

SEND MOBILITY CONSORTIUM

Coordinator: SEND ETS – Third Sector Entity

Erasmus+ KA131 Project – Ref. 2025-1-IT02-KA131-HED-000327700

REPORT ON THE DEFINITION OF THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

“Universities for Innovation” Call – 2nd ed. a.y. 2025/2026

Erasmus+ mobility grants for traineeship purposes for university students

Call reference	“Universities for Innovation” 2nd ed. a.y. 2025/2026
Application deadline	13 May 2026, 2:00 p.m. CET
Available grants	60 mobility grants for traineeship in Europe
Applications received	562 applications received, of which 560 effective
Eligibility threshold	Minimum score 24/50 (Art.10 of the call)
Publication of the ranking	Initially estimated between 8 and 10 June 2026, postponed to today's date owing to the exceptional number of applications received.
Date of recording of the criteria	Palermo, 22 June 2026.

1. Introduction and purpose of the document

This document is drawn up by the Selection Committee of the “Universities for Innovation” call in order to set out, in a transparent and verifiable manner, the operational sub-criteria and descriptors that the Committee applied when assigning the scores provided for under Art.10 of the call. Placing the operational criteria on record is necessary to safeguard the transparency of the procedure since, given the unprecedented volume of applications (it should be noted that last May's call received 76 applicants for 100 grants, and the October calls never recorded more than 350 applications), for the first time we integrated Claude (Opus 4.8) into the assessment of the documents, in order to avoid the effects of a subjective and necessarily holistic evaluation by the various staff members we would otherwise have had to involve to ensure reasonable evaluation times.

This document does NOT amend the call; it articulates in operational terms the indicators and the maximum caps already published under Art.10, remaining fully consistent with them.

2. Frame of reference

2.1 Indicators provided for under Art.10 of the call

The call identifies four evaluation indicators:

- consistency of the educational or professional path with the training objectives and with the occupational sector of the project and/or the traineeship;
- proven knowledge and command of the foreign language(s);
- previous experiences abroad (volunteering, study or internship);
- motivation to undertake a period of traineeship or training abroad in the field of Social, Technological or Economic Innovation.

These indicators are operationally distributed across the following scoring items: Online application form (max 10 pts); Curriculum vitae and curriculum studiorum (max 10 pts); Motivation letter (max 13 pts); Language skills (B1: 8 pts, B2: 9 pts, C1-C2: 10 pts); Letter of availability of the host organisation – Annex 7 (+7 pts, or +3 if sent by 27 May 2026).

2.2 Underlying theme of the project: Innovation

Art.1 of the call links the funding to the development of professional skills attributable to the three areas of Social, Technological and Economic Innovation, with explicit reference to the twin green and digital transition and to the European recovery and resilience policies (Next Generation EU). This underlying theme constitutes, pursuant to Art.10, the substantive lens for reading the consistency of the educational path and the candidate's motivation.

Consistently, in the operational sub-criteria that follow **the Committee adopted an evaluative approach that rewards: (a) the explicit relevance of the study path and of the traineeship project with respect to the three areas of innovation; (b) the presence in the CV of experiences, certifications or activities attributable to the twin green and digital transition; and (c) the candidate's ability to set out in the motivation letter a concrete and well-argued connection with such areas.**

3. Guiding principles of the evaluation

- Transparency: every score assigned is traceable to sub-criteria and descriptors documented in this report.
- Objectivity: where possible, scores derive from verifiable documentary elements (electronic transcript, certifications, mandatory annexes), reducing the scope for purely discretionary assessment.

- Independent double reading: the qualitative component (CV and motivation letter) is assessed on a sample basis by at least two members of the Committee operating separately, providing Claude with the necessary cues and examples to articulate its assessment.
- Consistency with the project theme: all items are read in the light of the three areas of Innovation (Social, Technological, Economic) and of the twin green-digital transition.
- Compliance with the call: the operational sub-criteria remain in any case within the framework of indicators and maximum caps set by Art.10; no new substitute criterion is introduced.

4. Evaluation workflow

Given the exceptional volume of applications, the evaluation was not carried out in predefined sequential phases, but rather as an **iterative process of continuous dialogue between the Committee and the artificial intelligence assistant (Claude, Opus 4.8)**, aimed at building and then uniformly applying the criteria defined by the Committee. The method was articulated in the following activities, repeated and progressively refined across the entire pool of candidates.

Simulations on batches of samples. The Committee submitted batches of sample applications to the tool, comparing the outcomes with reference anchor cases (high-quality profiles and weak profiles), so as to calibrate the descriptors and verify the consistency of the scores prior to extended application.

