

PARTNERSHIPS FOR EXCELLENCE

WHAT ARE PARTNERSHIPS FOR EXCELLENCE?

The Partnerships for Excellence support projects with a long-term sustainable perspective. The following actions are supported under this type of partnerships:

- Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)
- Erasmus+ Teacher Academies
- Erasmus Mundus Action:
 - Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters and
 - Erasmus Mundus Design Measures.

These actions are managed by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

ERASMUS+ TEACHER ACADEMIES

The 2019 Council Resolution on further developing the **European Education Area**¹²⁷ invites the Commission to “Develop new means to train and support competent, motivated and highly qualified teachers, trainers, educators and school leaders, and promote their continuous professional development and high-quality, research-based teacher education.”¹²⁸¹²⁹ The 2019 European Education Summit also stressed the crucial importance of teachers, and the role of teachers was identified in the consultations on the future cooperation framework as one of the most important topics to be addressed in EU cooperation.

The Council Conclusions on European Teacher and Trainers for the Future of May 2020¹³⁰ reiterate the role of teachers as cornerstones of the European Education Area and call for further support to teachers’ career and competence development as well as well-being at all stages of their careers. The Conclusions stress the benefits of mobility of teachers and the need of embedding mobility as part of teachers’ initial and continuous education. Moreover, the Conclusions invite the Commission to support closer cooperation between teacher education providers within the continuum of teachers’ professional development.

The 2020 Commission’s Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025¹³¹ recognises the key role of teachers and trainers and sets the vision of having highly competent and motivated educators who can benefit from a range of support and professional development opportunities throughout their varied careers. It proposes a number of actions to address the challenges the teaching professions face today, including the plan to launch Erasmus+ Teacher Academies.

The Commission’s Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)¹³² stresses the need to ensure that all teachers and trainers have the confidence and competences to use technology effectively and creatively to engage and motivate their learners as well as to ensure that all learners develop their digital competences for learning, living and working in an ever more digitalised world.

All EU countries express a desire to improve the **attractiveness** of the profession: in the EU countries participating in OECD’s TALIS survey, on average, less than 20% of lower secondary school teachers felt that their profession is valued by the society. The **ageing** of the teaching professionals is a concern as upcoming waves of retirement could result in potential shortages in the teaching workforce in a country. The 2019 **Education and Training Monitor**¹³³ indicates also that a number of European countries face **serious shortages** of teachers, either across the board or in some subjects such as science, or in specific profiles such as teaching pupils with special needs.

Despite wide offer of continuous professional development, **teachers still self-report a lack of professional development opportunities** according to the OECD’s TALIS survey. Despite the benefits of **mobility**, it is still not

127 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/st-13298-2019-init/en/pdf>

128 education and training monitor 2019, page 28.

129 8 November 2019, 13298/19, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/st-13298-2019-init/en/pdf>

130 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44115/st08269-en20.pdf>

131 https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/eea-communication-sept2020_en

132 https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en

133 https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/education-and-training-monitor-2019-executive-summary_en

embedded in teacher education effectively, due to many practical obstacles that should be removed by more consistent policies.

The Erasmus+ Teacher Academies will address these issues, complement other work done in achieving the Education Area, and help transfer the results **to national and regional policy making and eventually to teacher education and support for schools**. They will build on the innovations and effective practice that exists within national teacher education and European cooperation and develop them further. Specific attention will be paid to dissemination and exploitation of effective practice across countries and teacher education providers, and to ensuring feedback and impact also at policy level.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION

The overall objective of this action is to create European partnerships of teacher education and training providers to set up Erasmus+ Teacher Academies that will develop a European and international outlook in teacher education. These Academies will embrace multilingualism and cultural diversity, develop teacher education in line with the EU’s priorities in education policy and contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the European Education Area.

