



MERGING VOICES

INTERNATIONAL CREDIT MOBILITY

Guidelines for Applicants



UNIVERSIDADE
NOVA
DE LISBOA

U. PORTO



UNIVERSIDADE DO ALGARVE



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author. The Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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The Erasmus+ Programme

The Erasmus+ programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernizing Education, Training, and Youth work. The seven year programme will have a budget of €14.7 billion; a 40% increase compared to current spending levels, reflecting the EU's commitment to investing in these areas.

Erasmus+ provides opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad.

Erasmus+ supports transnational partnerships among Education, Training, and Youth institutions and organizations to foster cooperation and bridge the worlds of Education and work in order to tackle the skills gaps we are facing in Europe.

It also supports national efforts to modernize Education, Training, and Youth systems. In the field of Sport, there will be support for grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as combating match-fixing, doping, violence and racism.

Erasmus+ brings together seven existing EU programmes in the fields of Education, Training, and Youth; it will for the first time provide support for Sport. As an integrated programme, Erasmus+ offers more opportunities for cooperation across the Education, Training, Youth, and Sport sectors and is easier to access than its predecessors, with simplified funding rules.

The Merging Voices Partnership

The MERGING VOICES Consortium (MV) is based on institutional trust, founded on the excellent cooperation links developed among its partners during the last years. The MV is built on a strong cooperation, connecting Portugal's North and South and bringing together some of the best practices that our Country has to offer. The sharing of common ideas and priorities for international development coined the decision to present this new consortium.

The Portuguese Higher Education Institutions that joined together to form this consortium are:

Universidade Nova de Lisboa	UNL	Coordinator
Universidade do Algarve	UAlg	Partner
Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro	UTAD	Partner
Universidade do Porto	UPORTO	Partner

In the process of reinforcing the international visibility of the institutions, mobility flows play a decisive role. Consequently, mobility is one of the Universities' top priorities in terms of internationalization strategy. Having recognized it, the MV is prepared to provide new opportunities to their students, teachers and staff. By doing it, Universities are fulfilling their basic missions: fostering the mutual enrichment, the transfer of know-how



and best practices, as well as being driving forces of knowledge and contributing to the development of our society, economy and culture.

Through a total of 100 scholarships, the MV will support mobility of students, academic and administrative staff in Europe and in 12 Partner Countries: Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Macao, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam. The main goals of the MV are to:

1. reinforce the (inter)national cooperation of the involved institutions, thus contributing to the fulfilment of the HEIs' mission;
2. provide students with new mobility opportunities that may contribute to their academic growth, thus allowing them to benefit from an international experience beyond the "standard destinations";
3. improve students' knowledge and enhancing their capacities and skills, thus positively contributing to their employability in the near future;
4. bring more awareness to the staff (academic and administrative) on the importance of the international cooperation beyond the European borders so as to allow a closer and better understanding of the partner institutions.



General Information on the Project

1. Partnership

European Institutions (Merging Voices Consortium)

	Name	Country
UNL	<u>Universidade Nova de Lisboa</u> Coordinating Institution	Portugal
UTAD	<u>Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro</u>	Portugal
UAig	<u>Universidade do Algarve</u>	Portugal
UPORTO	<u>Universidade do Porto</u>	Portugal

Partner Institutions

	Name	Country
JCU	<u>James Cook University</u>	Australia
MONASH	<u>Monash University</u>	Australia
CANBERRA	<u>University of Canberra</u>	Australia
UNSW	<u>UNSW Australia</u>	Australia
CSU	<u>Central South University</u>	China
HUNNU	<u>Hunan Normal University</u>	China
LZU	<u>Lanzhou University</u>	China
SHOU	<u>Shanghai Ocean University</u>	China
AMRITA	<u>Amrita University</u>	India
BAMU	<u>Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University</u>	India
NITW	<u>National Institute of Technology, Warangal</u>	India
UOHYD	<u>University of Hyderabad</u>	India



