

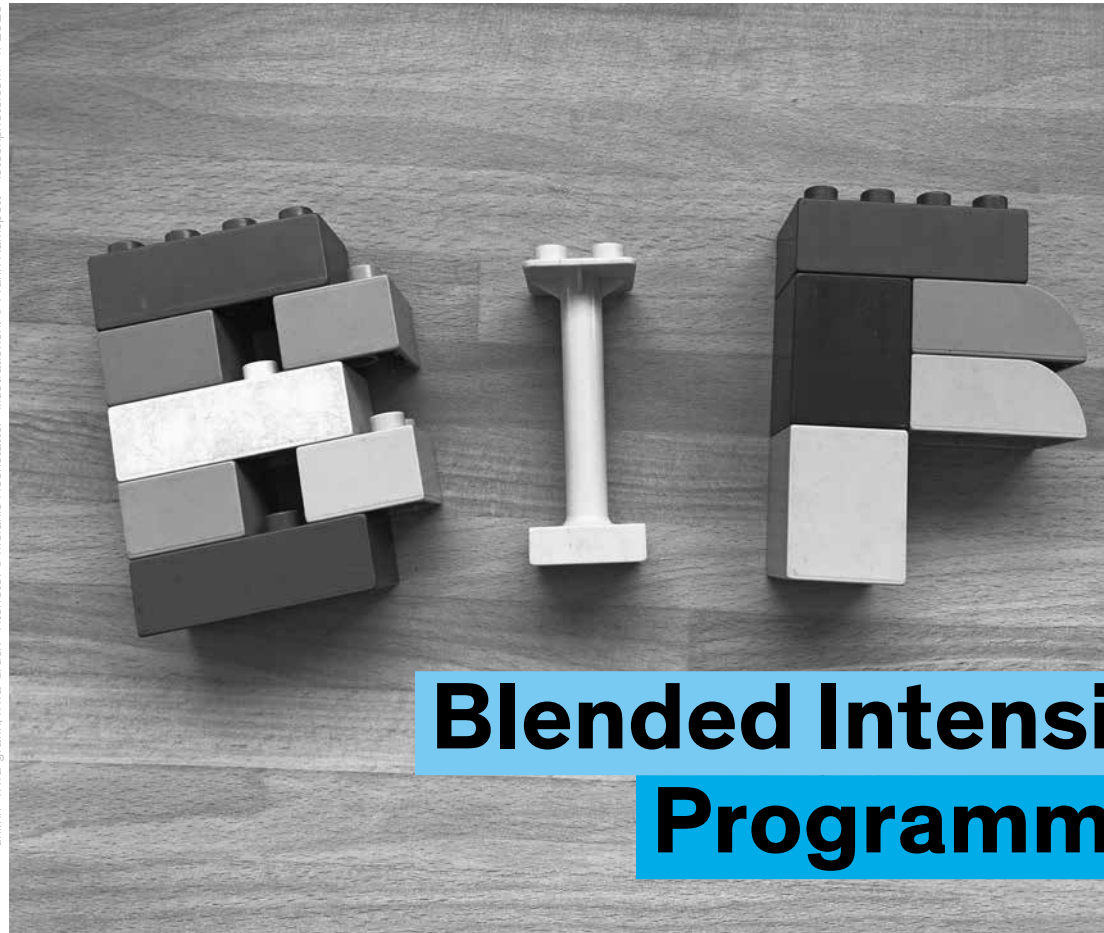
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Guidelines for Departments

guidelines for projects following the programme guides
up to and including 2025

What kind of projects are funded?

Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP) provide grants for the organisation and implementation of learning projects that are jointly designed and carried out by at least two European partners (three Higher Education Institutions as a whole). The format can vary depending on the discipline involved, e.g. compact seminars or excursions are conceivable. A combination of a virtual and a short physical learning phase (5–30 days) is mandatory. With this programme line, departments have the opportunity to raise funds for preparation and implementation (organisational resources, OS), e.g. for a supporting programme or supporting student assistants, in the amount of € 4.000 to € 8.000. The amount depends on the number of mobile participants (€ 400 each)¹. The physical learning phase takes place at one of the participating partners' locations. The home institution provides funds from their Erasmus+ budget for the mobility of their learners² and teachers.

