Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

Call for certifications

Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) 2021-2027

(ERASMUS-EDU-2022-ECHE-CERT)

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HISTORY OF CHANGES			
Version	Publication Date	Change	Page
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2.0	10.10.2022	▪ Second version	
3.0	04.07.2025	▪ Third version: Conditions for participation of Switzerland and other countries currently negotiating association agreements, deletion of 26.01.2027 cut-off and reference to the EU Financial Regulation “recast”.	
4.0	11.11.2025	▪ Fourth version: Conditions for participation of the United Kingdom and other countries currently negotiating association agreements, postponement of cut off deadline from 27/01/26 to 24/03/2026	

EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.A - Erasmus+, EU Solidarity Corps
EACEA.A.1 - European Higher Education

CALL FOR CERTIFICATIONS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) quality certifications under the Erasmus+ Programme.

ECHE sets out the fundamental principles and the minimum requirements with which higher education institutions (HEIs) must comply when applying for and implementing activities under the Erasmus + Programme (2021-2027).

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2024/2509 (EU Financial Regulation)[1]
- the basic act (Erasmus+ Regulation 2021/817[2]).

The call will remain open for the entire programming period 2021-2027 (with yearly cut-off dates) and will be managed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

We invite you to read the call documentation on the Funding & Tenders Portal Topic page carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the ECHE Certificate, the ECHE Guidelines and the EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual.

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the Call Document outlines the:
  - background, objectives, scope of the certification (section 1)
  - timetable (section 2)
  - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 3 and 4)
  - criteria for exclusion (section 5)
  - evaluation and award procedure (section 6)
  - award criteria (section 7)
  - other conditions (section 8)
- the Online Manual outlines the procedures to register and submit applications online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal').
- the ECHE Guidelines describe how the ECHE principles should be implemented.

1. Background, objectives and scope

1 Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

2 Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport (OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1).

The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) is an EU quality certificate for higher education institutions (HEIs). It is a prerequisite for all HEIs from Erasmus+ Programme countries and Western Balkans third countries not associated to the Programme to apply for funding under Erasmus+ calls (including calls managed by Erasmus+ National Agencies).

By applying for the ECHE, the HEI confirms that its participation in Erasmus+ is part of its strategy for modernisation and internationalisation. This strategy acknowledges the key contribution of student and staff mobility and of participation in transnational cooperation projects, to the quality of its higher education programmes and student experience. The ECHE aims to reinforce the quality of student and staff mobility, as well as of cooperation projects.

The certification procedure consists in validating the status as a 'higher education institution (HEI)' and certifying compliance with the ECHE quality standards (Erasmus Policy Statement, quality of organisation and management structures and the implementation of ECHE principles).

The ECHE will be valid for the entire duration of the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027 (and up until the end of projects funded under that Programme). The award of the ECHE does not automatically imply any direct funding under the Erasmus+ Programme.

ECHE holders will be subject to regular monitoring by the National Agencies.

2. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines:	
Call opening:	22 February 2022
Deadlines for submission:	26 January 2023 – 17:00 CET (Brussels) (cut-off date) 25 January 2024 – 17:00 CET (Brussels) (cut-off date) 28 January 2025 – 17:00 CET (Brussels) (cut-off date) 24 March 2026 – 17.00 CET (Brussels) (cut-off date)
Evaluation:	February- June 2023 February-June 2024 February-June 2025 March – September 2026
Information on evaluation results/award:	July 2023 July2024 July2025 September 2026

3. Admissibility and documents

Applications must be submitted before the call deadline *(see timetable section 2)*.

Applications must be submitted electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the Search Funding & Tenders section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Applications must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be complete and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participant *(to be filled in directly online)*
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (EPS, HEI profile and organisation and management structure, implementation of the ECHE principles) *(to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded)*.

Your application must be readable, accessible, printable.

Applications are limited to maximum 25 pages (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

ℹ For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the Online Manual.

4. Eligibility

In order to be eligible, the applicants must:

- be higher education institution (HEI) (public or private) and
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - Erasmus+ Programme Countries:
    - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
    - non-EU countries:
      - listed EEA (European Economic Area) countries and countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme (associated countries) or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement, in particular Switzerland and United Kingdom (see below).
      - Western Balkans third countries not associated to the Erasmus+ Programme: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo[3] and Montenegro.

All applicants must register in the Participant Register — before the call deadline.

Specific cases and definitions

Higher education institutions (HEIs) — are institutions which offer recognised degrees or other tertiary level qualifications and other comparable institutions at tertiary level, if recognised by the national authorities. The applicant must be recognised as higher education institution by the national authority of its country. After closure of the call,

[3] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

the national authorities will be asked by EACEA to confirm that they are recognised in their countries.

Switzerland, the United Kingdom and other countries currently negotiating association agreements- Where an applicant established in Switzerland, the United Kingdom - or in other countries currently negotiating association agreements - is awarded the ECHE under this call, the validity of the ECHE is conditional upon and will only commence on the date when Switzerland, the United Kingdom - or other countries currently negotiating association agreements - officially becomes a third country associated to the Programme according to the Article 19 of the Erasmus+ Regulation 2021/817.

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)[4]. Such entities are not eligible to participate in EU projects and can NOT obtain a certificate.

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092[5]. Such entities are not eligible to participate in EU projects and can NOT obtain a certificate. Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16 December 2022)

5. Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an EU exclusion decision or in one of the exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funding (bankruptcy, breach of social security or tax obligations, grave professional misconduct, breach of key obligations in an EU grant, etc) can NOT receive a certificate.[6]

6. Evaluation and award procedure

Applications will be subject to a formal evaluation procedure.