	Name	Country
OIA	<u>Hokkaido University</u>	Japan
NAGASAKI-U	<u>Nagasaki University</u>	Japan
U-TOKYO	<u>University of Tokyo</u>	Japan
SOLBRIDGE	<u>SolBridge International School of Business</u>	Korea, Republic of
UMAC	<u>University of Macau</u>	Macao
KATHMANDU	<u>Kathmandu University</u>	Nepal
TRIBHUVAN	<u>Tribhuvan University</u>	Nepal
CUST	<u>Capital University of Science and Technology</u>	Pakistan
COMSATS	<u>COMSATS Institute of Information Technology , Lahore</u>	Pakistan
ATENEO	<u>Ateneo de Manila University</u>	Philippines
KLN	<u>University of Kelaniya</u>	Sri Lanka
BUU	<u>Burapha University</u>	Thailand
KASETSART	<u>Kasetsart University</u>	Thailand
MAHIDOL	<u>Mahidol University</u>	Thailand
HUST	<u>Hanoi University of Science and Technology</u>	Vietnam
HCMUT	<u>Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology</u>	Vietnam
HUEUNI	<u>Hue University</u>	Vietnam



2. General eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible for an Erasmus + scholarship under this project, **you must be a student/staff from an Institution of the Consortium or from a Partner Institution.**

The Merging Voices project offers grants for exchange mobility. As so, all the students must be registered in a HEI and enrolled in studies leading to a recognized degree or another recognized tertiary level qualification.

For **Undergraduate studies:**

- must be enrolled at least in the second year of higher education studies in order to be eligible to undertake an exchange period abroad.

For **Master studies:**

- must have completed at least one semester at the home institution before undertaking an exchange period.

For **Doctorate studies:**

- must have completed at least one year of studies and have already a research project.

For **academic and administrative staff:**

- must work at a partner institution of the project in order to be eligible to apply for a grant.

All applicants must receive the formal support of their home institution, through the issuing of a support letter (this document is mandatory at the application stage).

Erasmus+ enables students to study abroad more than once as Erasmus+ students as long as the minimum duration for each activity and a total maximum of 12 months per study cycle is respected.

After selection, the candidates approved to the Merging Voices (MV) scholarship should also fulfill the admission criteria of each host institution.

3. Types and duration of the scholarships

The MV project supports 100 SCHOLARSHIPS

Types of mobility available	Durations available
Undergraduate	3 to 6 months
Master	3 to 6 months
Doctorate	3 to 6 months
Academic and Administrative Staff	7 days



In **Table A** you will find the **available scholarships** depending on the Country you belong to:

COUNTRY	HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	IN Mobility (to MV)			OUT Mobility (from MV)		
		Students	Professors	Admin. Staff	Students	Professors	Admin. Staff
Australia	TOTAL: 14	3	3	1	3	1	3
	Monash University						
	James Cook University						
	University of New South Wales						
	University of Canberra						
China	TOTAL: 12	2	2	2		2	4
	Lanzhou University						
	Hunan Normal University						
	Central South University						
	Shanghai Ocean University						
India	TOTAL: 6	2	1	1		1	1
	National Institute of Technology, Warangal						
	University of Hyderabad						
	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University						
	Amrita University						
Japan	TOTAL: 14	3	3	1	3	1	3
	Nagasaki University						
	University of Tokyo						
	Hokkaido University						
Korea	TOTAL: 6	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Solbridge International School of Business						



Macao	TOTAL: 6	1	1	1	1	1	1
	University of Macau						
Nepal	TOTAL: 12	4	2	2			4
	Tribhuvan University						
	Kathmandu University						
Pakistan	TOTAL: 4		2			2	
	COMSATS Institute of Information Technology , Lahore						
	Capital University of Science and Technology						
Philippines	TOTAL: 4		1	1		1	1
	Ateneo de Manila University						
Sri Lanka	TOTAL: 4		1	1		1	1
	University of Kelaniya						
Thailand	TOTAL: 10	2	2	2		2	2
	Kasetsart University						
	Burapha University						
	Mahidol University						
Vietnam	TOTAL: 8	4	1	1		1	1
	Hanoi University of Science and Technology						
	Hue University						
	Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology						
TOTAL: 100		22	20	14	8	14	22



