



## **Frequently Asked Questions – Joint Master Degrees (JMD)**

The following questions and answers on Joint Master Degrees (JMD) action are published as source of information for applicants intending to submit a project proposal under the 2014 Call for Proposals within Erasmus+.

This document addresses some typical enquiries received by the Agency since the Call for Proposals was launched. It aims at giving concise feedback to questions raised by potential applicants, and it may thus be useful for other applicants to read them.

Please note, however, that the primary sources of information remain the (amended) **Call for Proposal 2014** (EAC/S11/13), the updated **E+ Programme Guide** (esp. Part B, section "Joint Master Degrees"), and the **instructions for JMD applicants**. These documents constitute your first reference to guide you through your JMD application; they can be consulted on the Agency website:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/key-action-1-joint-master-degrees\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/key-action-1-joint-master-degrees_en)

The E+ Programme Guide (Part B: Key Action 1: Joint Master Degrees) explains the nature and functioning of JMDs, specifies key terms, and outlines the application procedure for this action. Most of the answers to questions which may arise for JMD applicants can be obtained from a close reading of the Guide, for instance:

- the definition of "Programme Country" and "Partner Country",
- the role of "associated partners" compared to "full partners" participating in a JMD,
- the eligibility criteria for potential applicants (e.g. is my organisation eligible, how many organisations does a consortium need to comprise, etc.),
- the award criteria that applicants need to address in their proposal, and the JMD funding rules.

An **updated E+ Programme Guide** was published on 27 February 2014. It has revised the selection procedure for Joint Master Degrees (Annex 1, section JMD, 3.1), see also FAQ N°1.

The following FAQs should help applicants find a quick answer for queries relating to the preparation of their JMD proposal. If you have specific enquiries where you consider that further explanations and/or clarifications are needed for a more complete understanding of the JMD rules, then you can send an email to the following Agency mailbox and you will receive an answer as soon as possible: [EACEA-EPLUS-JMD@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EACEA-EPLUS-JMD@ec.europa.eu)

**Q1: What are the main changes of the amended E+ Programme Guide in relation to JMD compared to its previous version?**

Answer: Firstly the selection procedure has been modified. There is no longer an interview stage at the end of the selection, as was initially foreseen (see Annex 1: JMD, section 3a). Step 1 and Step 2 of the selection procedure remain in place. Secondly the minimum threshold for award criterion "Relevance" has been raised from 50% to 75% of the max. points (22.5 out of 30 points), and from 50% to 60% of the max. points for the other three award criteria "Quality of the project design and implementation" (18 out of 30 points), as well as "Quality of the project team and the cooperation arrangements" and "Impact and dissemination" (12 out of 20 points each). Thirdly the first sub-criterion under award criterion 2 (i.e. the proposal's elements of "jointness/integration") has been moved to criterion 1.

**Q2: What about the participation of Switzerland and other non-EU Programme Countries in the Erasmus+ programme?**

Answer: In the light of the Swiss popular vote on 9 February 2014 changing Switzerland's system of immigration, the following has been decided: in 2014 Switzerland will not participate in Erasmus+ on an equal footing with EU Member States (i.e. as "Programme Country") as initially envisaged, but rather enjoy the status as "Partner Country". Therefore JMD applications involving Switzerland as one of the minimum number of "Programme Countries" will be considered ineligible.

Please also check in this context if the status of FYROM, Turkey, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein as "Programme Countries" has been finally confirmed (see Part A of the E+ Programme Guide). At the time of publication of the FAQ, these countries are considered as "Programme Countries"; we recommend applicants involving one or more of the above countries in a minimum consortium of three full partners to include another full partner from an EU country in order to prevent an application from possibly becoming ineligible due to unforeseen circumstances. Please consult [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm) for updated information.

**Q3: Is it necessary to have a Participant Identification Code ("PIC") for all organisations in the consortium?**

Answer: Yes, all organisations intending to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme need to have a PIC in order to validate an application. To obtain a PIC code, an organisation must register in the Unique Registration Facility (URF) of the European Commission's Participant Portal. For this you first need a login/password for secure access to URF via the European

Commission's Authentication Service (ECAS). For all details and internet links please consult the E+ Programme Guide, Part C "Information for Applicants". A user guide is also available here: [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/manualurf\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/manualurf_en.pdf)

***Q4: It is stated in the Programme Guide that a JMD must be fully developed at the time of the application and be ready to run for three consecutive editions as from the second academic year following the application, and that the process of accreditation of a JMD course must have been completed at JMD application stage. Is it possible to initiate the accreditation procedures of the joint Master at the time of application and to finish it only by the time of the first student intake?***

Answer: The JMD programme should be fully operational at the moment of application, and it is expected that the JMD programme has already been accredited as such by all degree awarding HEI (from Programme Countries) involved in the proposal. However, in order to comply with the minimum requirements set in the Programme Guide, it is enough to demonstrate accreditation for each degree-awarding Master programme at a national level which composes the proposed JMD programme. Besides accreditation, these national degree-awarding programmes must be mutually recognised by all full consortium HEI partners from Programme Countries.

