility of knowledge and good practices **sharing and mutual learning**;
- The opportunity to **support and influence** ENLIGHT impact work.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

The selection procedure is organised in two phases:

- **First, each ENLIGHT partner university is asked to submit at least one, and a maximum of three applications, from its institution** to be considered for the ENLIGHT IMPACT AWARD (internal selection process).
- Then, the awarded teams, and subsequent Impact Ambassadors, **will be ranked by an evaluation panel, comprised of both external and ENLIGHT impact experts, out of all nominations submitted by ENLIGHT universities.**
- The final ranking is established after taking into consideration the public voting results (cfr. selection criteria) during the ENLIGHT Impact Conference (University of Groningen, 27-28 March 2025)

Ideally, an ENLIGHT IMPACT AWARD will be made in each of the 6 flagship domains; however, depending on the submissions and the conclusion of the evaluation process, not all of the ENLIGHT flagship areas will necessarily be represented in the AWARDS.

Internal process

The internal procedure for identifying candidate teams at each ENLIGHT university is at the **discretion of each institution separately and not standard across the ENLIGHT Alliance**.

Besides the ENLIGHT Alliance own dissemination means³, each university is asked to circulate this announcement to all departments, faculties/schools, research groups/labs which could potentially be nominated, and to identify possible candidate teams through processes that are transparent and inclusive.

In order to facilitate the internal selection process, the ENLIGHT impact task force puts at disposal of ENLIGHT universities an example of ***expression of interest*** that could be useful to make a first pre-selection of the three potential applicants per university (annex 1). This *expression of interest* is based on the experiences of a few ENLIGHT universities who used it in the former ENLIGHT Impact Awards calls. Its use is **not compulsory**.

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

The selected teams of each ENLIGHT partner university should apply using the **application form**⁴ (annex 2) with due attention to the following eligibility and selection criteria:

Eligibility Criteria:

- Teams of ENLIGHT partner universities, involving at least 3 academics (i.e. teachers, researchers) and presenting initiatives developed in the university context (i.e. education & training, research & innovation, and/or service to society)⁵
- The time scope of the initiative should have been launched and/or implemented in the last 5 years period (January 2020-December 2024).

Selection Criteria:

- **Joint team effort (10/100)**
 - Teams involving senior and early career academics (2).
 - Participation of different teams from different fields of expertise and discipline focus (e.g. Arts & Humanities, Medicine & Health Sciences, Social Sciences, STEM) (2)
 - Involvement of management and support staff (2)
 - Collaboration between the different team members and their role in/contribution to the impact pathway (4).

- **Contribution to addressing ENLIGHT flagship related challenges** (climate change, culture & creativity, digital revolution and digitization, energy and circular economy, equity, health and well-being)⁶ **(10/100)**

³ ENLIGHT website, ENLIGHT Think Tank and ENLIGHT R&I Support Group, among others.

⁴ See Annex 1.

⁵ It could be an education & training programme (courses, programmes), research & innovation projects, citizen science initiatives, mobility programmes, leadership and entrepreneurship programmes, etc.

⁶ For further details, please consult <https://enlight-eu.org/university-about-us/flagship-domains>

- Contribution to more than one ENLIGHT flagship area (2)
- How the impact pathway underpinned or made a contribution to the ENLIGHT flagship related challenge(s) (8)
- **Stakeholder⁷ engagement (30/100)**
 - Identification and involvement of relevant societal stakeholders in the initiative (who) (10)
 - Role of societal stakeholders throughout the initiative life-cycle (design, implementation, communication, etc.) and pathway to impact (how) (20)
- **Impact pathways (30/100)**
 - Identification of the expected/desired/achieved outcomes and impacts (10)
 - Approach and efforts deployed by the team for promoting an impactful initiative (15)
 - Evidence of achieved outcomes and impacts, using both quantitative and qualitative indicators will be valued positively (5)
- **Interest and motivation (10/100)**
 - Interest and motivation of the team to apply, commit to and be represented at the ENLIGHT Impact Ambassadors Network
- **Impact pitch (10/100).** In a 3 minutes pitch, ENLIGHT Impact Awards Nominees are invited to introduce the impact story of their initiative/ project to the ENLIGHT community and a panel of international impact experts. Specific support by coaches will be given to the ENLIGHT Impact Award Nominees in order to prepare for the impact pitch. The exact dates of the support sessions and the Impact Pitches event will be communicated in due time. The punctuation is given on the basis of the public vote results during the ENLIGHT Impact Conference.

APPLICATIONS

Applications by each ENLIGHT institution should be sent by the **ENLIGHT university liaison** (see contacts list below) to the ENLIGHT Impact task force (impact.enlight@ehu.eus) using the above-mentioned form in pdf (annex 2).

TIMELINE

Call for nominations published	31 October 2024
ENLIGHT Universities internal selection procedure	November 2024 – January 2025
Deadline for nominations by ENLIGHT universities	31 January 2025
Evaluation	1 February- 15 March 2025
Impact pitch support to nominees	February-March 2025
ENLIGHT Impact Conference and Award Ceremony	27-28 March 2025

⁷ Stakeholders are those (directly or indirectly) affected by the initiative. They could be students, other academics (especially in the case of education& training initiatives) and societal stakeholders (business organisations, policy makers and public administration, civil society organisations, citizens, etc.).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

For any clarification question you can contact either the ENLIGHT impact task force (impact.enlight@ehu.es) or your ENLIGHT university coordinator at:

- University of the Basque Country: enlight@ehu.eus
- University of Bern: enlight@unibe.ch
- Comenius University of Bratislava: enlight@uniba.sk
- University of Bordeaux: enlight@u-bordeaux.fr
- University of Galway: enlight@universityofgalway.ie
- Ghent University: enlight@ugent.be
- University of Göttingen: enlight@uni-goettingen.de
- University of Groningen: enlight@rug.nl
- University of Tartu: enlight@ut.ee
- University of Uppsala: enlight@uu.se