4. Financial support

The MV project provides the following financial support to the grant holders:

- Monthly allowance (the amount per month will depend on the mobility's direction);
- Contribution for travel (defined by the distance between the grant holder's home city and the host city)

Monthly allowance:

The European Commission has defined the following amounts:

Students exchange

Origin	Monthly allowance
MV's grantees	650 EUR/month
Partner Institutions' grantees	800 EUR/month

Staff exchange (Academic and Administrative Staff – STA)

Amount per diem:

- From the MV's to the partner institutions: 160 EUR
- From the partner institutions to the MV: 120 EUR

Contribution for travel (based on the distance)

Travel distance*	Amoun
Between 100 and 499 km	180 EUR per participant
Between 500 and 1999 km	275 EUR per participant
Between 2000 and 2999 km	360 EUR per participant
Between 3000 and 3999 km	530 EUR per participant
Between 4000 and 7999 km	820 EUR per participant
8000 km or more	1100 EUR per participant

*To check your travel distance please access here: http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/distance_en.htm

The financial support allocated to the "travel distance" is the maximum allowed by the Erasmus+ Programme and is intended to contribute to the round trip back between the home and host institutions. In the event that the assigned value is insufficient to pay for the desired trip, the scholarship holder must find other sources of funding.

The Merging Voices will transfer the amount corresponding to the travel distance to the scholarship holders' bank account and he/she is responsible to buy his/her own flight ticket, always respecting the dates of exchange established.



Application to the Project

1. Preparing the application

In the phase of preparing the application, the candidate should follow the subsequent steps:

1. Verify the **eligibility criteria** previously indicated;

When applying to this project, it is crucial to:

- Ensure that you master the language of tuition or that the host institution provides support for applicants without the needed language skills for the country/course;
- Ensure that you have the necessary academic background in terms of study areas to apply to the selected activity;
- Be aware of the real cost of living at each partner institution and analyze it considering the monthly amount of the scholarship, in case of selection;
- Consider the need to adapt to different cultural realities and also to different climate conditions, in case of selection.
- Consider the need to have some financial support for the first weeks, in case of selection.

2. Read attentively the **Guidelines for Applicants**;

3. Collect all necessary information and documents to fill in the Application form



Several documents are **mandatory**. If not uploaded in the application form, the application cannot be submitted. In case of unreadable documents the application will be considered invalid and will not be evaluated.

4. Ensure that the **project proposal is objective and specific** concerning its methodology and viability, impact and benefit, as well as the capacity of attaining the project's purposes within the timeframe established by the duration of the scholarship. The lack of detailed information or objectivity will reduce the chances of success during the process of application's evaluation;

5. Make sure that the **motivation** presented in the application concerning the mobility's benefits and expected outcomes is **clear** and reflects **each one** of the options selected (maximum of 3 host Universities);

6. Once all the information is gathered and compiled in a learning/teaching/training project, the applicant should create a log in and password to be granted access to the **Application Form** available on the project's website (<http://mergingvoices.unl.pt/>).



2. Online submission

To fill in the Application Form, the following steps must be considered:

1. The applicants should have a valid e-mail address and an internet connection.
2. As a way to access the form, the applicants should create a new login in the “**Apply**” section, selecting the **type of scholarship** they want to apply to (ex: undergraduate mobility).
3. The form will open with a set of questions regarding general eligibility criteria.



Only online applications are considered eligible.