They will be checked for formal requirements (admissibility and eligibility) and then evaluated by an evaluation committee (assisted by independent external experts) against the award criteria (section 7).

Applications that pass the evaluation will be included in the award list.

All applicants will be informed about the evaluation result (evaluation result letter). Successful applications will be awarded the certificate; not successful ones will be rejected.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a complaint (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access *(see also Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions)*. Please

4 Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the EU Sanctions Map.

5 Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

6 See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

7. Award criteria

The award criteria are as follows:

Relevance of the Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS):

- The Erasmus Policy Statement is clear, consistent and relevant.
- The Erasmus Policy Statement reflects on the relevance of the Erasmus+ Programme within the applicant's institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy.
- The Erasmus Policy Statement reflects on the planned implementation of the Erasmus+ actions and how these will contribute to achieving the objectives of the applicant's institutional strategy.
- The targets and indicators are described when explaining the envisaged impact of the participation in the Erasmus+ Programme.

Quality of organisation and management:

- The applicant shows qualitative levels of general management, including internal management structure, human resources and mobility/project organisation from preparation through to recognition, dissemination and evaluation.
- The applicant has the capacity to implement the activities in place and ensure their sustainability.
- The applicant demonstrates its commitment to quality management, with emphasis on human resources and sustainable structures of cooperation and communication.

Implementation of the ECHE principles:

- The application reflects on adequate procedures for full automatic recognition of all credits gained for learning outcomes achieved during a mobility period abroad/ a blended mobility. The application should reflect on the necessary measures to achieve:
  - a correct use of learning agreements, including online learning agreements
  - the inclusion of appropriate information on learning outcomes, volume of workload (credits) and grades in the transcripts of records
  - achieving full automatic recognition of credits and the recognition of grades (if appropriate) after outgoing mobility
  - a clear and easy path for students to appeal in case full automatic recognition is not achieved
  - the provision of full information on the grading system in the inter-institutional agreements
  - the provision of grade distribution tables, together with transcripts of records (whenever grades are used)

  - the transparency of the course catalogue (following the rules of the ECTS Users' Guide, explaining how the information will be provided in a timely manner and providing a link to the course-catalogue).

- The application reflects on adequate procedures for staff recognition when it comes to participation in mobility and in European and international cooperation projects.

- The application reflects how the Higher Education Institution will adhere to the ECHE principles (cf. the ECHE guidelines) and details the procedures in place to participate in the Programme activities.

- The applicant institution demonstrates a commitment to further develop the implementation of the new ECHE principles, notably:

  - ensuring full and equitable access to participants from all backgrounds, paying particular attention to those with fewer opportunities

  - having in place a well-explained methodology for allocating ECTS credits. If this is not the case, it must be explained why the applicant is not yet using ECTS credits and how they plan to implement it in the future

  - putting measures in place to implement the European Student Card Initiative

  - promoting the programme's Erasmus+ mobile App to students

  - implementing and promoting environmentally-friendly practices in the context of the Erasmus+ Programme

  - promoting civic engagement and active citizenship amongst outgoing and incoming students before, after and during mobility.

The Application Form will also require statistical information on the HEI profile and previous activities. This information is NOT part of the award criteria, but will be used to verify whether commitments and planned activities are realistic, considering the institution's profile.

Each award criterion will be scored as fulfilled or not fulfilled (Yes/No). Only institutions that pass all three criteria will be certified. Other applications will be rejected.

8. Other conditions

Communication and visibility

ECHE holders must promote the Erasmus+ Programme activities and must display the ECHE Charter prominently on their website (in the official languages of their country and at least another widely spoken Programme Country language).

Monitoring

ECHE holders will be subject to regular monitoring by the Erasmus+ National Agencies, on compliance with the ECHE Charter principles. The application Form Part B and the Evaluation Summary Reports will be shared with the Erasmus+ National Agencies for monitoring purposes.

If problems are identified, an action plan will be agreed between the holder and the Erasmus+ National Agency to solve the issues. If the action plan is not properly

implemented (or late) the National Agency will report this to EACEA and this may lead to the withdrawal of the certificate.

For more information about the monitoring of the ECHE principles, see the ECHE Monitoring Guide for Erasmus+ National Agencies.

Withdrawal

EACEA may withdraw the certificate if the institution loses its status as 'higher education institution' or no longer complies with the ECHE quality standards.

9. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to create an EU Login user account.

Once you have an EULogin account, you can register your organisation in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the Calls for proposals section.

Submit your proposal in 2 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file

The proposal must keep to the page limits *(see section 3)*; excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the right category in the Submission System, otherwise the proposal may be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted before the call cut-off deadlines (*see section2*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the IT Helpdesk webform, explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the Online Manual. The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

10. Help

As far as possible, *please try to find the answers you need yourself*, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- Online Manual
- Topic Q&A on the Topic page

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates.

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the IT Helpdesk.

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: EACEA-ECHE@ec.europa.eu.

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call your question relates to *(see cover page)*.

11. Important

IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait** until the end — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute technical problems. Problems due to last minute submissions *(e.g. congestion, etc.)* will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- Consult the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call updates).
- Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System — By submitting the application, you accept to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the Portal Terms & Conditions.
- Registration — Before submitting the application, you must be registered in the Participant Register. The participant identification code (PIC) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- Language — You can submit your application in any official EU language. However, for reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English. If needed, the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, *see section 9*).
- Rejection — By submitting the application, you accept all the call conditions set out in this this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Applications that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected.
- Cancellation — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- Data protection — The submission of an application under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with Regulation 2018/1725. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your application (and subsequent management of the certificate). Details are explained in the Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement.