

Call for Applications

Incubator Grant: Strand A: Joint study programmes

Introduction

The European University Alliance ENLIGHT announces the **3rd and final** round of the Incubator Grant call. Aligning with ENLIGHT's main objective of widening bottom-up engagement in our university communities, Incubator Grants support the development and upscaling of **international and innovative joint educational initiatives that are ECTS-credit bearing**, connected to ENLIGHT's [Focus Areas](#) - Health and Well-being, Digital revolution and Impact of Digitization, Climate Change, Energy and circular economy, Culture and Creativity, Equity. Eligible activities are educational initiatives in various formats that can be sustainably integrated into (a) study programme(s). Funding for the selected projects through Incubator Grants is available **from 1st September 2026 to 31st October 2027**, which is also the recommended period for project implementation. The Incubator Grant Call for Proposals consists of two independent strands:

Strand A: Joint study programmes. This strand supports the development of joint study programmes at bachelor's or master's level among partner universities. A joint study programme is defined as an integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions¹. The aim is to award joint degrees², but proposals with double/multiple degree awarding are also eligible. The joint study programme does not have to be ready to run by the end of the Incubator Grant project period, but a minimum set of deliverables is expected.

Strand B: International and innovative joint educational initiatives. This strand is meant to develop educational initiatives that bring innovation and internationalization to teaching. This can comprise of seasonal schools, lifelong learning activities, microcredentials, double degree schemes³, and any joint courses in physical, virtual or blended format (see also the [ENLIGHT Toolkit for virtual and blended learning formats](#) and a [Creating ENLIGHT Lifelong Learning Micro-Credentials](#)). The only exception is that this grant cannot be used to develop Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP's). Call for Applications for Strand B is to be found [here](#).

¹ [Definition of joint programme as defined within the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes](#)

² [Definition of a joint degree as defined within the EHEA](#): A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme.

³ 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 programme.

Eligibility criteria - Strand A

1. At least 3 participating ENLIGHT institutions are involved.
2. All project partners applying for funding are affiliated with one of the ENLIGHT universities.
3. All activities requiring funding from the Incubator Grant must be completed by October 31, 2027.
4. The envisaged joint programme should be open to appropriate staff and/or students of the involved ENLIGHT universities.
5. The funding guidelines differentiate between the role of coordination and that of partners. Academics with teaching obligations can submit a project as coordinator. Coordinators as well as partners must be entitled to manage a budget at his/her university and remain in position for the duration of the proposed project. Please note that regulations differ between the ENLIGHT universities. Please contact your ENLIGHT office in case of doubt.
6. The scope of the initiative should refer to the identified Focus Areas. These focus areas should not be seen as disciplinary categories.
7. The application form must be correctly completed, including a breakdown of the budget. If several items of significant importance for the evaluation of the project remain unfilled in the application, the call coordinators reserve the right to exclude it.

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

Funding

Applications under the Strand (A) Joint study programmes can apply for a **maximum of €30.000 EUR**. Applications under the Strand (B) International and innovative joint education initiatives can apply for a maximum of €20.000 EUR. **The total maximum amount allocated for the implementation of the third round of the Incubator Call is €226.000.**

ENLIGHT Incubator Grant funding originates from Erasmus+ funding, except for the University of Bern. In the case of parallel applications to other EU funds for the same purpose, the same costs may under no circumstances be financed twice. Due to the non-association of Swiss universities in Erasmus+, members of the University of Bern receive funding from Movetia. All mobilities to Bern must be included in the University of Bern's share of the project budget, rather than in that of the sending university.

If the project includes physical student mobility, applicants should consult the available funding options at their home university or institutional ENLIGHT office prior to submitting their application as certain restrictions may apply to them.

Each partner university in the project receives its share of the requested budget. Funding **cannot be transferred** between universities. This means that if a team member leaves, even to a partner university, the budget share remains at the original university/faculty, and the university/faculty must nominate a replacement for the departed member so that the project can continue.

Eligible costs can include:	Non-eligible costs include:
• travel costs	• overhead costs
• purchase costs	
• organizational costs	
• other goods and services	
• and personnel costs.	

Selection criteria

Applications are evaluated in four categories, with a total of 100 points available:

- Relevance (max 30 points)
- Quality of the project methodology (max 30 points)
- Quality of the partnership and cooperation (max 20 points)
- Impact and sustainability (max 20 points)

Each criterion in a category can be awarded 10 points.

1. Relevance (30%)

1.a The overall aims and general objectives of the envisaged joint study programme are clear.

1.b The proposal describes the rationale for the design of the envisaged joint study programme and the needs analysis on which it is built.

1.c The proposal describes the innovativeness of the envisaged joint study programme as compared to the existing offer of bachelor or master programmes.

2. Quality of the project methodology (30%)

2.a The project work plan is clear and includes the (minimum) expected deliverables for designing the joint study programme.

- 2.b The deliverables are aligned to the overall aims and objectives of the initiative.
- 2.c The proposal includes a detailed and realistic budget, demonstrating how resources (financial, human or material) will be allocated effectively per partner institution to meet the project aims and objectives.

3. Quality of the partnership and cooperation (20%)

- 3.a The proposal describes
- the expected roles of the participating organisations
 - the added value of the collaborative nature and the complementarity of the partners
 - the competencies of each partner in the project
- 3.b The initiative is embedded in regular institutional processes. The proposal demonstrates that the institution and involved faculty or department support the initiative.

4. Impact and sustainability (20%)

- 4.a The proposal indicates the expected impact at the individual level (future students, involved professors) and institutional level (partner organizations) of the envisaged joint study programme.
- 4.b The proposal describes the foreseen measures to ensure the sustainability of the new joint study programme.

Steps for selection

STEP 1: Applications are evaluated on eligibility criteria by the ENLIGHT project staff.

STEP 2: Independent reviewers from ENLIGHT universities rank applications using the selection criteria.

STEP 3: The final selection of Incubator Grant recipients is made by the WP2 Executive Group, which consists of vice-rectors, vice-presidents, directors or equivalents responsible for education at all ENLIGHT universities. Quality is taken into account, with a threshold of 70% being used, as well as balanced participation among ENLIGHT universities. **Collaboration with universities underrepresented in previous ENLIGHT calls is strongly encouraged** (University of the Basque Country, University of Bordeaux, Comenius University, University of Goettingen, University of Tartu).

Application procedure and timeline

Applications should be submitted by the coordinator of the educational proposal through the online [application form](#) at the ENLIGHT central online submission point. Please convert your proposal form(s) into one .pdf file labeled as "ACRONYM-INCUBATOR-A-2026.pdf".

Deadlines

Call published	2 March 2026
Applications submitted by	15 May 2026
Eligibility check	25 May 2026
Evaluation and selection	30 June 2026
Communication of results	15 July 2026
Start of the projects	1 September 2026
End of the projects' funding	31 October 2027
Final report	10 November 2027

Reporting

The grants for **developing** joint study programmes at bachelor's or master's level (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 are to be developed. The joint study programme does not have to be ready to run by the end of the Incubator grant project.

If, following these exploratory phases, the design of a new joint study programme is determined to be unfeasible, consortia are encouraged to consider other potential outcomes.

The coordinating institution is requested to submit a final report (Annex 3) **by 10th November 2027 the latest**, including jointly designed programme-level outcomes, study programme and corresponding student mobility trajectories, joint admission requirements, and (progress on) a draft partnership agreement that includes the minimum expected deliverables and an overall structure referencing the elements and policies that are to be further developed beyond the Incubator Grant project.

Questions and Answers

It is recommended to read the [FAQ](#).

In order to ensure that the project submission process runs as smoothly as possible, we strongly encourage you to contact and inform your local ENLIGHT office about this initiative before submitting your application.

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