Validations and iterative refinement of the criteria. In light of the simulation results, the Committee progressively refined rules, weights and cap-rules (including the continuous 0.5-step scale, the evaluation floors, the discipline-specific base values and the seniority multiplier), reapplying the updated criteria retroactively and consistently across the entire pool.

Random checks and feedback requests. Throughout the process the Committee carried out random sample checks on the scores produced and made targeted requests to the tool for justification and re-reading, verifying the soundness and replicability of the assessments and correcting any misalignments found.

The final decision on scores and on the ranking remained in any case with the members of the Committee, who assume full responsibility for it; the tool performed a support function for the uniform application of the criteria, without introducing any criteria beyond those of Art.10 of the call.

5. Operational rubrics by scoring item

5.1 Online application form – maximum 10 points

The form (online application) is assessed on the basis of the answers provided by the candidate at the application stage, according to four scoring sections (A, B, C, D) and an automatic penalty, within a 10-point cap. **The relative weights of the sections are: answer on innovation 40% (max 4), technical/professional skills 30% (max 3), naming of the annexes 15% (max 1.5) and soft skills 15% (max 1.5); the greatest weight is therefore given to the narrative answer on innovation.** The grid does not depend on the specific study path, but assesses the candidate's ability to present their skills and their motivation towards innovation in a relevant manner. The sub-criteria are as follows:

Sub-criterion	Points	Descriptor / verification
A · Naming of the annexes	max 1.5 (15%)	1.5 = all annexes named with candidate name + description of content (e.g. Lodi-Angela-CV.pdf); 0.75–1.2 = most files recognisable (>50%), proportional; 0.1–0.5 = few recognisable files or generic names (scan001, DH5000035...); 0 = no recognisable file (random hashes or names without information).
B · Answer to the question on Innovation	max 4 (40%)	Assesses the narrative answer to the question on interest in innovation. Three sub-criteria: B1 — Understanding of the concept (max 1.5): the answer goes beyond “innovation = technology” and cites specific dimensions (digital, green, social, biomedical...); B2 — Human and social dimension (max 1.5): recognises the impact on people, communities and the environment; B3 — Connection with the study path (max 1.0): links innovation to one's own study programme, experiences or traineeship project.
C · Soft skills	max 1.5 (15%)	Assesses the selection of soft skills via checkbox (max 6 per section), not free text: C1 — Soft skills offered (max 0.75): consistency with the chosen position/sectors and compliance with the limit; C2 — Soft skills to be acquired (max 0.75):

Sub-criterion	Points	Descriptor / verification
		complementarity with those already possessed, awareness of a growth path.
D · Technical/Professional skills	max 3 (30%)	Assesses the free-text answers on technical skills; absorbs the completeness of the form (sections not filled in = 0): D1 — Technical skills offered (max 1.5): specific description, consistent with the study programme and with innovation; D2 — Technical skills to be acquired (max 1.5): concreteness of the learning objectives, consistent with position and sector.
Automatic penalty	-0.5	-0.5 if the candidate answers NO to the question on interest in innovation (failure to read the defining requirement of the call). Applied to the total.

5.2 Curriculum vitae and curriculum studiorum – maximum 10 points

This scoring item combines two components into a single assessment on a 10-point scale: the curriculum vitae (CV), with a weight of 75%, and the curriculum studiorum (study plan, Annex 2), with a weight of 25%.

Curriculum vitae (Annex 3) – weight 75%

The CV component is assigned on an analytical basis by verifiable documentary items, rather than through a “holistic” assessment. Its sub-criteria are as follows:

Sub-criterion	Points	Descriptor / verification
Consistency with innovation (weight 25%) — base value by disciplinary area, raisable with concrete elements of the CV	4–10	Base values: 8 = life sciences/biotechnology, medical-health and pharmaceutical area; 7 = engineering, economics and management, socio-political and international area, psycho-educational and sports area; 6 = linguistic-communication area, artistic-design, legal; computer science/data/AI: already

Sub-criterion	Points	Descriptor / verification
		consistent, no raising. Continuous 0.5-step scale.
Work experiences in a broad sense (weight 15%)	4–10	Any work or internship experience documented in the CV is valued, even if not strictly relevant to the study programme, as an indicator of autonomy and readiness for the experience abroad. Floor 4.
Extracurricular activities (weight 25%)	4–10	Hackathons, business plan competitions, entrepreneurship programmes, associative activities on green/digital, publications, etc. Floor 4.
International exposure (weight 15%)	4–10	Study, work or volunteering experiences abroad documented in the CV. Floor 4.
Quality and completeness of the CV, also formally (weight 20%)	3–10	Clarity, completeness, order and formal care of the CV. Floor 3. A score of 0 is assigned only in the case of an absent or illegible CV.
BONUS — Volunteering or competitive sport	+1 / +2	+1 for 2–4 documented experiences/elements; +2 for 5 or more. Documentary bonus within the 10-point cap.
BONUS — Knowledge of several foreign languages	+1	+1 in the presence of 3 or more documented foreign languages. Documentary bonus within the 10-point cap.