Prerequisites

Projects are eligible for funding if at least **three Erasmus+ partner universities from three different programme countries** are involved in the planning and implementation, and **at least 10 mobile learners** take part in the on-site learning phase. All participants have to be awarded **at least 3 ECTS credit** points and the learning activity should be recognized at their home institution. Ideally, a BIP was designed in a way that it meets the requirements of a curricular element of the degree programmes of all student groups involved. The aim of a Blended Intensive Programme is to strategically internationalise teaching through jointly designed learning units and to create added value in terms of content for students and lecturers.

1) From call 2024 onwards, BIPs with 10 mobile participants are eligible for funding. See program guide version 1 (2024): 28.11.2023, p. 77.

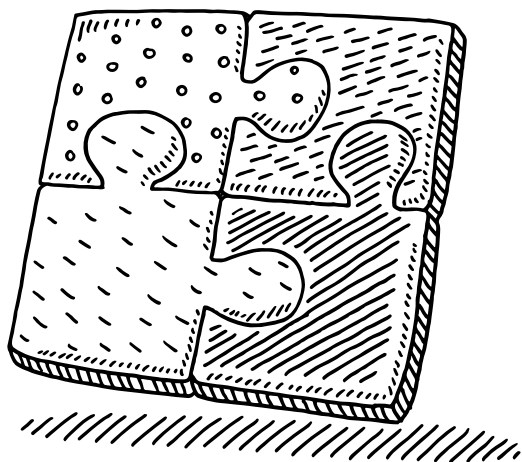
2) Learners can be students, doctoral candidates or employees of a higher education institution.

Application for funding

When planning a BIP, one university takes on the role of the coordinating university, which means that this university applies for the OS funding. In most cases, the coordinating university is at the same time the receiving institution, hosting the group of learners for the physical learning phase. All other partners take on the role of sending institutions, thereby having to calculate and apply for the mobility funds of their participating students, staff and lecturers. Both the OS and mobility funds for outgoing staff and learners are financed through the institutional Erasmus+ budget of the participating higher education institutions:

Once a year, higher education institutions may apply for Erasmus+ funding (usually the call for applications published by the National Agencies closes in February). In one large application, central International Offices request funds for the various programme lines, including the organisational funds for BIPs or the mobility funds for outgoing mobility. This means that interested parties must enquire at their own institutions regarding the exact procedure for internal applications for funding/expressions of interest in hosting a BIP. The procedure varies from university to university. At some universities, departmental staff members can apply for BIPs in February. These internal applications before the national application deadline for funding usually require a brief BIP project outline with information on the topic, the participating institutions and the planned dates of the mobility period. Therefore, please contact your International Office as soon as possible to find out about the procedure in your institution, in order to apply for OS funds in time.

As stated earlier, not only the receiving institution needs to apply for OS-funding, the sending institutions also have to take the cost for their mobile participants into consideration in their regular Erasmus+ budget. **Hence, an early communication regarding the application for funds between all institutions involved is of the utmost importance for a successful project implementation.** Departmental staff need to identify the groups of learners a BIP addresses and estimate how many students their institution could recruit for participation. International Offices need to calculate how many grants they would most likely be able to award. **A BIP can only be realized with sufficient funding granted to all institutions involved.**



First steps: From topic to BIP

A project usually starts with a concrete idea, e. g. for a jointly taught interdisciplinary compact seminar aimed at a specific group of learners.

Example:

A teacher from university A (Art History) would like to offer a seminar with another teacher from university B (Restoration) in which students benefit from the complementary perspectives on a particular subject area. With this idea, a third partner, a teacher from University C (Materials Science), is brought in to fulfil the minimum requirements for a BIP.

An institution with a particular connection to the content of the BIP and the resources for coordination is a suitable venue. From this early point of the planning phase, the teacher who has agreed to coordinate and organise the project at their own institution should contact the Erasmus+ departmental/faculty coordinator. Participating institutions need to set up inter-institutional agreements for the planned mobilities if necessary. Mobilities for study and teaching may only be funded within the frame of agreements that are signed before the mobilities take place. This means that even if there is not yet an Erasmus+ cooperation in place between (some of) the participating institutions, this does not rule out the cooperation for a BIP. Inter-institutional agreements may easily be signed ad-hoc.

In a three-partner scenario, experience shows that planning and calculating with 7–10 mobile learners per sending institution is a reasonable number in order to ensure a project's eligibility for funding. If each sending institution commits to this number of mobile learners, the project may still meet the funding criteria even if participants drop out. Nominated

participants who withdraw due to force majeure³ reasons may still be added to the overall number of participants of a project.

University C..... sending..... 10 mobile participants
 University B.....sending..... 10 mobile participants = 20 mobile participants
 University Areceiving ... 10 participants = 30 participants in total

If more than three partner institutions are involved in a project, the number of learners to be sent may be reduced accordingly. As approved funds for the organisation and implementation are linked to reaching the minimum number of mobile learners, keeping a waiting list of possible candidates is recommendable. **Recruiting suitable learners (from a degree programme/cohort/major/seminar) at an early stage plays an equally important role as the design of the teaching unit itself.** In order to retain participants, it is also advisable to organise virtual meetings of the group early on after the jointly agreed selection procedure.

When planning the collaborative project, you should first consider the target group for the seminar: bachelor's or master's students of a specific degree programme? Students of different subjects (majors/minors), e.g. students of an education programme, taking a course/seminar on educational research and pedagogy? Then, it is necessary to consider which requirements must be met by a course/seminar at the participating institutions so that all institutions can ideally integrate the BIP into the curriculum of their degree programmes. How many contact hours (converted weekly semester contact hours) must a BIP cover for the award of at least 3 ECTS credit points? What number of

3) A mobility may be labelled as "force majeure" if a mobility was cancelled due to "an unforeseeable exceptional situation or event beyond the participant's control and not attributable to error or negligence on his/her part" see Erasmus+ Program Guide 2023, p. 452.

ECTS credit points are required for a course/seminar in the participating degree programmes in order for the BIP to be recognised?

E.g. 24 hours of teaching plus individually assessable work to obtain at least 3 ECTS credits

In further planning of the seminar, consideration should be given to how the seminar content can sensibly be distributed between virtual and face-to-face teaching units. For example, virtual preparation for the joint learning project as well as lectures introducing the topic and subsequent discussions may lend themselves to intensive work in small groups in person. **It is important to note that the programme line does not specify the scope or form of virtual teaching and that there are no limits to the imagination (and the requirements of the individual disciplines) with regard to the combination with the face-to-face phase.** For example, projects can also start with the face-to-face phase and be followed up virtually. The only requirement is that the physical meeting of the learners must have a minimum duration of 5 to a maximum of 30 days (arrival and departure days are not counted). While there is greater flexibility when planning the virtual phase, the face-to-face phase requires close coordination with regard to lecture times, examination periods and lecture-free periods.

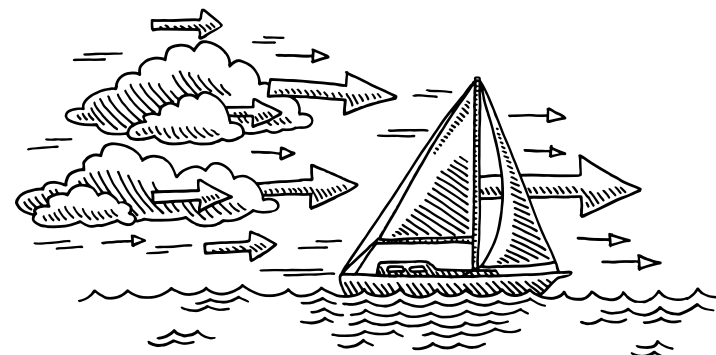
E.g. A compact seminar with virtual preparation (syllabus, expectations, etc.) and lectures in May and June, a physical mobility phase of one week at the beginning of July, a final virtual session at the end of July.