The Erasmus+ Teacher Academies will meet the following objectives:

- Contribute to the improvement of teacher education policies and practices in Europe by creating networks and communities of practice on teacher education that bring together providers of initial teacher education (pre-service education for future teachers) and providers of continuing professional development (in-service), other relevant actors such as teacher association, ministries and stakeholders to develop and test strategies and programmes for professional learning that is effective, accessible and transferable to other contexts.
- Enhance the **European dimension** and internationalisation of teacher education through innovative and practical collaboration with teacher educators and teachers in other European countries and by sharing experiences for the further development of teacher education in Europe. This collaboration will address the key priorities of the European Union such as learning in the digital world, sustainability, equity and inclusion, also by offering teachers courses, modules and other learning opportunities on these topics.
- Develop and test jointly different models of **mobility (virtual, physical and blended)** in initial teacher education and as part of teachers’ continuous professional development in order to enhance the quality and number of mobility as well as to make mobility an integral part of teacher education provision in Europe.
- Develop **sustainable collaboration** between teacher education providers with an impact to the quality of teacher education in Europe and with a view to inform teacher education policies at European and national levels.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to be eligible for an Erasmus+ grant, project proposals for Erasmus+ Teacher Academies must comply with the following criteria:

<p>Who can apply?</p>	<p>Any nationally recognised organisation (with the features of a participating organisation as listed below) established in a Programme Country can be the applicant. This organisation applies on behalf of all participating organisations involved in the project.</p>
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<p>What types of organisations are eligible to participate in the project?</p>	<p>The following organisations, established in Programme countries (see section "Eligible Countries" in Part A of this Guide) can be involved as full partners or associated partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher Education Institutions (colleges, institutes, universities providing initial teacher education and/or continuing professional development) for teachers at ISCED level 1-3, including VET teachers; ▪ Ministries or similar public bodies responsible for school education policies; ▪ Public (local, regional or national) and private bodies responsible for developing policies and offer for teacher education as well as defining standards for teachers' qualifications; ▪ Teacher associations or other nationally recognised providers of teacher education and continuous professional development; ▪ Authorities responsible for education and training of teachers and supervision of their continuous professional development and qualifications; ▪ Schools working with teacher education providers to allow for practical training as part of teacher education; ▪ Other schools (from primary schools to initial VET) or other organisations (e.g. NGOs, teacher associations) relevant for the project.
<p>Number and profile of participating organisations</p>	<p>An Erasmus+ Teacher Academy must include at least 3 full partners from a minimum of 3 Programme countries (including at least 2 EU Member States) involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two nationally recognised providers of initial teacher education from 2 different Programme countries, and • At least one nationally recognised provider of continuing professional development (in-service training) for teachers. <p>Furthermore, the partnerships must also include, as full partner or associated partner, at least one practice/training school.</p> <p>The partnership may also include, as full partners or associated partners, other organisations with relevant expertise in teacher education and/or bodies defining standards, qualifications or quality assurance for teacher education.</p>
<p>Venue of the activities</p>	<p>All the activities of Erasmus+ Teacher Academies must take place in Programme countries.</p>
<p>Duration of the project</p>	<p>3 years</p>
<p>Where to apply?</p>	<p>To the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Call ID: ERASMUS-EDU-2021-PEX-TEACH-ACA</p>
<p>When to apply?</p>	<p>Applicants have to submit their grant application by 7 September at 17:00:00 (Brussels time).</p>

Applicant organisations will be assessed against the relevant exclusion and selection criteria. For more information please consult Part C of this Guide.

SETTING UP A PROJECT

Each Erasmus+ Teacher Academy shall implement a coherent and comprehensive set of activities, such as:

- Collaborate and establish **networks and communities of practice** with teacher education providers, teacher associations, public organisations involved in teacher education and other relevant actors to create innovative strategies and programmes for initial and continuous professional development for teachers and schools.
- Develop and deliver joint, innovative and effective **learning modules** on teacher education and for teacher competences on challenging and/or new pedagogical matters of common concern. They shall address the

distinct needs of **student teachers** (as part of their initial education) **and serving teachers** (as part of continuous professional development).

- **Develop joint learning offer with a strong European dimension** that includes mobility activities in all its forms, setting up, for instance summer schools, study visits for students and teachers as well as other forms of cross-campus collaboration, both physical and virtual.
- Identify effective ways to remove obstacles of mobility and identify conditions, including practical arrangements and recognition of learning, in order to increase the number and quality of mobility and its inclusion as an integral part of initial and continuous learning offer for teachers.
- Involve schools and in particular **training schools** to experiment and share innovative new ways of teaching (including for distance and blended approaches to teaching and learning).
- Undertake, in line with the objectives of this call, studies, research and/or surveys or collections of effective practices to produce summaries, discussion papers, recommendations etc. to stimulate discussion and to inform policies on teacher education.
- Promote and give preference to the existing Erasmus+ tools, such as **eTwinning and School Education Gateway**, for virtual mobility, collaboration, communication for testing and sharing results.