Methodological refinement of the scale: during the evaluation the Committee found that assigning whole points to the individual items compressed the scores excessively, reducing the ability to distinguish genuinely different profiles. A continuous 0.5-step scale was therefore adopted, within the same cap of 10 points (anchor values 4–6–8–10; 6 = pass, 0 = CV absent), articulated across the five merit indicators with their respective weights: consistency with innovation 25%, work experiences 15%, extracurricular activities 25%, international exposure 15%, quality and completeness of the CV 20%; to these are added two documentary bonuses (volunteering or competitive sport up to +2; knowledge of several foreign languages up to +1). Evaluation floors of 4 are applied to the first four indicators and of 3 to the quality of the CV — without prejudice, for the consistency-with-innovation indicator alone, to the higher discipline-specific base value referred to in the following point (min 6, 7 or 8 depending on the area) — and 0 is assigned only in the case of an absent or illegible CV.

Consistency with innovation – base value by disciplinary area. Since social, technological and economic innovation can be pursued in every field of study, the indicator does not penalise mere disciplinary background: the Committee set a base value differentiated by area, which can be raised in the presence of concrete elements in the CV. The base values are: min 8 for life sciences/biotechnology and the medical-health and pharmaceutical area; min 7 for engineering, economics and management, the socio-political and international area, the psycho-educational and sports area; min 6 for the linguistic-communication, artistic-design and legal areas. The computer science, data and artificial intelligence area, already intrinsically consistent with the theme, requires no raising.

Work experiences in a broad sense. As this is mobility for traineeship purposes, the Committee values any work or internship experience documented in the CV, even if not strictly relevant to the study programme, as an indicator of autonomy, of the ability to integrate into professional contexts and of readiness for the experience abroad. By contrast, academic projects, course project work and thesis or laboratory activities do not constitute work experience for this specific purpose, even where candidates sometimes report them in the “experience” section of the curriculum.

Seniority multiplier by age band. A multiplier related to the candidate’s age (calculated as at 1 April 2026) is applied to the CV merit score: $\times 1.15$ up to 21 years; $\times 1.10$ from 22 to 24 years; $\times 1.05$ from 25 to 27 years; $\times 1.00$ from 28 years onwards. The Committee widened the range of the multiplier compared with an initial, more limited hypothesis, in order to provide greater support to younger candidates, and chose to anchor the multiplier to age rather than to the year of study, considering it a fairer and more defensible criterion in the face of non-linear academic paths (for example, those undertaking a new bachelor’s degree after a master’s degree or an experience abroad).

Curriculum studiorum (study plan, Annex 2) – weight 25%

The study-plan component (Annex 2) is assessed analytically from the electronic transcript and the list of examinations, on the same continuous 0.5-step scale and within the same 10-point cap as the CV. It is articulated in five indicators with the following relative weights: regularity of the path 25%, relevance to innovation 25%, excellence (marks $\geq 27/30$) 25%, robustness/availability of the documentary data 10%, and international exposure recognised in the transcript 15%.

Sub-criterion	Points	Descriptor / verification
Regularity of the academic path (weight 25%)	0–10	Pace of the path, credits acquired in relation to the year of enrolment, absence of significant delays. For first-year master's students, assessed in a non-penalising way (see methodological note).

Sub-criterion	Points	Descriptor / verification
Relevance to innovation (weight 25%)	0–10	Consistency of the examinations taken/planned with the social, technological and economic innovation theme of the call.
Excellence (weight 25%)	0–10	Presence and incidence of high marks (grades $\geq 27/30$) in the electronic transcript.
Robustness / availability of data (weight 10%)	0–10	Completeness and solidity of the documentary evidence in the transcript (number of graded examinations on which the assessment can rely).
International exposure recognised in the transcript (weight 15%)	0–10	Erasmus/study-abroad periods or examinations taken abroad and recognised within the current study path.

Methodological note on first-year master's students. Candidates in the first year of a master's programme, who have necessarily taken few examinations, are not penalised on the study plan: where the transcript is still limited, the value of the prior academic path (already-completed bachelor's degree) is recognised within the CV component, which carries the greater weight. Where no examination with a grade has yet been taken in the current cycle, only the relevance indicator is assigned, drawn from the examinations planned in the study plan.