4. The applicants must answer truthfully to all questions so as to ensure the fulfilment to all general eligibility criteria. In case one eligibility criteria is not fulfilled, the system will immediately inform the applicant through the following message: “Please verify the eligibility criteria.”
5. The applicants should then fill in the online Application Form available on the project’s website. The system will save a draft of the application every time the “**Save**” button is pressed, allowing it to be revised, edited and completed.
6. The applicants should carefully prepare and revise the application before pressing the “**Submit**” button.



After selecting the “Submit” button, it is not possible to make any additional change to the already submitted proposal. Accordingly, if you would like to make any valid changes, you must create a new register and fill in another application form.

The Application Form can be filled in only in English, and all the documents must be written in English and submitted online.

The **deadline for the submission of the online applications for the Call is indicated on the webpage of the project** (<http://mergingvoices.unl.pt/>) and has as reference the Central European Time (CET). The Coordination Office will do everything possible to avoid system failures, but cannot assume any responsibility if it is not possible to submit the application in the very last minutes before the deadline. Applicants must avoid the last minute applications so as to guarantee there will be no problems in the submission of the application form. It is reminded to all candidates that **applications sent by mail, fax or e-mail will not be accepted.**

By pressing the “Submit” button, the application is closed and sent to the Coordination Office, which gives it a code. A digital certificate that contains the date and hour of the submission is issued and sent to the applicant as well as a full copy of the application. **This digital certificate does not constitute a confirmation of eligibility or of selection**, it just confirms the submission of the application.

Please include a **valid e-mail address** in your application for communication purposes. Do not include in the application form the e-mail of another colleague or friend that is also applying as the communication of results will be done exclusively by e-mail and this could generate problems in interpreting the selection results.

The applicants should only have **one valid application** at the beginning of the selection procedure. Being so, if the same applicant submits several online forms, the informatics



system will automatically consider the last one as the only valid and will disregard the other applications.

3. Documents to be submitted by the applicants

The applicants should submit in section 10, together with the online application, a digital copy of several documents. In case a document is considered mandatory by the host institution, it must also be included online. If a candidate fails to do so the application will be immediately excluded without any possibility of appeal.

- **Photo** (mandatory for all applicants)
- **Video** (optional)
- **Formal Identity Document** - Must be issued by a national authority otherwise it will not be considered valid and the application will be immediately excluded. In case your country does not issue such document it is mandatory to upload a copy of your passport (mandatory for all applicants)
- **Passport** (optional when a formal identity document has been uploaded)
- **Certificate proving the obtained degree** – Must be issued by a university, dated, signed and stamped, otherwise it will not be considered valid and the application will be immediately excluded. In the case of having achieved more than one academic degree, the uploaded file must contain the scan of all documents (mandatory for Master and Doctorate applications).
- **Transcript of Records** - must be issued by the home university, stating in detail all courses taken and grades obtained. This document must be dated, signed and stamped by the institution, or have an official digital certification, otherwise it will not be considered valid and the application will be immediately excluded. (Mandatory for Undergraduate, Master, Doctorate)
- **Statement of support from the University of origin** - This document must be issued by a professor or by the respective academic department of the applicant. It must be dated, signed and stamped by the home institution, otherwise it will not be considered valid and the application will be immediately excluded. (Mandatory for all applicants)
- **Statement issued by the home institution regarding the applicant's enrollment in the degree course** (Mandatory for Undergraduate, Master, Doctorate)
- **Statement of the partner institution with a brief description of the applicant's main activity** - This document must be dated, signed and stamped by the institution, otherwise it will not be considered valid and the application will be immediately excluded. (Mandatory for Academic and Administrative Staff)
- **Certificate of language skills** - In cases when institutions do not require it, it is optional.
- **Pre-acceptance from host** - Only applicable to Portuguese/European candidates. A pdf version of e-mails exchanged with the host institution will also be accepted. Pre-acceptance letter from the host institution. After selection, the candidates approved to the Merging Voices scholarship should also fulfill the admission criteria of each host institution. (optional)
- **Proposed Study Plan** - (Mandatory for Undergraduate, Master, Doctorate)



- Document that specifically proves your physical disability - For example: declaration of honor from a doctor; recent medical exam; etc. In case you fail to do so we will not consider you as a candidate with a physical disability. (Optional)
- **Document that specifically proves your vulnerable socio-economic situation** - This document must be dated, signed and stamped by the issuing entity. In case you fail to do so the Merging Voices will not consider you as a candidate in particularly vulnerable socio-economic situation. (Optional)
- **Document that specifically proves your social/political vulnerable situation** - This document must be issued by a recognized authority and must also be dated, signed and stamped by the issuing entity. (Optional)
- **Other documents relevant for the application**

All documents abovementioned must be uploaded to the Application Form. It is important to highlight the fact that incomplete applications or with blank or unreadable documents will not be considered eligible and will immediately be disregarded.

In case you want to attach more than one document in the same field (ex: support letter of the home institution), the attached file should include the scanning of all documents, up to maximum of 5 MB. **Due to limitations in the webserver that hosts this website, the uploaded documents must have a maximum size of 5 MB.**

How to upload a document?

- You should follow the following steps for each of the required documents
- Click in "Browse" and select the document
- Click in "Upload"
- After uploading all the documents you just need to click in "Back to the menu" and the section will become green (✓). GUI-PDF-TK and PDFSAM are useful free software for handling PDF documents. You can download it from the application form.
- You must start by putting in a folder all PDF documents you want to merge. Then you should use the "Join" command to merge them all in a new single PDF document. Afterwards you can upload the new document to the correspondent section.

4. Evaluation and selection of applicants

All submitted applications will be included as read-only documents in a protected database. All the legal requisites concerning the manipulation of personal data will be observed and it will always be kept confidentiality of the information submitted online. The database will only be accessed and revised by authorized persons in the home and host institutions who have an access code.

MV selection procedures

1. Application: Once you have checked that you are eligible for a scholarship and know what programme type, mobility level and field of study you want to apply to and the documents that are requested for each level of mobility and target group, fill in the online application form, upload all necessary documents and close your application.



Attention: When filling in the online application, you may select up to three different host institutions, in order of preference. You must also respect the language requirements and some other additional criteria defined by each host institution. However, depending on the number of applications received, the institutions selected as 2nd and 3rd options may decide not to evaluate applications.

2. Validation by the home university: After the deadline, your application will be validated by your home university regarding the eligibility criteria such as language proficiency, mandatory documents, etc. If your application was classified as not eligible, you will be informed via email.
3. Grading by both host and home universities. If your application is classified as not admissible, you will be informed via email.
4. Selection: The Selection Committee will meet and do the final selection of the scholarships following the criteria of academic merit taking into account also cross-cutting requirements such as a balanced scholarship distribution among the partner universities, gender-balance and real participation of disadvantaged people. If your application was not selected for a scholarship or included in the reserve list, you will be informed about the reasons and have at least one week to appeal against this decision of the Selection Committee.
5. Confirmation by home and host universities: The final selection result will be notified to the host and home universities who will confirm the list of selected applicants.
6. Notification of the award decision: All selected candidates will be informed about the award decision by e-mail. Selected candidates will not have more than seven days to accept or reject the offered scholarship. Candidates within the reserve list may be notified if the selected candidates refuse or drop out of their scholarships.
7. Scholarship contract: All selected candidates will have to sign a scholarship contract specifying their rights and obligations regarding the grant. Afterwards, the host universities will start the admission procedures for their future grantees and send the Invitation Letters required for the visa application (if needed).
8. Latest ending dates: All mobilities must end until July 2018.



Please note that in case a selected applicant is afterwards identified as not eligible, (s)he will have to reimburse entirely the costs incurred by the partnership with the mobility flow until that moment (scholarship, travel, etc).

Appeals

All applicants that do not agree with the selection results will be granted the possibility to submit an appeal to the coordinating institution. Further details on the appeals procedure will be given later in the e-mail to be sent to all applicants together with the selection results.