The teacher and, if applicable, the Erasmus+ departmental coordinator from university A, which will be the coordinating and hosting institution, should contact their International Office in time to discuss the next steps (best as soon as there is an idea for a project). It is quite helpful to have at least one virtual meeting with all relevant staff from the participating institutions involved (teachers, Erasmus+ coordinators/ international coordinators at departmental level and institutional level). The parties involved should come to an agreement on the timing and administration of the project, the use of OS funds and, above all, the funding of the mobilities.

Ideally, there should be an administrative and an academic BIP coordinator at each participating institution. This role can also be taken on by a single person. It is essential **for the further project implementation, that the responsibilities and areas of responsibility of the partners and within the participating institutions are clearly defined. For example, it is important to clarify who is responsible for the correct and timely submission of the mobility documents of the mobile participants at the respective institutions.** Being a regular funding line within the Erasmus+ programme, the mobility of learners in BIPs needs to be documented in the same way as semester/long term mobilities. For all funded participants, the mobility must be documented on the basis of learning agreements, grant agreements, certificates of stay, a transcript of records and participation in the EU evaluation (EU survey). Depending on the distribution of tasks at the participating institutions, the Erasmus+ documents of the mobile learners are provided by the sending International Offices and processed by the administrative coordination of a BIP. Each sending higher education institution must keep records of their

database (Beneficiary Module) by the coordinating higher education institution and completed with the date of their mobile learners by the sending institutions.

It is usually the International Office that handles the registration of a BIP in the Beneficiary Module in consultation with the academic coordination of the project. Coordinating institutions need to fill in a general report section: Title of the project, type of mobile participants, ECTS points, dates of stay/ mobility phase, scope of the virtual component, partners involved etc. Additionally, a summary of the content of the project, the teaching methods and learning outcomes, as well as the objective of the project and its learning formats used need to be included (short text sections of max. 1000 characters each).



Organisational support (OS)

If the organisational funds for a BIP have been approved, an institution receives the official funding statement by their National Agency around June. The funds are usually available from July on and while the partners ideally jointly decide on the use of the funds, the financial management and responsibility for the project lies solely with the coordinating institution.

Examples for the use of the OS in compliance with the funding principles of the coordinating institution:

- (Increasing the number of) student assistants
- guest lectures
- materials
- venue rent
- translations/communication
- equipment
- excursions/ entrance fees
- preparation of teaching materials and printing costs
- proportionate accommodation costs
- preparatory visits
- catering

OS may not be used to top up individual mobilities.

Funds may therefore not be paid out to the participants.

Organisational challenges (BIPs for the advanced)

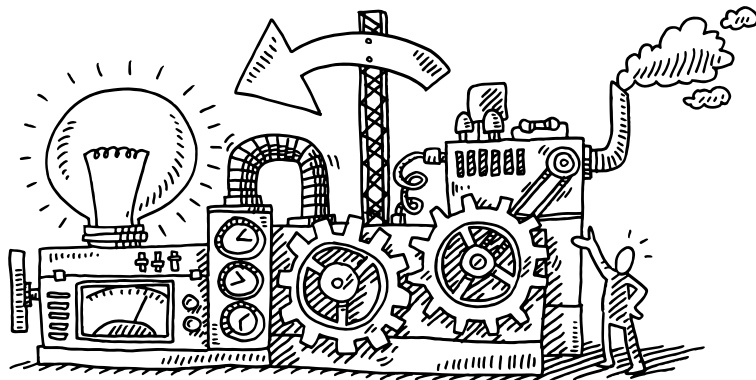
While a BIP must consist of at least three collaborating institutions from three different programme countries, it is also possible to involve further institutions, including those from **partner countries**, in the project. However, it is important to note that mobile participants from partner countries cannot be counted towards the minimum number of mobile participants. In many cases, there is no funding for participants from partner countries. It may therefore be a good idea to involve both teachers and learners in the project organisation only virtually.