Combination of the two components. The final score of this item is obtained as the weighted sum of the two components: study plan $\times 0.25$ + CV (after application of the seniority multiplier) $\times 0.75$, within the overall cap of 10 points.

5.3 Motivation letter – maximum 13 points

The motivation letter is assessed by means of a rubric structured in five sub-criteria, each with clear descriptors. The assessment is carried out through independent double reading; the score assigned is the arithmetic mean of the two assessors, rounded to the half point.

Sub-criterion	Points	Descriptor
Form and layout (max 2.5)	0–2.5 (≈19%)	Structure, layout and language. Cap-rule: does not exceed 2.0 if the letter exceeds the single page provided for by the Guidelines or takes the form of a dossier; it decreases further with several cumulative structural defects (absence of letterhead, addressee, opening or closing formula).
Content (max 5)	0–5 (≈38%)	Self-presentation, objectives and value of the project, consistently with the Guidelines for the motivation letter provided to candidates.
Motivation and consistency (max 5.5)	0–5.5 (≈42%)	Component with the greatest weight, as indicated by the Guidelines. Cap-rule: does not exceed, as a guideline, 3 when the letter makes no reference at all to the area of Social, Technological or Economic Innovation.

Methodological refinement of the scale. For the same reasons set out in point 5.2, the letter was assessed, within the cap of 13 points, on a continuous 0.5-step scale, articulated in three components with the following relative weights: motivation and consistency 5.5 (≈42%), content 5 (≈38%), form and layout 2.5 (≈19%), anchored to the Guidelines for the motivation letter provided to candidates. The motivation and consistency component, indicated by the Guidelines as a fundamental element, therefore receives the greatest weight.

Cap-rules resolved by the Committee. In order to ensure uniformity of judgement: the form and layout component does not exceed 2.0 when the letter exceeds the single page provided for by the Guidelines or effectively takes the form of a dossier, and it decreases further in the presence of several cumulative structural defects (absence of letterhead, addressee, opening or closing formula); the motivation and consistency component does not exceed, as a guideline, 3 when the letter makes no reference at all to the area of Social, Technological or Economic Innovation, consistently with the importance the Guidelines attach to this aspect.

5.4 Language skills – maximum 10 points

The score strictly follows the table provided for by Art.10 of the call: B1 = 8 points, B2 = 9 points, C1-C2 = 10 points. The Committee specifies the documentary equivalence criteria for the assignment of the level:

Documentary source (Annex 5)	Level assigned
Valid international certification or CLA open badge	Level indicated in the document (B1/B2/C1/C2).
University language/proficiency exam passed from 13/04/2024	Exam taken in the Bachelor's programme: level B1 (8 points). Exam taken in the Master's/Specialist/Single-cycle programme: level B2 (9 points).
Degree programme entirely in English	Level B2 (9 points), unless a higher certification is attached.
English video-CV only, in the absence of other documentation	The Committee assigns a level.

6. Objective bonuses and automatic scores

6.1 Letter of availability of the host organisation (Annex 7)

For the optional annex consisting of the letter of availability of the host organisation (Annex 7), the call provides for a bonus of 7 points if sent by the closing of the call, or of 3 points if sent by 27 May 2026. No intermediate scores are provided for: the bonus is equal to either 7 or 3 points.

Note: the overall maximum bonus may not in any case exceed the 7 points provided for by the call.

6.2 Automatic bonuses and penalties provided for under Art.10

Item	Score
First experience abroad (no previous Erasmus mobility)	+1
Withdrawal after acceptance in previous SEND calls	-1
Multiple supplementary submissions sent by email	-1
Candidates close to obtaining their degree, for whom this call is the last opportunity to participate	+0.5
Non-eligible mobility period	-2

Item	Score
Participants who have already carried out Erasmus Mundus / Erasmus+ mobility during the present study cycle	-0,3
Type of traineeship — Post-graduate	+1.5
Type of traineeship — Embedded (curricular)	+1
Type of traineeship — Voluntary (non-curricular)	0

7. Eligibility threshold and formation of the ranking

- Minimum eligibility score: 24/50, as provided for by Art.10.
- Eligible grant recipients: the top candidates in the ranking up to coverage of the 90 available grants (20 extra grants based on budget redistribution).
- Eligible non-recipients: candidates with a score ≥ 24 but beyond the number of available grants; they may opt for “zero grant” status or wait for the list to scroll.

Palermo, 22 giugno 2026