Implementation of the Mobility

1. Obligations of the coordination and the scholarship holders' home and host institutions

CONTRIBUTION FOR TRAVEL –The Merging Voices will transfer the amount corresponding to the travel distance to the scholarship holders' bank account and he/she is responsible to buy his/her own flight ticket, always respecting the dates of exchange established.

GRANTS – A scholarship contract that defines all the conditions, benefits and responsibilities related with the project implementation as well as the schedule of payments covered by the scholarships will be signed by the MV and the scholarship holder. Only after this document is signed it will be possible to transfer the scholarship on a monthly basis.

RECOGNITION – It is mandatory that, in the cases of students' exchange, all partner institutions consider the study period undertaken abroad as an integral part of the study/research programme developed in the home institution. The home Higher Education Institution of the scholarship holder must guarantee the full academic recognition (including exams and other forms of evaluation) of the study/research period undertaken at the host institution, through the signature of the Learning Agreement, as long as the student has obtained a passing grade. Students must assure that the study/research plan is discussed with the responsible professor before the departure to the host institution and that all the necessary documents for the validation (recognition) process are provided in due time to the home institution.

2. Obligations of the scholarship holder:

The Coordinating Institution has the right to **suspend** the payment of the scholarship if:

- the scholarship holder withdraws from the project in case of force majeure;
- the scholarship holder does not comply with the internal regulations of the host Institution;
- the scholarship holder does not comply with the internal regulations set by the coordination;
- the scholarship holder leaves the host institution;
- the scholarship holder doesn't fulfil the requirements of his study/work program.

Signing both the **Statement of Scholarship Acceptance** and the **Scholarship Contract** means that:

- The scholarship holder may not accept, during the period of the current MV scholarship, any other mobility scholarship awarded by the European Union.
- The scholarship holder has the obligation to inform the Coordinating Institution about any change regarding the study/research/work period abroad, namely the learning agreement or work/research program and the duration of stay at the host Institution. Should this happen, a new Learning Agreement/Work programme must be signed.



- It is mandatory the participation in all classes that the grantees are enrolled in. Any absence must be duly justified to the professor responsible for the classes and C/c to the MV team through a suitable document (e.g. Medical statement).
- Scholarship holders are compelled to report (by e-mail) to the Coordinating Institution any difficulties experienced during the exchange, such as: Language barriers; Integration with class mates; Communicating with Professors; Difficulty in getting study materials; Health insurance; Accommodation; etc.
- At the end of the exchange period, all scholarship holders will receive a Transcript of Records detailing the achieved results. All students must obtain a positive mark in all the subjects/activities contemplated in their study programme. In case this criterion is not fulfilled, the MV will consult the European Commission and the Legal Department in order to identify the procedures to be followed that may result in the return of the scholarship. The academic and administrative staff must comply with the programme. Failing to do so may result in the return of the scholarship.

Preferably all students must start their exchange period by February 2017. However in duly justified cases the date can be postponed for the following semester.

The academic and administrative staff exchanges can start at any moment upon the selection of applicants is published and whenever all the mandatory documents (work programme, visa if applicable, travel, and insurance) are duly taken care of.



Information and support

All the information related with the project's implementation can be consulted on the **official website**: <http://mergingvoices.unl.pt/>

Address and contact of the **Coordination Office**:

Merging Voices Project

International Relations Office

Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Campus de Campolide

1099-085 Lisboa

Portugal

Phone number: +351 210496451

E-mail: international@unl.pt

All partner institutions have nominated a contact person responsible for assisting and counselling potential applicants of their institutions. The official contacts of each institution can be accessed on the MV website, in the **Contacts** section.

It is strongly recommended to regularly consult the **e-mail address** indicated in the application form, as this will be the **only means of communication between the applicant and the coordination**.

The Merging Voices is looking forward to receive your application.

GOOD LUCK!