EXPECTED IMPACT

The development of the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies is expected to **improve the attractiveness** of the teaching profession and to **ensure high-quality initial education and continuous professional development** for teachers, educators and school leaders.

Erasmus+ Teacher Academies are expected to **enhance the European dimension and internationalisation of teacher education** by creating European partnerships of teacher education and training providers. The close collaboration between relevant actors across European borders envisages innovative European cooperation and substantial development of teacher education policies and practices, building upon the existing innovations and effective practices within national teacher education systems and on the joint learning offer organized for participating teachers. This approach is expected to pave the way to make **mobility an integral part of teacher education provision** in Europe, by removing actual obstacles to mobility and by identifying conditions for successful mobility strategies and programmes.

Operating at national and European level, the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies will form strong and sustained partnerships between providers of initial teacher education and continuing professional development. They will provide closer co-operation between teacher education providers, paving the way towards **structural partnerships and joint programmes between institutions**. Erasmus+ Teacher Academies will thereby ensure high quality, effective initial and continuous professional development and achieve results that would be difficult to obtain without knowledge sharing and effective cooperation.

Through the use of various dissemination channels at transnational, national and/or regional levels as well as the deployment of a long-term action plan for the progressive roll-out of project deliverables, projects are expected to engage relevant stakeholders within and outside the participating organisations and ensure a lasting impact also after the project lifetime.

AWARD CRITERIA

<p style="text-align: center;">Relevance of the project</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(maximum score 35 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to policy: the extent to which the proposal establishes and develops a European partnerships of teacher education and training providers to set up Erasmus+ Teacher Academies with innovative learning offer to teachers; • Consistency: the extent to which the proposal is based on an adequate needs analysis; clearly defined and realistic goals, and addresses issues relevant to the participating organisations and to the action; • Innovative approach: the proposal considers state-of-the-art methods and techniques, and leads to innovative results and solutions for its field in general, or for the geographical context in which the project is implemented (e.g. content; outputs produced, working methods applied, organisations and persons involved or targeted); • Cooperation and partnerships: the extent to which the proposal is suitable of realising a strong and on-going relationship at both local, national and transnational levels between providers of initial teacher education (pre-service for future teachers) and providers of continuing professional development (in-service), in which interactions are reciprocal and mutually beneficial; • European added value: the proposal clearly demonstrates the added value at the individual (learner and/or staff), institutional and systemic levels, generated through results that would be difficult to attain by the partners acting without European cooperation; the proposal uses and promotes the existing tools at EU level such as eTwinning and School Education Gateway for collaboration, communication, and for testing and sharing results. • Internationalisation: the proposal demonstrates its contribution to the international dimension of teacher education, including the development of joint models of mobility (virtual, physical and blended) and other learning offer in initial teacher education and teachers' continuous professional development; • Digital skills: the extent to which the proposal foresees activities related to digital skills development (e.g. the design of innovative curricula and teaching methodologies, effective learning modules, etc.); • Green skills: the extent to which the proposal foresees activities (e.g. innovative curricula and teaching methodologies, effective learning modules etc.) linked to European priorities on environmental sustainability and the transition to a circular and greener economy; • Social dimension: the proposal includes a horizontal concern throughout the various actions to address diversity and promote shared values, equality, non-discrimination and social inclusion, including for people with special needs/fewer opportunities and working in multilingual and multicultural contexts; • Gender sensitivity: the extent to which the proposal addresses gender equality and helps to find solutions to effectively foster gender sensitive teaching in schools.
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<p>Quality of the project design and implementation</p> <p>(maximum score 25 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence: the overall project design ensures consistency between project objectives, activities and the budget proposed. The proposal presents a coherent and comprehensive set of appropriate activities and services to meet the identified needs and lead to the expected results; • Methodology: the quality and feasibility of the methodology proposed and its appropriateness for producing the expected results; • Structure: the clarity, completeness and quality of the work programme, including appropriate phases for preparation, implementation, monitoring, exploitation, evaluation and dissemination; • Management: solid management arrangements are foreseen. Timelines, organisation, tasks and responsibilities are well defined and realistic. The proposal allocates appropriate resources to each activity; • Budget: the budget provides for appropriate resources necessary for success, it is neither overestimated nor underestimated; • Risk management: Challenges/risks of the project are clearly identified and mitigating actions properly addressed; • Quality Assurance: control measures (continuous quality evaluation, peer reviews, benchmarking activities, etc.) are adequately put in place; • Monitoring tools: indicators are set to ensure that the project implementation is of high quality and cost-efficient.
<p>Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements</p> <p>(maximum score 20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Configuration: the project involves an appropriate mix of complementary participating organisations with the necessary profile, competences, experience and expertise to successfully deliver all aspects of the project. • Upward convergence: the extent to which the partnership establishes networks and communities of practice with teacher education providers, public authorities involved in teacher education and other relevant actors, and allows for an effective exchange of expertise and knowledge among those partners; • Geographical dimension: the extent to which the partnership includes relevant partners from different geographical areas, as well as the extent to which the applicant has justified the geographical composition of the partnership and demonstrated its relevance to the achievement of the objectives of the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies; as well as the extent to which the partnership includes a wide and appropriate range of relevant actors at local and regional levels; • Virtual collaboration and mobility: the extent to which the cooperation is linked to existing Erasmus+ tools, such as eTwinning and School Education Gateway • Commitment: the distribution of responsibilities and tasks is clear, appropriate, and demonstrates the commitment and active contribution of all participating organisations in relation to their specific expertise and capacity; • Tasks: the coordinator shows high quality management, ability to coordinate transnational networks and leadership in complex environment; individual tasks are allocated on the basis of the specific know-how of each partner; • Collaboration: an effective mechanism is proposed to ensure a good coordination, decision-making and communication between the participating organisations, participants and any other relevant stakeholder.

