Call: Implementation of Joint Programmes

The Arqus European Alliance is pleased to invite all academics interested in developing a Joint Master or Joint Bachelor programme to submit a project proposal.

1. Introduction

The Arqus European University Alliance brings together nine longstanding and excellent research universities. One of the main objectives within the Alliance is to enhance the academic offer at the partner universities, both local and joint, to ensure that students develop global competences through the incorporation of flexible and innovative learning opportunities.

For this reason, the Arqus European University Alliance strongly encourages the development of **new Joint Programmes at Bachelor and Master level** based on the results of the previous project period and on proposals from partner universities.

In this context, a Joint Programme (JP) is understood as a study programme which is jointly developed and offered by at least two Arqus Partner institutions, including a strong integration of both curriculum and organisation at the participating partner institutions. Joint Programmes lead to double, multiple or joint diplomas.[1]

2. Objectives of the action

Joint Programmes which are offered as a cooperative result of Arqus University Alliance partner universities aim to bring together both international and local students in an international classroom. This not only provides graduates with an education with a strong international component and recognition, but also offers students the opportunity to specialise in complementary focus areas. Students have the opportunity to gain academic and cultural experience abroad, expand their language skills and develop new perspectives and boost their chances in an increasingly global job market.

For participating universities, this opens up opportunities for increased cooperation in teaching and research and the possibility of specialisation and expansion of the respective research area. Joint Programmes create the opportunity to bring together expertise of all participating universities in order to offer unique programmes generated from academic complementarity which are highly attractive to excellent students.

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[1] Cf. https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/individuals/students/erasmus-mundus-joint-master-degrees_en

3. Expected impact

- Foster academic excellence and innovation through jointly designed curriculum
- Sharing academic strength and unique profile to benefit from complementarity and foster excellence
- Expand single institution academic offer integrating complementary contents delivered by other institution(s)
- Increase the overall attractiveness and quality of involved institutions educational offer and of the Arqus Alliance
- Increase student and staff intercultural awareness through structured mobility – Internationalisation at home/ international classroom
- Facilitate further cooperation in research via newly gained in-depth knowledge
- Heighten international visibility and reputation
- Reinforce international cooperation
- Improve talented student recruitment
- Contribute to the promotion of employability on the international labour market through an enriched curriculum and an international degree

4. How to set up a project

By the end of the funding period, the selected Arqus Joint Programmes are expected to **include the following components**:

1) Jointly designed curriculum following the Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes by at least 2 degree awarding higher education partner institutions of the Arqus University Alliance. However, priority will be given to multilateral consortia;
2) Jointly developed qualification profile and learning outcomes;
3) Issuing of a joint, double or multiple degree (the Arqus Alliance strongly recommends and prioritise the issuing of a joint degree in terms of a joint diploma) accompanied by a jointly designed and issued Diploma Supplement based on the template developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO.
4) Flexible and embedded student mobility arrangements (physical and/or virtual mobility components of at least 30 ECTS credits/1 semester for MA and 60 ECTS credits/2 semester for BA studies) for students;
5) Flexible and embedded staff mobility arrangements;
6) Provisions for joint administrative and financial management of the consortium;
7) Compliance with the Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
8) Joint promotion & dissemination mechanism;
9) Joint policy on student selection and admission, fee policy, monitoring and evaluation, examination and services (e.g., language courses);
10) Joint student support.

5. Participating Organisations and Consortium Composition

All Arqus partner universities are encouraged to participate in the joint programmes.

In order to be eligible, the Consortium must include **at least 2 degree awarding higher education partner institutions of the Arqus University Alliance**. Priority will be given to multilateral consortia.

In case non-Arqus degree awarding partners are involved, their added value to the programme should be explained in the project proposal. The number of non-Arqus degree awarding partners should not exceed the number of Arqus partners.

6.   Selection Criteria

The following criteria are applied for the selection of projects:

a.   **Relevance (0-50 points)**

- Rationale and strategic interest (10 points)
- Expected Impact and ambition (10 points)
- Link to Arqus priorities (20 points)
- Institutional support (10 points)

b.   **Cooperation and implementation (0-50 points)**

- Proposed consortium setup (20 points)
- Availability of teams of academics and programme developers to participate in the design and setting up of each programme (10 points)
- Proposed schedule for the implementation (10 points)
- Budget and Sustainability plan[2] (10 points)

7.   Arqus priorities:

Academic field: priority will be given to the project proposals for interdisciplinary Joint Programmes on Bachelor and Master level covering the Arqus focus areas:

- Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability
- Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence

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[2] A sustainability plan should already be discussed during the implementation process of each Joint Programme and should then be considered in the cooperation agreement. Participating universities in the JP consortia are responsible to ensure that sufficient financial and human resources are available for the management of the programme with the start of the individual programmes - this concerns in particular the tuition fee policy and additional personnel resources for the coordination and the monitoring of the programme as well as financial means for meetings, teaching staff and student mobility.

- European Identity and Heritage

Joint Programme proposals in other subject/research areas will be taken into consideration if the implementation and purpose are well justified and elaborated in the proposal.

