

Guidelines for Applicants

1st Call

4th November-22nd November 2024



**MERGING
VOICES** 2024

INTERNATIONAL CREDIT MOBILITY



Co-funded by
the European Union





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The Erasmus+ Programme

As per the EACEA (European Education and Culture Executive Agency) of the European Commission, *Erasmus+* is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. It has an estimated budget of €26.2 billion for the period 2021-2027, which is nearly the double of funding compared to its previous period (2014-2020).

The 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life.

It supports the priorities and activities set out in the European Education Area, Digital Education Action Plan and the European Skills Agenda. The programme also:

- supports the European Pillar of Social Rights
- implements the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027
- develops the European dimension in sport

The Merging Voices Partnership

The 7th edition of the Merging Voices 2024 (MV 2024) builds upon the foundation of previous years, further strengthening cooperation with partner higher education institutions. It also seeks to expand opportunities for students with fewer resources to pursue studies in Portugal.

Through 92 scholarships, MV 2024 will support the mobility of students and academic staff both within Europe and across 17 partner countries. The MV 2024 aims to:

- Continue fostering (inter)national collaboration among participating institutions, contributing to the fulfilment of each institution's internationalization goals.
- Further increase the international visibility and recognition of the high-quality education offered by Portuguese institutions, both within and outside Europe.
- Offer students new and enriching mobility experiences beyond traditional destinations, promoting personal and academic growth.
- Continue providing academic and administrative staff formative mobility experiences that promote awareness and deepen understanding of partner institutions worldwide.



The Partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of the MV 2024 are:

| | | |
|---|--------|-------------|
| Universidade Nova de Lisboa | UNL | Coordinator |
| Universidade do Algarve | UAAlg | 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 these Universities' top priorities in terms of internationalization strategy. Having recognized it, the MV partnership 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.



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 |
|---------|---|--------------------|
| UAN | Universidade Agostinho Neto | Angola |
| RUA | Royal University of Agriculture | Cambodia |
| UDOUALA | Douala University | Cameroon |
| UniCV | Universidade de Cabo Verde | Cape Verde |
| PUCMM | Pontifical Catholic University | Dominican Republic |
| NFUCA | National University Cooperation Yamaguchi | Japan |
| AKU | Aga-Khan University | Kenya |
| UM | Universidade de Macau | Macao |



| | Name | Country |
|----------|---|------------------------------|
| UTOLIARA | University of Toliara | Madagascar |
| UNILURIO | Universidade Lúrio | Mozambique |
| KU | Kathmandu University | Nepal |
| TU | Tribhuvan University | Nepal |
| ATENEO | Ateneo de Manila University | Philippines |
| UP | University of the Philippines | Philippines |
| UNISEY | University of Seychelles | Seychelles |
| KLN | University of Kelaniya | Sri Lanka |
| UDSM | University of Dar Es Salaam | Tanzania, United Republic of |
| UNTL | Universidade Nacional de Timor Lorosa'e | Timor-Leste |
| HUST | Hanoi University | Viet Nam |

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 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 (3rd Call)

| Types of mobility available | Durations available |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Undergraduate | 3 to 4 months |
| Master | 3 to 4 months |
| Doctorate | 3 to 4 months |
| Academic and Administrative Staff | 5 working days + 2 days for travelling |



The **available scholarships** for the **1st call** are:

| Country | Partner Higher Education Institution | Incoming Mobility | | Outgoing Mobility | |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| | | SMS | STAFF | SMS | STAFF |
| Angola | Universidade Agostinho Neto | 3* 4 months | 3* 5 days | 1* 4 months (PhD only) | 3* 5 days |
| Cabo Verde | Universidade de Cabo Verde | 1* 4 months | 1* 5 days | | 1* 5 days |
| Cambodia | Royal University of Agriculture Douala University | 1* 3 months | 1* 5 days | | 2* 5 days |
| Cameroon | Douala University | 1* 4 months | 1* 5 days | | 1* 5 days |
| Dominican Republic | Pontifical Catholic University | | 4* 5 days | | 2* 5 days |
| Japan | National University Cooperation Yamaguchi | | 2* 5 days | 1* 3 months | 1* 5 days |
| Kenya | Aga-Khan university | 1* 4 months | 1* 5 days | | 1* 5 days |
| Macau | Universidade de Macau | | 2* 5 days | 1* 3 months | 1* 5 days |
| Madagascar | University of Toliara | 2* 4 months | 2* 5 days | | 2* 5 days |
| Mozambique | Universidade Lúrio | 3* 4 months | 3* 5 days | 1* 4 months (PhD only) | 3* 5 days |
| Nepal | Tribhuvan University | 1* 3 months | 1* 5 days | | 1* 5 days |



| | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|-------------|-----------|--|-----------|
| Nepal | Kathmandu university | 1* 3 months | 1* 5 days | | 1* 5 days |
| Philippines | Ateneo de Manila University | 1* 3 months | 1* 5 days | | 1* 5 days |
| Philippines | University of the Philippines | 1* 3 months | 1* 5 days | | 1* 5 days |
| Seychelles | University of Seychelles | 1* 4 months | 1* 5 days | | 1* 5 days |
| Sri Lanka | University of Kelaniya | 2* 3 months | 2* 5 days | | 2* 5 days |
| Tanzania | University of Dar Es Salaam | 3* 4 months | 3* 5 days | | 2* 5 days |
| Timor Leste | Universidade Nacional de Timor Lorosa'e | 2* 3 months | 2* 5 days | | 2* 5 days |
| Vietnam | Hanoi University | | 2* 5 days | | 2* 5 days |

4. Financial support

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

- Students: Monthly allowance (the amount per month will depend on the mobility's direction);
- Staff: Daily allowance ((the amount per day will depend on the mobility's direction);
- Insurance policy valid for the entire period of the mobility;
- Reimbursement of visa's issuing cost;
- 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 |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| From Portugal to Partner Countries | 700 EUR/month |
| From Partner Countries to Portugal | 850 EUR/month |

Staff exchange (Academic and Administrative Staff – STA)

Amount per diem:

| Origin | Per diem |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| From Portugal to Partner Countries | 190 EUR |
| From Partner Countries to Portugal | 170 EUR |

Contribution for travel (based on the distance)

| Travel distances | Amount |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Between 100 and 499 km | 211 EUR per participant |
| Between 500 and 1999 km | 309 EUR per participant |
| Between 2000 and 2999 km | 395 EUR per participant |
| Between 3000 and 3999 km | 580 EUR per participant |
| Between 4000 and 7999 km | 1188 EUR per participant |
| 8000 km or more | 1735 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 provide the amount corresponding to the travel distance to the scholarship holders' arrival in Portugal or to the bank account of EU staff, as they are responsible to buy their 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 following steps:

a) Verify the **eligibility criteria** 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.

b) Read attentively the **Guidelines for Applicants**.

c) 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.

d) 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 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.

e) Make sure that the **motivation** presented in the application concerning the mobility's benefits and expected outcomes are **clear** and reflect **each one** of the options selected (maximum of 3 host universities).

f) 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 (<https://www.up.pt/mergingvoices2024/>).



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. 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 all questions 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** (<https://www.up.pt/mergingvoices2024/>) 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 to guarantee that 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 in the online application. 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 Home University** - 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 home 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 letter from host - Only applicable to Portuguese/European candidates**. A PDF version of e-mails exchanged with the host institution will also be accepted. 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)



For students with fewer opportunities:

- **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 above mentioned 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.

If you have any questions regarding the validity of these documents, do not hesitate to get in touch as to make sure you submit the correct and valid documents.

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 host universities: After your application is validated by your home university, your application will be graded by the host university.
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 will 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 under this call must be undertaken by the 28th of February 2026.**



Please note that in case a selected applicant is afterwards identified as not eligible, they 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 provide the amount corresponding to the travel distance to the scholarship holders' arrival in Portugal or to the bank account of EU staff, as they are responsible to buy their own flight ticket, always respecting the dates of exchange established.

GRANTS – A scholarship contract that defines all the conditions, benefits and responsibilities related to 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 monthly.

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 according to the signed 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 forced 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, which 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 2025. However, in duly justified cases the date can be postponed to the following semester (**September 2025**)

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**: <https://www.up.pt/mergingvoices2024/>

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

Merging Voices PM Team

International Mobility Unit

Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Campus de Campolide

1099-085 Lisboa

Portugal

Phone number: +351 210496451

E-mail: erasmus@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 project is looking forward to receiving your application.

GOOD LUCK!