

ENLIGHT Incubator Grants

Call for applications - 2025

Introduction

The European University Alliance [ENLIGHT](#) announces the 2nd round of the Incubator Grant call. The Incubator Grant is one of three ENLIGHT [CALLS](#), aiming to stimulate and support bottom-up collaborations in constellations of two or more ENLIGHT universities.

ENLIGHT is committed to fostering an Open Science culture that enhances the quality, impact, and accessibility of our activities. In line with the UNESCO Recommendations on Open Science, we encourage project proposals that embrace open, collaborative, and transparent practices for the benefit of science and society. To support this, ENLIGHT has established official [Open Science principles](#) and also provides a [dedicated Open Science toolkit](#) outlining key concepts, services, and tools.

Aim of the Incubator Call

The Incubator Call focuses on supporting and developing educational activities that introduce new approaches to the academic environment and improve the quality of education. Its main goals are:

A. Joint study programmes – Supporting and coordinating joint study programmes among partner universities. A joint study programme is an integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions and leading to a (double/multiple or joint) degree.

B. Joint innovative educational initiatives – Supporting educational initiatives that bring innovation to teaching. The goal is to enhance the quality and accessibility of education, develop students' critical thinking and practical skills, and strengthen the connection between academia and practice.

The Incubator focuses on supporting and developing educational activities that introduce new approaches to the academic environment and improve the quality of education.

Aligning with ENLIGHT's main objective of widening bottom-up engagement in our university communities, ENLIGHT will incentivise the design and upscaling of sustainable **educational initiatives across all three study cycles** addressing societal transition, sustainable future and human well-being, targeting future-proof skills and global competences and connecting learners with societal stakeholders around our [6 FLAGSHIP AREAS](#).

Eligible activities

Sustainable educational activities in various formats with specific and measurable outputs implemented before summer 2027. This call consists of two strands:

- A. Preparation and development of **joint study programmes** (Bachelor or Master), which are jointly designed and jointly implemented. The aim is to award joint degrees, but proposals with double/multiple degree awarding are also eligible.
- B. **Joint innovative education initiatives** such as living labs, lifelong learning educational activities, virtual courses, virtual exchange, collaborative online international learning (COIL), joint minors, co-teaching formats for larger groups of students (e.g. 1st semester students), joint courses. Other formats are also welcome.

Eligibility criteria

The criteria are formulated in line with the [ENLIGHT Competence Framework](#).

1. For strand (A) Joint study programmes, at least 3 participating ENLIGHT institutions are involved. For strand (B) Joint innovative education initiatives, at least 3 participating ENLIGHT institutions are involved with the following exceptions: double degree schemes¹, virtual exchanges and micro-credentials only require at least 2 participating ENLIGHT institutions and can apply for max. €30.000.
2. All project partners are affiliated with one of the ENLIGHT universities. Involvement entails developing and delivering the educational initiatives.
3. Outputs should be open to appropriate staff and students of the involved ENLIGHT universities and disseminated publicly.
4. The scope of the initiative should refer to the identified [Flagship areas](#). These focus areas should not be seen as disciplinary categories.
5. The initiative awards a Transcript of Records with ECTS credits, if applicable for the intended format, or awards another form of recognition (e.g. digital badge, certificate). For joint study programmes under Strand A, this applies upon successful development of the initiative and at the start of its implementation.

Funding

The total maximum amount allocated for the implementation of the second round of the Incubator Call is €600.000.

¹ A **double degree scheme** is an arrangement between two educational institutions where each offers its own separate study programme, rather than a joint study programme. Students can choose to complete part of their studies at a partner institution, allowing them to earn two separate diplomas—one from each institution. The specific terms and structure of the double degree scheme are formalized in an agreement between the partner institutions. This arrangement can apply to both bachelor's and master's programmes.

Applications under strand (A) Joint study programmes can apply for a maximum of €50.000 EUR. Applications under strand (B) Joint innovative education initiatives can apply for a maximum of €30.000 EUR.

Projects from strand (A) Joint study programmes might apply for additional support in the 3rd round of the call in 2026, providing no other dedicated EU funding would in the meantime have been granted to avoid potential issues with double funding (cf. e.g. Erasmus Mundus).

The grants for developing joint study programmes (Strand A) are intended to support exploratory steps and feasibility checks for developing such joint study programmes with ENLIGHT partners. If successful, the first joint instruments of the joint study programme will be developed (see also 'reporting and timeline'). The joint study programme does not have to be fully implemented by the end of the incubator grant, if deemed unfeasible within the timeline.

If, following these exploratory phases, a joint study programme is determined to be unfeasible, other potential outcomes may be considered, such as virtual exchanges, semester exchanges, living labs, winter/summer schools, virtual courses or other collaborative initiatives.

The budget distribution among project partner universities

All partner universities, except for the University of Bern, finance their participation through Erasmus+ funding. In the case of parallel applications to other EU funds for the same purpose, the same costs may under no circumstances be financed twice by the European Union budget.

Due to the non-association of Swiss universities in Erasmus+, members of the University of Bern receive funding from Movetia. Each partner university is funded by their home university, so the same applies for Bern. Funds awarded to members of the University of Bern may not be used by other universities.