Priority will be given to project proposals for interdisciplinary Joint Programmes on Bachelor and Master level covering

- Complementary strengths of Arqus universities, allowing the alliance to offer more than each university alone
- Minority programmes with unique profile allowing the alliance jointly to protect endangered programmes by joining efforts
- Innovative approaches of learning & teaching methodology
- Innovative approaches to programme design (e.g., interdisciplinarity, Liberal Arts approaches, challenge-based approaches, team teaching, hybrid offer)
- Synergies between educational offer and research strengths

Curricular enriching elements: **up to 10 extra points** will be given to project proposals that foresee one or more of the following components:

1) Joint courses (e.g. joint delivery of programme units, cross-institution team teaching)
2) Virtual exchange
3) Blended mobility
4) Summer/winter schools
5) Co-supervision of thesis or dissertation
6) Support of multilingualism beyond the language of instruction
7) Connection with industrial actors / professional stakeholders
8) Internship opportunities
9) Alumni activities/tracking of graduates
10) Additional worldwide partners stressing global outreach
11) Additional mobility windows

Consortium composition: priority will be given to multilateral consortia including more than 2 Higher Education Institutions. Programmes are encouraged to involve as many Arqus partner universities as possible.

8. Support of the Arqus Alliance

To provide the best possible support for the often-complex implementation process, the Alliance offers the following:

a. Financial support:

3 Joint Programmes at Bachelor level and **3 Joint Programmes at Master level** will be funded with a **lump sum of € 30,000** each which may be used for organisational support of the implementation.

Funding may cover coordination, training activities, travel costs for coordination meetings, translation expenses, accreditation costs.

The application must include a budget plan and clear cost breakdown showing how the partnership intends to use the funds and how they are to be distributed within the consortium.

Please include a detailed cost estimation for external accreditation costs if foreseen.

b. Information and expertise:

The team of Arqus Work Package 6 (Innovative Learning Pathways) has designed a series of training courses at different levels and on different topics relevant for the design and implementation of joint programmes. The first three trainings are designed as introductory modules that can be attended separately or consecutively, are open to academic and administrative staff on departmental and central level and cover the following topics:
- Joint Programmes, A very initial introduction to the why and who
- Joint Programmes: Preparing the grounds for a successful programme implementation
- Joint Programmes: Preparing relevant documents

In addition, the Arqus Alliance and the Work Package 6 members will offer continuous support by providing **individual counselling** as well as best practice examples and individual advice on concept design, preparation, development and implementation.

9. Application

The Arqus European University Alliance invites all interested parties to submit project proposals by filling in the **online application form**.

Applications should be submitted by the coordinating academic staff member/university, who will then be coordinating the process of the joint programme development and who will be responsible for the project implementation and monitoring of funds.

Application period: February 15, 2024 – May 31, 2024

Project period: June 2024 – September 2026

The newly implemented joint programmes should start by the winter semester 2026 at the latest.

10. Selection Procedure and implementation of the action

a. Selection and Grant notification

Work package (WP) 6 – Innovative Learning Pathways will collect, screen and rank all project proposals according to the selection criteria. The Action Line Education Board will act as selection committee and will select 3 project proposals at Bachelor level and 3 project proposals at Master level for funding. The selection decision will then be ratified by the Executive Council.

The selected projects will then be notified by the team of Work Package 6 as soon as possible.

The proposals which are eligible but not selected for funding will also be offered technical assistance and guidance by the expert team of WP 6. Project leaders and partners are invited to get in contact with the relevant contact person at the individual Arqus partner university to check other opportunities for financial support.

b. Plan for the implementation of the action:

1) Setting up the partnership and working groups, who will develop and implement the joint programmes. Start of the development process of the joint programmes on different levels (BA & MA);
2) Organisation of cooperation meetings and the workshops for staff members and working groups (topics: implementation of joint programmes - what to consider, legal regulations, programme components for Arqus label, JP agreement);
3) Online staff training on joint programme implementation
4) Preparation of documents (curriculum, learning outcomes, cooperation agreement);
5) Providing programme documentation for QA agencies for their evaluation and accreditation according to the European Approach (if planned);
6) Internal approval procedures at partner universities at appropriate stages in the process, as established by internal regulations and calendars.
7) Start of programmes.

11.   Contact information:

In case of any questions related to this call for interest and related to the development and implementation of joint programmes, please contact the local coordinators of each university:

- **University of Granada:**

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- **Maynooth University**

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- **University of Minho:**

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- **University of Wroclaw:**

Małgorzata Dowlaszewicz, Faculty of Philology

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12.   Useful information

- Joint Programme Trainings
- Arqus Guidelines for Joint Programme implementation prepared by AL 3.5 in Arqus I
- Standards and Guidelines for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes
- Current version of the criteria for the European Degree (Label)
- Presentation Joint Programme Training Module 1
- Presentation Joint Programme Training Module 2
- Arqus Example: MA Programme in European Studies
- Arqus Example: MA Programme in International Cybersecurity and Cyberintelligence
- Arqus Example: Arqus Multiple Master's Degree Programme in Translation
- Word Document of the application form