***Q5: Do all full partner HEIs need to award a JMD degree to the students?***

Answer: No, only those HEIs where students have spent a mandatory full mobility period (i.e. min. 20 ECTS in a 60 ECTS Master course, and min. 30 ECTS in a 90/120 ECTS Master course) are obliged to issue a JMD degree.

***Q6: If a "double degree" is issued only by two full partner HEIs within a JMD consortium of three full partner HEIs, does the third partner HEI also need to be a degree-awarding institution?***

Answer: Yes, it must be degree-awarding institution, without obligation however to issue the degree in this specific scenario ("double degree").

***Q7: We have established a consortium of three full partners – all HEIs – and think of including another university which is, however, not yet ready to host students on their mandatory mobility. Should we include this additional partner as full or associated partner?***

Answer: In the peer review evaluation of the proposals the role, involvement and preparedness of all partners in the implementation of the JMD will be looked at from a quality point of view. If an institution cannot host JMD students for a mandatory full mobility period, this will be taken into account in the expert assessment. Nevertheless it remains at the discretion of the consortium to include this partner as either full or associated partner, but the consortium needs to be aware of the limited role this additional partner can actually play in the JMD implementation. It is however expected that the minimum eligible consortium of three full partner HEIs does not have any mobility restrictions.

***Q8: If a project foresees short visiting periods for students at associated partners, and these associated partners will incur costs of tuition/mentoring in order e.g. to provide guidance on incoming internships or other training, are we right to assume that the full partners will be able to reimburse these costs to the associated partners? And can these costs be included in the calculation of the participation costs?***

Answer: The associated partners can be reimbursed for this kind of activity from the EU "contribution to the consortium's management costs" (= lump sum). However, as the Programme Guide considers "associated partners" as outside of the JMD consortium in terms of the grant agreement (see JMD section "What is the role of organisations participating in a Joint Master Degree?"), these costs should not be included in the calculation of the consortium's official participation costs.

***Q9: What is the aim of the mandate to be signed between the coordinating institution and the other full partners of the consortium?***

Answer: Each full partner must sign a mandate by which the signatory grants power of attorney to the coordinator to act in his name and for his account during the implementation of the project. A model template of the mandate will be published on the JMD website of the Agency.

***Q10: In section B.2 of the electronic application form it is expected to indicate horizontal and sectorial priorities which the JMD proposal addresses. However, they are very general and do not always relate specifically to the JMD action. What do you recommend?***

Answer: The horizontal priorities relate not only to JMD, but to all actions under Erasmus+ in general. They have more of a statistical rather than a strategic value. Therefore we recommend interpreting them rather widely and choosing at least one from the list. This applies also to the sectorial priorities.

**Q11: What are the specific rules for scholars in the implementation of a JMD? Is it mandatory to include any, and if yes based on how many weeks and on which scholar grant?**

Answer: Scholars/guest lecturers must be included in each of the three JMD editions financed under the grant, namely four (4) scholars per cohort. There will be no specific scholar scholarships anymore, but the consortium is flexible to finance their participation through the management lump sum per edition. The concrete funding rules applying to scholars (e.g. duration of engagement, reimbursement mechanisms in case of non-participation, etc.) will be laid down in the JMD administrative & financial handbook and made public on the Agency website.

**Q12: *Can a JMD be implemented for students on a part-time basis or via distance learning?***

Answer: No, a JMD is a full-time study programme and cannot be attended on a part-time basis neither as distance-learning course (physical mobility cannot be replaced by virtual mobility). However, a course module may contain some complementary e-learning elements.

**Q13: *Apart from the mandatory annexes to be submitted with the application form, how many and which additional documents may we submit as annex?***

Answer: The number of the optional annexes is limited to a set of specific documents (see also instructions for applicants), which are:

- Needs analysis of the proposed JMD,
- Business plan for implementing the JMD,
- Letters of endorsement/intent from associated partner organisations with a structural role in the JMD,
- Blank copies of the proposed master degree diploma(s),
- Model of the diploma supplement,
- (Draft) consortium agreement,
- (Draft) student agreement.

Guidelines on the consortium and student agreements can be obtained from the Agency's JMD website:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/key-action-1-joint-master-degrees\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/key-action-1-joint-master-degrees_en)