Another option is to involve other **organisations**, such as research institutions, companies, NGOs, etc., in the project alongside participating higher education institutions. These institutions or organisations can also be a **co-organisier** and function as the venue for the on-site sessions of a BIP. As a general rule, the venue of a BIP must be in the country of the receiving institution.

Another possible scenario is one in which an institution applies for the OS funds and takes on the overall coordination of the project but does not function as the host of the mobility phase. Instead, **the venue of the BIP is located in another programme country where one of the other BIP partners is based**. In this case, the coordinating institution would not take on the role of the receiving institution. It would be another BIP partner taking on this role. However, partners should take into consideration that the rules and regulations on spending funds of the coordinating institution have to be met. This means, partners need to discuss in detail the use and spending of the

funds available and agree on the kind of documentation necessary of the coordinating institution. Bear in mind that participants in the host country will not receive a mobility grant. Nevertheless, OS funds can be used to cover the costs of the leisure and cultural programme for all participants.

BIPs that are aimed at students and take the form of a compact seminar or an excursion are the obvious choice. However, the project line is also suitable for doctoral students and employees. Training seminars for (administrative) staff at partner institutions are also eligible for funding.



Tip for sustainable internationalisation

In favour of a sustainable internationalisation, it is advantageous to consider the extent to which **the coordination of a BIP can “rotate” in subsequent years**. This means that the planning and coordination work already carried out can be taken up again and again and used in further learning projects. For example, historians could agree to organise BIPs on a rotating basis, starting with a seminar on antiquity, offering one on the Middle Ages the following year and then one on modernity the year after that. Since the agreements on the organisational framework and academic conditions already took place during the first implementation, the format of the first BIP can be used as a “template” for follow up projects. Please note: If a group of institutions would like to offer the same BIP (i. e. with the same title, content and partners) more than once, it is not possible to do so with funding from the same Erasmus+ call. Funding a project with funds from following calls would, however, be possible. In this way, institutions/departments may establish lasting partnerships with institutions that weren't partners before.

Disciplines/programmes with little to no budget for the internationalisation of teaching may use BIPs to **make their degree programmes internationally more visible** and to build up a **partnership network** particularly for this type of cooperation (if, for example, semester-based exchanges are not an option). BIPs for doctoral students can provide a **starting point** for the initiation **of joint research projects**.

Further information on Erasmus+

– Programme guide of the European Commission (2024)

This guide explains the conditions for participation, eligibility criteria and funding opportunities for the individual Erasmus+ programme lines. The basic programme structure is explained, detailed information on the individual funding lines can be found in supplementary documents.

– Programme guide of the NA DAAD (2022–2024)

Erasmus+ Guidelines of the NA DAAD for Projects 2022–2024 - Version VII, Dezember 2024 (in German). A “practical translation” of the programme guide with reference to implementation at German universities.

– Higher Education Mobility Handbook (2021)

A handbook only available in English, focusing in particular on the programme lines introduced in the current programme generation (Blended mobilities, blended short-term, Blended Intensive Programmes and (Post) Doctoral Mobility). A chapter on BIPs addresses some detailed questions.

– Information from the NA DAAD on BIPs (2024)

A brief outline of the programme line and application process. At the bottom of the page you will find a PDF (in German and English) summarizing the most important information on BIPs (mainly based on the frequently asked questions addressed at the NA DAAD).

– Funding rates and top-ups in the mobility of individuals (KA131)

(in German) For the calculation of funding rates for learners, see “Funding rates for blended short-term mobilities”.



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This brochure was composed by the three authors based on the available materials (programme guides, mobility handbooks) published by the European Commission on the newly introduced programme lines of the Erasmus+ programme 2021–2027.