<p>Impact</p> <p>(maximum score 20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation: the proposal demonstrates how the outcomes of the project will be used by the partners and other stakeholders. It provides means to measure exploitation within project lifetime and after; • Dissemination: the proposal provides a clear plan, during the project lifetime and after the project’s termination, for the dissemination of results, and includes appropriate targets, activities, relevant timing, tools and channels to ensure that the results and benefits will be spread effectively to stakeholders, policy makers, teacher education providers, public authorities etc. within and after the project’s lifetime; the proposal also indicates which partners will be responsible for dissemination and demonstrates the relevant experience that they have in dissemination activities; the proposal sets out the means used for dissemination, with preference to the Erasmus+ tools such as eTwinning and School Education Gateway. • Impact: the proposal demonstrates the potential impact of the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On participants and participating organisations, during and after the project lifetime; • Outside the organisations and individuals directly participating in the project, at local, regional, national and/or European levels. <p>The proposal includes measures as well as targets and indicators to monitor progress and assess the expected impact (short- and long-term);</p> • Sustainability and continuation: the proposal explains how the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies will be rolled out and further developed. The proposal includes the design of a long-term action plan for the progressive roll-out of project deliverables after the project has finished. This plan shall be based on sustained partnerships between providers of initial teacher education (pre-service for future teachers) and providers of continuing professional development (in-service). It should include the identification of appropriate governance structures, as well as plans for scalability and financial sustainability, including the identification of financial resources (European, national and private) to ensure that the results and benefits achieved will have a long-term sustainability.
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To be considered for funding, applications must score at least 60 points (out of 100 points in total), also taking into account the necessary minimum pass score for each of the four award criteria: minimum 18 points for the “relevance of the project” category; 13 points for “quality of the project design and implementation” and 11 points for the categories of “quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements” and “impact”. In ex aequo cases, priority will be given to highest scores for "relevance of the project" and then “impact”.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING RULES?

The EU grant will be a contribution to the actual costs incurred by the project (real costs funding model). Only eligible costs and those costs that the beneficiary has actually incurred in the implementation of the project (not the budgeted costs).

The maximum EU grant per project is 1.5 million euros

In addition,

- The detailed grant parameters will be fixed in the Grant Agreement.
- The financial contribution from the EU cannot exceed 80% of the total eligible costs. .
- The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

More details are described in the model Grant Agreement available in the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP).