

Upscaling Internationalization and Innovation in Education

Terms of Reference

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I. Objectives

This group focuses on **Upscaling Internationalization and Innovation in Education** (later: UIIE).

Regarding **internationalization**, it focuses on ways to achieve the Alliances' goal of massively increasing the number of students gaining meaningful international exposure. Focus is on inclusive, accessible, green, highly scalable strategies, including (short-term) physical, virtual, blended mobility, internationalization of curriculum, Internationalization at Home. This group will enable Alliances to share challenges, good practices, pedagogical models, methods, tools, and foster mutual learning and co-creation among alliances from all generations.

At the same time, it focuses on ways to promote scalable **innovation** in education, leveraging a network of European Universities, notably focusing on Challenge Based Education, as it is a key requirement for the Alliances. The group focuses on didactical innovation, on bridging educational research and practice, and supporting teachers' professional development. This topical group aims to share experience on strategies and best practices to modernise teaching and learning, both at course and curriculum level, enabling universities to respond to the evolving needs of students, educators, and society.

By September 2026, we expect to:

- Develop a concept note aiming to standardize main concepts and terminology across Alliances regarding the UIIE;
- Define a common understanding of UIIE in the context of European University Alliances (models, strategies, role of alliances, ...);
- Initiate practice-sharing across Alliances.

By September 2027, we expect to:

- Continue practice-sharing and initiate practitioners training across Alliances;
- Produce initial case studies and guidance documents (any multimedia form);
- Do outreach through large audience webinars and presence at conferences (e.g., EAIE).

By mid-2028, we expect to:

- Continue practice-sharing and teacher-training across Alliances;
- Produce reflection papers on key models, good practices, achievements, lessons learned;
- Continue outreach through large audience webinars and presence at conferences (e.g., EAIE);
- Contribute to policy dialogue regarding policy instruments for UIIE (label, ...)

Specific expectations from this UIIE group are:

1. Establish a shared understanding of UIIE and its concepts in the context of the Alliances;
2. Develop practical guidelines, etc. to ease implementation of UIIE within alliances;
3. Share good practices of UIIE across alliances;
4. Enhance mutual learning by bridging first-generation and new alliances, leveraging their respective maturity and innovation as well as spurring peer learning;
5. Feed reflections on emerging challenges related to UIIE, such as IT infrastructure as an example;
6. Develop joint position and policy for sharing at FOREU4ALL WP3 level, as well as publish papers;
7. Provide informed perspectives to influence European Higher Education policies, ensuring that UIIE practices are aligned with the evolving needs of Alliances and HEIs;
8. Stimulate consultation, peer interaction and promote dialogue among practitioners, managers and decision makers;

9. Provide mentoring and coaching to (re-)design innovative pedagogical or educational approaches and put in practice new ideas;
10. Present research and support in innovation, e.g., how to carry out research on innovation in courses, etc.
11. Support dissemination of innovations and experiments;
12. Motivate reflection on a UIIE group vision on education.

Target audience are the Alliances themselves and, at a later stage, the policy makers.

Specific stakeholders benefiting from the activities of the group are:

- Project managers and pedagogical engineers (instructional designers)
- Managers and decision-makers,
- Teachers and program heads,
- Didactical experts and educational researchers.

II. Background

Regarding scalable internationalization of Education:

While joint programs are extremely valuable, they cannot, alone, achieve the Commission's goal of massively increasing the number of students gaining international exposure. To achieve large-scale, lasting impact, Alliances have to leverage complementary strategies that are inclusive, accessible, and highly scalable. Such strategies include different types of physical, virtual and blended mobility, as well as various forms of internationalization of the curriculum, both at the level of programs and individual courses. Mainstreaming these approaches requires the sharing of knowledge, experiences and pedagogical approaches across the Alliances. European University Alliances have been built with a vision of offering to a vast number of students, doctoral candidates, and also academic and non-academic staff members the opportunity to receive impactful European and international exposure during their studies, and, simply put, to internationalize their time at the university.

The European Universities Call documentation (ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV) states an objective of 50% of the students benefiting from mobility, be it physical, virtual or blended.

In this regard, the Alliances can play a leading role, going far beyond the classical Erasmus+ semester-long mobilities, by offering – at a large scale – different alternative modalities of international experience (physical, virtual, blended) and internationalization at home, either embedded in the study programs, so as to internationalize them, or available in a standalone way.

This topical group will be instrumental in sharing on the enabling conditions for such massification and in advancing them collectively.

Regarding scalable innovation in Education, notable through CBL:

By fostering didactical innovation and sharing best practices, this topical group is meant to share experience on strategies and best practices to modernise teaching and learning, both at course and at curriculum level, enabling universities to respond to the evolving needs of students, educators, and society.

This group aims to elevate the quality of education across European universities, directly supporting the overarching mission of the European Higher Education Area to enhance the preparedness of teachers to teach and students to gain future-proof skills, in particular in a challenge-based learning environment.

The emphasis in this group is on upskilling teachers for challenge-based learning and to address the different modalities that institutions must develop.

This Group directly aligns with the objectives of European University Alliances and the broader European Higher Education and Research Areas by addressing key priorities such as educational innovation, inclusivity, co-creation and collaboration across borders.

III. Work plan and working modalities

Work Plan and Provisional Timeline

Initially the Group is organized in 5 Subgroups. The number and scope of the groups may be adapted as the needs evolve.

Subgroup 1 – Overarching matters in internationalization: With an objective to further develop shared understanding and common enabling conditions – pedagogical methods, organization, tools and support services – for faculty, program managers, and institutions to embed impactful internationalization deeply into their practices, to support teachers’ professional development, to transform existing institution processes and conduct change management in education, to successfully engage academics and their institutions in such transformations. Such enabling conditions will be tackled in this sub-group when considered common to different modalities covered in the other sub-groups.

Subgroup 2 – Digital courses internationalization: With an objective to promote dedicated enabling conditions – pedagogical methods, tools, support services, processes – to foster the large-scale deployment of educational modalities enabling students to access courses and engage with peers and faculty across borders through digital platforms (virtual mobility, virtual exchange, COIL, etc.). On top of international knowledge and skills in specific fields and topics, these approaches can strengthen various transversal and digital skills.

Subgroup 3 – Short format Physical and blended internationalization: With an objective to promote dedicated enabling conditions – pedagogical methods, tools, support services, processes – to foster the large-scale deployment of educational modalities enabling students to experience short-term courses abroad (BIPs, ...) as well as European Internships: Offering flexible, impactful international experiences tailored to students' needs, while exploring different economic modalities to favour long-term sustainability.

Subgroup 4 – Internationalization of the curricula: With an objective to promote dedicated enabling conditions to foster the large-scale and agile adaptation/transformation of existing local programs to include international components and perspectives, guaranteeing full academic recognition, ensuring large numbers of students benefit from international exposure beyond Joint, Double, Multiple Degrees.

Subgroup 5 – Challenge Based Learning: With an objective to foster the large-scale deployment of Challenge-based learning, as core requirement for all European Universities. Here we look at curriculum and course design, coaching and supervision of students, self-directed learning and assessment of learning, teachers’ training on CBL, working together with industry partners and/ or with research

orientated challenges etc. The emphasis is on upskilling teachers for challenge-based learning and to address the different modalities that institutions must develop to implement it.

There is a workplan per subgroup as well as a group workplan.
Years of the workplans are counted from 1 September to 31 August.

Group workplan

The Group workplan is the responsibility of the GCT.

For each year, this workplan may include:

- Organization of 1 to 2 group plenary online meetings to share on group-level common topics in learning mode with experts;
- Report to FOREU4ALL WP2 Board.
- In Year 1 it will additionally include: Revision of the ToR.
- From Year 2 it will additionally include: Organization of 1 large audience webinar or presence at 1 conference (e.g., EAIE).

Subgroups workplans

The subgroups workplans are the responsibility of their Lead and Co-Lead.

A first version of the subgroups workplans will be prepared by 30 November 2025.

It is the objective that each Subgroup completes at least 1 concrete activity, with a concrete result, in the first 12 months and then yearly.

In the first year, these workplans may include:

- **Subgroup 1:** Development of a glossary of terms for UIIE; Production of a paper reflecting a common understanding of UIIE in the context of European University Alliances, with a convincing narrative and a strategy to convey it;
- **Subgroup 2:** Regular best practices sharing sessions;
- **Subgroup 3:** Regular best practices sharing sessions;
- **Subgroup 4:** Regular best practices sharing sessions;
- **Subgroup 5:** Regular best practices sharing sessions.

In the second year, these workplans may include:

- Continued practice sharing and initiate practitioners' trainings across Alliances;
- Production of 1 case study and/or guidelines document (any multimedia form).

In the third year, these workplans may include:

- Continued practice sharing and practitioners' trainings across Alliances;
- Production of 1 reflection paper on key good practices, achievements, lessons learnt;
- Subgroup 1: Production of 1 white paper to contribute to policy dialogue regarding policy instruments for UIIE (label, ...).

Meeting Plan and Working Modalities

- **Group meetings organized by the GCT:**
 - o 1 monthly online meeting of the GCT (at fixed dates);
 - o 1 to 2 plenary online meetings per year to share on group-level common topics.
- **Subgroup meetings organized by the subgroups leads and co-leads:**

- 1 monthly online meeting (at fixed dates).

Attributions of the Chair, Vice-chairs, GCT and group members

Group Chairing Team:

- Planning of Group plenary meetings, preparation of meeting agendas and meeting minutes, reporting to FOREU4ALL WP2 Board/WP2 Project Officer.

Subgroups Leads and Co-Leads:

- Planning of Subgroup meetings, preparation of meeting agendas and meeting minutes, reporting within GCT.

Group members:

- Participate actively to 1 or several Subgroups;
- Elect the Group Chair, the Subgroups Leads and Co-Leads.

Only one candidate per Alliance per position is permitted.

The Chair and Subgroups Leads must come from different Alliances (this restriction does not apply to Co-Leads).

The group is open to representatives from all 65 alliances and can therefore be assumed to have a good spread in terms of equality and diversity. The group is also open to external stakeholders interested in SIIE issues. The UIIE group will also consider ways to effectively incorporate the students' perspective.

IV. Members

Expected profile of participants:

- Project managers and pedagogical engineers;
- Didactical experts and educational researchers;
- Managers and decision-makers;
- Teachers and programs heads.

Members are expected to:

- Participate actively to one or several subgroups;
- Elect the group chair, the subgroup leads and co-leads.

There is no limitation on the number of participants per alliance for now.