No budget can be shifted or relocated between partners, i.e. each institution must plan the budget for its own expenses not covering other partner's expenses. Each partner's share of the budget will be managed and incurred within their own institution and by its staff members.

Eligible costs can include

- Purchase costs:
 - o Travel, accomodation, subsistence.
 - o Other goods, works and services: consumables and supplies (other than office equipment), service for meetings/seminars, services for communication/dissemination, website, other
- Staff costs: for staff employed by an ENLIGHT partner university
- Subcontracting costs: are to be avoided and should in any case be limited

Selection criteria

Applications are jointly ranked by quality, feasibility, proposed output, and their added value with regard to the objectives of ENLIGHT.

1. Quality (30%); The maximum total score for the category is 30 points. Each subcriterion can be awarded between 0 and 7.5 points.

- The proposal should have clear, well-defined goals and objectives, clearly linked to the planned educational activities that will help achieve the project's goal.
- The project focuses on at least one of the 6 Flagship areas, clearly describing which specific Flagship area will be addressed.
- The proposal clearly describes the innovative educational methods that will be used, and how they will contribute to achieving the project's objectives.
 - o For Strand A Joint study programmes: The proposal describes the innovative added value of the envisaged joint study programme.
- The proposal clearly describes the roles and competencies of each partner in the project.

2. Feasibility (30%); The maximum total score for the category is 30 points. Each subcriterion can be awarded between 0 and 7.5 points.

- The initiative must be feasible and sustainable in the long term. It should have a clear plan for measuring its impact and long-term sustainability.
 - o For Strand A Joint study programmes: The initiative must have a clear indication of the expected impact of the envisaged joint study programme and the steps towards its sustainability.
- The initiative must be embedded in regular institutional processes.
- The initiative must demonstrate how it will continue to have effect after funding ends.
- The proposal should include a detailed and realistic budget, demonstrating how resources (financial, human or material) will be allocated effectively to meet project goals.

3. Proposed output (20%); The maximum total score for the category is 20 points. Each subcriterion can be awarded between 0 and 10 points.

- The project clearly defines its expected outputs and identifies target groups; the outputs are aligned to overarching learning objectives.
 - o For Strand A Joint study programmes: The proposal clearly describes the (minimum) expected output for setting up the joint study programme, and the outputs are aligned to the overall goals of the initiative.
- Outputs are measurable and quantifiable.

4. Added value (20%); The maximum total score for the category is 20 points. Each subcriterion can be awarded between 0 and 10 points.

- The project describes the added value it provides for students, educators or other stakeholders, including ENLIGHT partners (e.g., introducing specific innovations in

education, improving curricula, concrete initiatives to enhance a selected flagship area, new joint study programs, etc.).

- The description clearly states the advantages of collaborative development for this initiative.

Steps for selection

STEP 1: Applications are evaluated on joint formal criteria (eligibility) by the project coordinators of the Work Package Future Proof Education.

STEP 2: Applications are jointly ranked by quality, feasibility, proposed output and added value with regard to the objectives of ENLIGHT (selection criteria) by independent reviewers from ENLIGHT universities. The Incubator call focuses on balanced collaboration and participation of all ENLIGHT institutions.

Quality threshold: A successful project proposal must obtain a score of over 70%.

STEP 3: Projects are ranked per strand: strand (A) Joint study programmes and (B) Joint innovative education initiatives. The project distribution ensures balanced participation among ENLIGHT universities. Hence, each university is involved in a balanced number of projects as partner. The aspect of balanced budget distribution between universities will also be taken into account.

The final selection decision for the Incubator Grants is made by a joint committee consisting of executives (vice-rectors, vice-presidents, directors of education or equal) from all ENLIGHT universities.

Application procedure and timeline

Applications should be submitted by the coordinator of the educational proposal through the online application form /using the pdf forms (see annex I Application Form) at [the ENLIGHT website](#).

Call published	1 April 2025
Applications submitted by	30 June 2025
Evaluation and selection	August – October 2025
Final selection	15 October 2025
Communication of results	End of October 2025
Start of initiatives	1 November 2025

Reporting and timeline

The coordinating institution is requested to submit a final report within one month after completion of the initiative. In case of longer implementation, a mid-report is requested by July 2026.

For strand (A) Joint study programmes, reporting consists of a mid-term report, final report, jointly designed programme-level outcomes, study programme and corresponding student

mobility trajectories, joint admission requirements, and (progress on) a draft partnership agreement (if applicable). Progress on the latter four is to be submitted as part of the mid-term report (July 2026) and a final version of the deliverables is included with the final report (by October 2027 at the latest).

For strand (B) Joint innovative education initiatives, reporting consists of a mid-term report and final report.

Questions and Answers

For any clarification questions you can contact your [institutional liaison](#). We also recommend checking the [FAQ](#).

Disclaimer:

Obtaining ENLIGHT funding does not exempt recipients from adhering to institutional procedures for educational initiatives. All necessary institutional approvals and processes must be followed, especially in cases involving joint programmes.