



INGENIUM
European University

INGENIUM
Joint Programmes
Guidelines and FAQs

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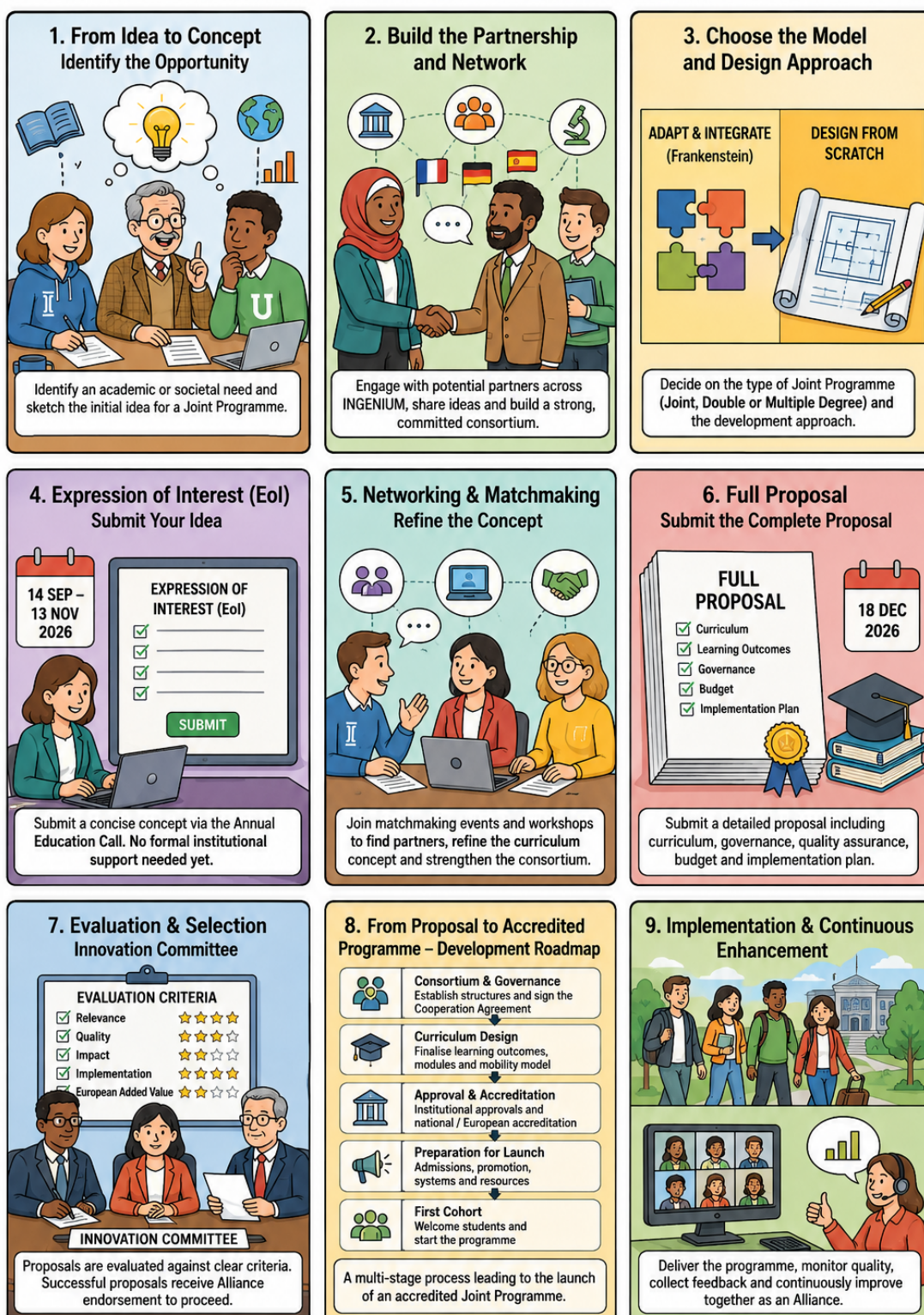
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The Journey of an INGENIUM Joint Programme: From Idea to Implementation



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Joint Programmes represent one of the most ambitious forms of educational collaboration within the INGENIUM European University Alliance. By bringing together the complementary expertise of partner universities, they provide students with integrated, international learning experiences that prepare them to address complex societal challenges while contributing to the development of the European Education Area.

As the European higher education landscape evolves towards deeper transnational cooperation, Joint Programmes play a central role in the Alliance's educational strategy. They support the creation of innovative curricula, foster institutional collaboration and contribute to the long-term ambition of developing programmes aligned with the European Degree Criteria and the future European Degree Label.

These Guidelines have been developed to support academic and administrative staff throughout the entire lifecycle of creating an INGENIUM Joint Programme. Rather than focusing solely on the application process, the document provides practical guidance from the earliest stages of developing an academic idea through partnership building, proposal preparation, evaluation, programme development, accreditation and implementation.

The Guidelines are intended to complement the INGENIUM Annual Education Guidelines, providing programme-specific guidance for teams wishing to develop Joint Programmes within the Alliance. They also draw upon the experience gained through existing INGENIUM initiatives, as well as the Alliance's continuing work towards the European Degree.

Throughout the document, emphasis is placed on the principles that characterise successful Joint Programmes: genuine academic integration, shared ownership between partner institutions, student-centred learning, robust governance, long-term sustainability and alignment with the European Degree Criteria. The Guidelines encourage programme teams to view Joint Programme development as a collaborative and iterative process, recognising that high-quality programmes are built through continuous dialogue between academic staff, university services and institutional leadership across the Alliance.

Whether developing a programme by adapting existing curricula or designing an entirely new educational offer, these Guidelines aim to provide a common framework that supports the creation of innovative, high-quality Joint Programmes capable of strengthening educational cooperation within INGENIUM and contributing to the future of European higher education.

The Guidelines follow the natural lifecycle of a Joint Programme: from the initial academic idea to the launch and continuous enhancement of an accredited programme; allowing readers to navigate each stage of development in a logical and practical way.

1. What is an INGENIUM Joint Programme?

An INGENIUM Joint Programme is a fully integrated study programme that is jointly designed, delivered and governed by two or more INGENIUM partner universities from different countries. Unlike other forms of educational collaboration, such as mobility schemes, collaborative teaching initiatives or pathway programmes, a Joint Programme is conceived as a single shared educational project, with participating institutions working together throughout the entire student lifecycle: from curriculum design and admissions to teaching, assessment, quality assurance and the award of the final diploma(s).

Joint Programmes represent the highest level of educational integration within the INGENIUM European University Alliance. They enable students to benefit from the complementary academic strengths, research expertise and learning environments of several partner universities through a coherent and coordinated curriculum that prepares graduates to address complex societal and global challenges.

Depending on the agreed delivery model and the applicable national regulations, an INGENIUM Joint Programme may lead to:

- **a Joint Degree**, awarded jointly by the participating institutions through a single diploma;
- **a Double Degree**, where two partner institutions each award their own recognised qualification for the successful completion of a common programme;
- **a Multiple Degree**, where three or more participating institutions each confer their own qualification under a shared curriculum.

As a strategic priority, INGENIUM encourages the development of Joint Programmes that are aligned with the European Degree Criteria, supporting the Alliance's commitment to the future European Degree and the European Degree Label, and preferably awarding a single Joint Degree Diploma.

Regardless of the award model, all Joint Programmes are expected to demonstrate a high degree of academic integration, including jointly defined learning outcomes, coordinated curriculum design, transparent governance arrangements, embedded mobility opportunities, shared quality assurance mechanisms and long-term institutional commitment.

As new accredited programmes, Joint Programmes require formal approval through the relevant national or European quality assurance procedures before they can be offered to students. Throughout their development, programme teams should also consider the principles underpinning the emerging European Degree Label, ensuring that new programmes are designed from the outset to support greater European recognition, interoperability and student-centred learning.

These Guidelines explain how Joint Programme proposals are developed, evaluated and supported within the INGENIUM Annual Education Call, from the initial Expression of Interest through to programme development, accreditation and implementation.

1.1 Joint Programmes as a strategic priority for INGENIUM

Developing Joint Programmes is a strategic objective of the INGENIUM European University Alliance and an essential component of the Alliance's vision for a shared European Campus. Joint Programmes foster long-term institutional cooperation, strengthen educational innovation and contribute to the creation of integrated European learning opportunities that extend beyond traditional mobility.

For this reason, INGENIUM encourages proposals that demonstrate:

- genuine joint curriculum design and shared academic ownership;
- broad, multilateral collaboration involving several Alliance partners;
- clear added value for students, employers and society;
- sustainable governance and long-term institutional commitment;
- alignment with the European Degree initiative and the European Degree Label.

While bilateral collaborations may provide valuable foundations for future cooperation, proposals demonstrating broader academic integration and institutional participation will normally be considered more closely aligned with the strategic ambitions of the Alliance.

2. Partnership, roles and governance

The successful development and long-term sustainability of an INGENIUM Joint Programme depends on a strong and well-balanced partnership. Joint Programmes require sustained collaboration between academic and administrative teams across participating institutions, supported by clear governance arrangements and shared institutional commitment.

Unlike other collaborative educational initiatives, Joint Programmes are based on the principle of shared academic ownership. Participating institutions work together to design, deliver, evaluate and continuously improve a single integrated programme, while respecting the legal and institutional requirements applicable in each country.

From the earliest stages of development, partners should establish transparent roles, decision-making procedures and communication mechanisms to ensure efficient programme management throughout the programme lifecycle.

2.1 Building an effective partnership

Each Joint Programme should be developed by a consortium of higher education institutions that collectively provide the academic expertise, institutional capacity and complementary perspectives necessary to deliver a high-quality integrated curriculum.

Although bilateral collaborations may provide an appropriate starting point for programme development, INGENIUM particularly encourages multilateral partnerships involving several Alliance universities. Broader participation strengthens the European dimension of the

programme, enhances interdisciplinarity and creates richer learning opportunities for students.

Partners should contribute complementary expertise rather than duplicating existing provision. Each institution is expected to make a clearly identifiable academic contribution to the programme, whether through specialised teaching, research expertise, laboratory facilities, professional networks, mobility opportunities or other distinctive strengths.

The objective is to develop programmes that offer learning experiences that could not be achieved by a single institution acting alone, ensuring that the added value of the partnership is evident throughout the curriculum.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

While the internal organisation of each consortium may vary, Joint Programmes should clearly define responsibilities from the outset. Typical roles include:

Table 1. Roles involved in Joint Programmes

Role	Description
Lead Institution	The Lead Institution coordinates the overall development of the programme and acts as the principal contact point for the Alliance during the proposal and development phases. Depending on the agreed governance model, the Lead Institution may also coordinate accreditation activities, external communication and reporting.
Programme / Consortium Coordinator	Named academic leading day-to-day development on behalf of the consortium; the single point of contact for the alliance throughout proposal, development and accreditation.
Partner Institutions	Partner institutions contribute to the academic design, delivery and continuous enhancement of the programme. Their responsibilities normally include curriculum development, teaching, supervision, student support, mobility coordination and participation in governance bodies.
Academic Lead	Each participating institution should designate an Academic Lead responsible for coordinating local academic activities and representing the institution within the programme's academic governance structure.
Joint Academic Committee	The central governance body of an INGENIUM Joint Programme should normally be a Joint Academic Committee (JAC) composed of academic representatives from each participating institution. Depending on the programme, the Committee may also include representatives from relevant administrative and professional services and, once the programme is operational, student representatives.
Administrative Support	The development of a Joint Programme requires close collaboration between academic staff and professional services. International offices, quality assurance units, legal services, admissions teams,

Role	Description
	finance offices and student support services should be involved from the early stages of programme development to ensure institutional feasibility.
Joint Programmes Task Force	The Next INGENIUM team responsible for Joint and Collaborative Education (Task 3.2). Supports consortia through the development roadmap, and tracks milestone progress across the Joint Programme portfolio.
Education Council	Assess Full Proposals following the the Annual Education Cycle.
INGENIUM Steering Committee	Kept informed of progress; involved in resourcing and institutional-priority decisions concerning the Joint Programme portfolio.
INGENIUM Alliance Council	Reviews and approves a programme proposal. It is the highest-level Alliance endorsement a Joint Programme receives.
EQAR-registered Quality Assurance agencies	EQAR-registered Quality Assurance agencies such as ANVUR, ANECA, EVALAG, ARACIS, HAHE are official organisations that evaluate and accredit higher education institutions and programmes. They can be consulted for capacity-building and policy dialogue on the European Approach and the European Degree.
INGENIUM Secretariat	Coordinates the call, consolidates documentation for the Evaluation Committee, and supports reporting throughout.

2.3 Governance of the Joint Programme

Joint Programmes require governance structures that support collaborative decision-making while ensuring efficient programme management. All governance details will be included in a Cooperation Agreement signed between the partner institutions.

Although governance arrangements may vary according to the size and complexity of the consortium, programmes are generally expected to establish:

- a Joint Academic Committee (JAC), expected to oversee the academic and operational coordination of the programme, including: curriculum development and periodic review; alignment of learning outcomes and teaching activities; admissions and student selection; academic regulations and student progression; quality assurance and continuous enhancement; monitoring programme implementation; coordination of mobility arrangements; and, recommendations for programme improvements. The Committee should meet regularly throughout both the development and delivery phases to ensure consistent implementation across all participating institutions.
- where appropriate, specialised working groups addressing quality assurance, mobility, admissions, digital learning or student services.

Governance arrangements should define:

- decision-making procedures;
- voting arrangements;
- responsibilities of each partner;
- conflict resolution mechanisms;
- procedures for programme review and amendment;
- communication channels between participating institutions.

Clear governance structures are particularly important during the accreditation process and throughout programme implementation, ensuring that responsibilities remain transparent as the consortium evolves.

2.4 Institutional commitment

The successful implementation of a Joint Programme requires commitment beyond the academic team responsible for its development. Participating institutions should ensure that the necessary institutional support is available throughout the programme lifecycle, including:

- academic leadership;
- admissions and student administration;
- financial management;
- digital infrastructure;
- mobility support;
- student services;
- monitoring and quality assurance.

Where appropriate, institutional endorsement should be obtained before submitting proposals through the INGENIUM Annual Education Call, helping to ensure that selected projects are both academically ambitious and institutionally feasible.

3. Types of Joint Programme

INGENIUM Joint Programmes may lead to different types of qualifications depending on the level of academic integration agreed by the consortium and the legal and accreditation frameworks of the participating countries. INGENIUM Joint Programmes may be developed at all levels of higher education, including Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral programmes.

Although all Joint Programmes are based on a shared curriculum jointly designed and delivered by two or more partner universities, the form of the final qualification/diploma may

vary. The choice of award model should be determined by the consortium at an early stage of programme development, taking into account national legislation, institutional regulations and the long-term objectives of the programme.

Regardless of the qualification awarded, all INGENIUM Joint Programmes are expected to demonstrate:

- a jointly designed and integrated curriculum;
- shared learning outcomes;
- collaborative teaching and assessment;
- transparent governance arrangements;
- coordinated quality assurance;
- meaningful mobility and international learning opportunities;
- student-centred learning and student support services;
- long-term institutional commitment from all participating partners.

The three principal models are described below.

3.1 Joint Degree

A Joint Degree is a single qualification awarded jointly by two or more higher education institutions that have collaboratively designed and delivered an integrated study programme.

Students follow a common curriculum that includes jointly agreed learning outcomes, coordinated teaching and assessment, and embedded mobility between partner institutions. Upon successful completion of the programme, graduates receive a single diploma issued jointly by the participating universities, or a joint diploma accompanied by national degree certificates where required by national legislation.

The Joint Degree represents the highest level of academic and institutional integration and is the model most closely aligned with the objectives of the European Degree initiative, and for this reason, the INGENIUM Alliance promotes and encourages this kind of joint degrees.

3.2 Double Degree

A Double/Dual Degree is awarded when two partner universities jointly deliver an integrated programme but each institution awards its own nationally recognised qualification.

Students complete a common curriculum that satisfies the academic and quality assurance requirements of both institutions. On successful completion, graduates receive two separate degree certificates, one from each participating university.

This model is often adopted where national legislation does not yet permit the award of a Joint Degree while still enabling a high degree of curriculum integration and institutional collaboration.

3.3 Multiple Degree

A Multiple Degree follows the same principles as a Double Degree but involves three or more participating universities. Students complete a jointly designed curriculum delivered across the consortium and, upon successful completion, receive separate qualifications from each participating institution in accordance with the applicable national regulations.

Multiple Degrees provide significant opportunities for international collaboration and offer students access to a broad range of academic expertise and learning environments.

3.4 The European Degree and the European Degree Label

The European Degree is an initiative of the European Union that seeks to facilitate the development and recognition of high-quality joint programmes delivered collaboratively by higher education institutions across Europe. As part of the broader European Education Area, the initiative aims to reduce legal and administrative barriers to transnational education, promote deeper academic cooperation, and make it easier for students to obtain qualifications that are recognised across European countries.

While the European Degree is still under development, the European Degree Label represents an important milestone towards this objective. Rather than constituting a new qualification in itself, the Label is intended to recognise Joint Programmes that meet a common set of European quality and integration criteria, demonstrating that they provide a genuinely transnational learning experience.

These criteria cover key aspects of programme design and delivery, including joint curriculum development, integrated governance, student mobility, quality assurance, international learning outcomes, flexible learning pathways and the involvement of students and external stakeholders. Together, they provide a common reference framework for the design of future European Joint Programmes.

INGENIUM actively supports the objectives of the European Degree initiative and encourages programme teams to consider the European Degree Criteria from the earliest stages of programme development. Designing programmes in accordance with these principles not only facilitates future alignment with the European Degree Label but also contributes to the creation of high-quality, student-centred and internationally recognised educational programmes across the Alliance.

As European policies and regulatory frameworks continue to evolve, Joint Programmes developed within INGENIUM will be well positioned to benefit from future developments in European degree recognition and cross-border higher education cooperation.

4. Developing a Joint Programme Proposal

A Joint Programme is not defined by the number of universities involved or the number of diplomas awarded. It is defined by the degree of academic integration achieved.

The development of an INGENIUM Joint Programme is an iterative process that begins with an academic idea and gradually evolves into a fully developed programme proposal. Given the complexity of creating a new accredited programme involving multiple institutions, applicants are encouraged to adopt a collaborative and phased approach, allowing sufficient time to build partnerships, explore feasibility and jointly develop the curriculum before submitting a full proposal.

The INGENIUM Annual Education Call provides a structured framework to support this process, enabling academic teams to refine their ideas, identify suitable partners and receive feedback throughout the different stages of programme development.

Developing a successful Joint Programme is therefore not simply a matter of preparing an application. It involves building a shared academic vision, establishing institutional commitment and ensuring that the proposed programme is educationally innovative, academically robust and operationally feasible.

4.1 Identifying an opportunity

Joint Programmes often emerge from existing collaborations between academics, research groups or departments that identify opportunities for deeper educational cooperation. Potential starting points may include:

- existing Erasmus+ partnerships;
- research collaborations;
- successful previous collaborations (BIPs, Micro-credentials...);
- established INGENIUM Pathways;
- complementary Master's programmes;
- emerging interdisciplinary themes;
- societal or labour market needs requiring international expertise.

Applicants are encouraged to consider whether developing a Joint Programme offers clear added value beyond existing educational provision and whether collaboration between partner universities enables learning opportunities that would not be possible within a single institution.

4.2 Approaches to developing a Joint Programme

There is no single route to developing a successful Joint Programme. Depending on the maturity of the partnership and the educational objectives, programme teams may adopt

different approaches to curriculum design. In practice, most Joint Programmes evolve along a continuum, gradually moving from the integration of existing educational provision towards the creation of a fully integrated curriculum.

We can illustrate the different approaches visually through two contrasting models and all the options in-between: the **"Frankenstein Model"** and the **"From Scratch Model."** While these represent opposite ends of the spectrum, many successful Joint Programmes combine elements of both.

4.2.1 Model 1 – Building from existing programmes ("Frankenstein Model")

This approach starts by identifying existing courses, modules or degree programmes offered by the participating universities and combining them into a coherent Joint Programme.

Although the programme initially draws upon existing educational provision, the objective is not simply to assemble a collection of modules. Instead, the consortium progressively aligns learning outcomes, harmonises teaching and assessment methods, introduces mobility opportunities and develops common governance arrangements to create an integrated educational experience. This approach may be particularly suitable when:

- partners already offer complementary programmes;
- collaboration has developed through Erasmus+, Pathways, Micro-credentials or Blended Intensive Programmes;
- institutions wish to build on established academic strengths while reducing development time.

As the programme evolves, existing modules may be adapted, redesigned or replaced to strengthen academic integration.

4.2.2 Model 2 – Designing a programme from scratch

In this approach, the consortium begins with a shared educational vision rather than existing curricula. Partners collaboratively define:

- the graduate profile;
- programme objectives;
- learning outcomes;
- curriculum structure;
- teaching and assessment strategy;
- mobility model;
- governance arrangements.

Only once these elements have been agreed are individual modules designed to support the intended learning outcomes. Although this approach generally requires greater

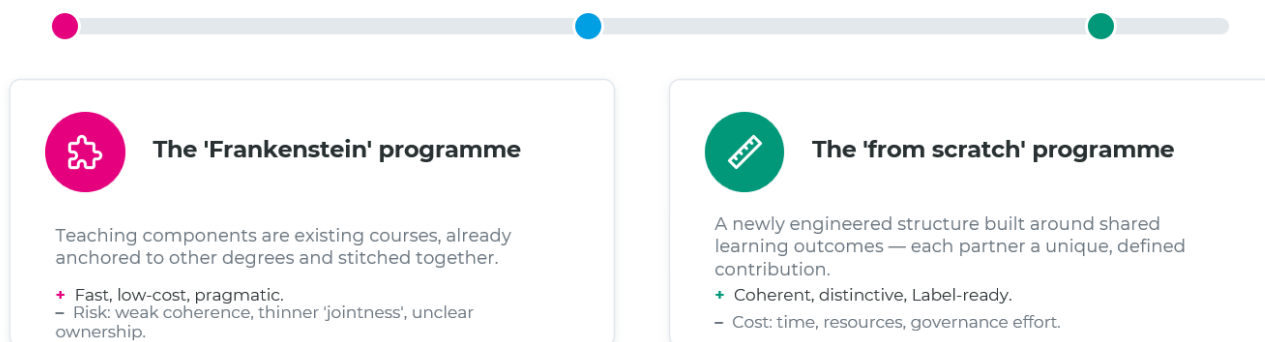
investment during the development phase, it often allows a higher level of curriculum integration and innovation.

4.2.3 The in-between model

Most programmes lie between the previously explained two models. In practice, many successful Joint Programmes combine both approaches. Existing courses may provide a valuable starting point, while new modules, learning activities or mobility components are introduced to create a coherent and genuinely integrated curriculum.

Regardless of the approach adopted, programme teams should ensure that the final programme offers a single, coherent educational experience rather than a collection of independently delivered courses. The added value of the Joint Programme should be evident throughout its curriculum, governance and student experience.

From 'Frankenstein' to 'from scratch'



Neither extreme is 'wrong'. The Approach and the Label ask for genuine joint design and shared learning outcomes — not that every course be brand-new.

4.3 Building the partnership and programme structure

Once an initial idea has been identified, programme teams should establish a consortium of partner institutions that collectively provide the academic expertise, resources and institutional commitment necessary to deliver the programme.

At this stage, discussions should focus on developing a shared vision for the programme. Early conversations should explore:

- the academic objectives of the programme;
- the contribution of each partner institution;
- the target student profile;
- expected learning outcomes;

- potential mobility pathways;
- programme sustainability;
- compatibility with institutional strategies.

The INGENIUM networking activities organised through the Annual Education Call provide valuable opportunities for identifying collaborators, stakeholders, suitable courses and international learning components and refining programme concepts before submitting a proposal.

4.4 Assessing feasibility

Before investing significant effort in proposal development, consortium partners should undertake an initial feasibility assessment. Key questions include:

- Is there sufficient student demand?
- Does the programme address a recognised academic or societal need?
- How is it different to other similar study programmes in Europe? What is the specific added value of this new programme?
- Are the necessary academic expertise and resources available across the consortium?
- Is the programme likely to satisfy national accreditation requirements?
- Are participating institutions able to commit the necessary administrative support?
- Does this programme enable learning opportunities that would not be possible within a single institution?
- Can we align the programme with European Degree Criteria?

Considering these questions early helps identify potential challenges and reduces the risk of significant revisions later in the development process. Partners can consult with the INGENIUM Secretariat and INGENIUM offices about the feasibility and long-term sustainability of the Joint Programme before submitting an idea.

4.5 Aligning with the European Degree Criteria

Programme teams are encouraged to consider the European Degree Criteria from the earliest stages of programme design.

Rather than viewing the criteria as an additional requirement at the end of the process, applicants should use them as a reference framework when developing the programme's educational model, governance, student experience and quality assurance arrangements.

Early alignment with the European Degree Criteria will strengthen the proposal and support future accreditation, recognition and participation in emerging European initiatives.

Designing with the European Degree Criteria in mind

When developing an INGENIUM Joint Programme, programme teams are encouraged to consider the European Degree Criteria from the earliest stages of curriculum design. In practical terms, this means ensuring that the programme demonstrates:

- ✓ **Joint curriculum design** with shared learning outcomes and an integrated programme structure.
- ✓ **Collaboration between multiple higher education institutions** from different European countries.
- ✓ **Transparent joint governance** with clearly defined roles and shared decision-making.
- ✓ **A student-centred learning experience**, including active learning approaches, flexibility, inclusion and appropriate student support.
- ✓ **Embedded international and intercultural learning**, achieved through physical mobility, virtual collaboration or other international learning experiences.
- ✓ **Joint quality assurance and continuous programme enhancement**, aligned with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.
- ✓ **Recognition and transparency**, ensuring that students can easily understand and demonstrate the learning achieved through the programme, joint and clear grading practices and alignment with the ECTS Users' Guide.
- ✓ **Relevance to society and the labour market**, including opportunities to engage with external stakeholders and address a recognised academic or societal need.

Considering these principles during programme design will help create high-quality Joint Programmes that are well positioned for future alignment with the European Degree Label.

4.6 Preparing the proposal

Once the consortium has agreed on the overall concept and confirmed the feasibility of the programme, applicants may begin preparing their proposal for submission through the INGENIUM Annual Education Call.

A strong proposal should demonstrate:

- a clearly articulated academic rationale;
- genuine collaboration between partner institutions;
- an integrated curriculum with jointly defined learning outcomes;
- an appropriate governance model;
- a realistic implementation plan;
- institutional commitment;
- consideration of quality assurance and accreditation requirements;
- long-term sustainability.

The proposal should present sufficient information to allow reviewers to evaluate both the academic quality of the programme and its potential for successful implementation within the Alliance.

5. Application Process

The development and selection of INGENIUM Joint Programmes take place through the Annual Education Call, which provides a transparent and structured process for identifying, evaluating and supporting new collaborative educational initiatives.

Recognising that Joint Programmes require significant academic, institutional and administrative preparation, the application process is organised in two successive stages:

1. **Expression of Interest (Eoi)**
2. **Full Proposal**

This phased approach enables academic teams to progressively develop their ideas, identify suitable partners and refine their proposals before submitting a comprehensive programme design for evaluation.

Throughout both stages, applicants are encouraged to engage with the networking and support activities organised by the Alliance, ensuring that proposals benefit from interdisciplinary collaboration, institutional feedback and alignment with the strategic objectives of the INGENIUM European Campus.

5.1 Stage 1 – Expression of Interest (Eoi)

The Expression of Interest (Eoi) is the entry point to the Joint Programme development process. Its purpose is to identify promising ideas at an early stage, encourage collaboration between Alliance partners and provide an opportunity for academic teams to receive feedback and discuss their programmes before preparing a full proposal.

The Eoi is not intended to present a fully developed programme. Rather, it should outline the initial concept and demonstrate its potential to evolve into a high-quality Joint Programme aligned with the objectives of the Alliance.

Applicants are normally expected to provide information on:

- the academic rationale and objectives of the proposed programme;
- the thematic area and expected qualification level;
- the participating institutions or prospective consortium;
- the educational need or societal challenge the programme addresses;
- the proposed approach to curriculum development;
- the anticipated added value of international collaboration;

The EoI stage also provides an opportunity to identify additional partners within the Alliance, strengthen the consortium and refine the proposal before progressing to the next stage.

5.2 Stage 2 – Full Proposal

Following the Expression of Interest stage, there will be time to meet with academic staff and potential partner universities in order to move from a bilateral idea towards the genuinely multilateral consortium the alliance prioritises and work together to submit a Full Proposal.

The Full Proposal provides a comprehensive description of the proposed Joint Programme and demonstrates that the consortium has developed a shared academic vision, established a viable partnership and considered the institutional, pedagogical and regulatory aspects necessary for successful implementation.

The proposal should normally include:

- a detailed description of the academic concept and rationale;
- roles and responsibilities of participating institutions;
- programme learning outcomes;
- curriculum structure and indicative study plan;
- teaching, learning and assessment approach;
- mobility model and international learning opportunities;
- governance arrangements;
- quality assurance;
- implementation timetable;
- sustainability and resource considerations;
- preliminary considerations regarding accreditation and recognition;
- alignment with the European Degree Criteria.

The Full Proposal should demonstrate not only academic excellence but also that the programme is feasible, sustainable and capable of delivering a genuinely integrated European learning experience.

5.3 Fast Tack & Erasmus Mundus Applications

The INGENIUM Annual Education Call includes a Fast Track route for mature and advanced proposals that include Joint Programmes that have already reached an advanced stage of development. This route is intended for mature initiatives that do not require the initial concept development and networking phase provided through the standard application process.

In this case, the Fast Track enables experienced consortia to seek Alliance endorsement and support for programme development, accreditation or participation in external funding opportunities, such as the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's (EMJM) call, where appropriate.

- > **The Fast Track.** This route is designed for proposals that already demonstrate a high level of academic maturity. Unlike the standard application route, Fast Track proposals do not require an Expression of Interest. Instead, they are submitted directly for evaluation through the procedures established in the Annual Education Call.
- > **The General Call.** This is the standard route for proposing new academic programmes within INGENIUM such as new Joint Programmes. It provides a structured process beginning with an Expression of Interest, followed by networking and consortium-building activities, before the submission of a Full Proposal. This route is particularly suitable for programme teams that are still developing their partnership, refining the academic concept or designing an integrated curriculum.
- > **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Applications.** Mature Joint Programme proposals intending to apply for the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's (EMJM) programme and its full scholarship scheme are encouraged to use the Fast Track route to obtain Alliance feedback and institutional support before submitting their application to the European Commission. Where appropriate, INGENIUM may provide specific support to help applicants prepare competitive EMJM proposals. Applicants should note that all Erasmus Mundus applications must comply with the eligibility requirements, timetable and submission procedures established by the European Commission.

6. Evaluation criteria

Full Proposals are evaluated in accordance with the evaluation procedures established by the Alliance. Successful proposals may be recommended for Alliance support, enabling programme teams to proceed to the development, accreditation and implementation phases with the help from the Technical Secretariat and INGENIUM offices and teams.

All Joint Programme proposals submitted through the INGENIUM Annual Education Call are evaluated against a common set of criteria designed to assess their academic quality, strategic relevance and potential for successful implementation.

The evaluation process aims to identify proposals that demonstrate a high level of academic integration, contribute to the objectives of the INGENIUM European University Alliance and have the potential to develop into sustainable, high-quality educational programmes.

Joint Programme proposals are assessed against a shared assessment framework and scored on the full 1–10 scale per dimension (30 points maximum).

Table 2. *Evaluation criteria and assessment*

Dimension	Max points	What it asks	Sub-criteria for Joint Programmes
Relevance	10	Does the proposal advance what the alliance has committed to?	Contribution to the European Campus and to genuine jointness in both design and delivery; breadth and multilaterality of the consortium; societal and labour-market relevance, drawing on the ecosystem dialogue and Knowledge Ecosystems; readiness to embed the European Degree Label criteria from inception
Quality	10	Is it well designed and can it actually be delivered?	Feasibility and regulatory realism, with an honest account on the accreditation route; student-centred curriculum design with clear, shared learning outcomes; quality of the proposed awarding model; inclusion, student support services, multilingualism and sustainability built into the design.
Impact	10	What will change, and will it last?	Embedded and seamless student and staff mobility; breadth and novelty of the partnership, including institutions new to joint-programme delivery; contribution to the Next INGENIUM targets; prospects for the programme continuing and growing beyond its first cohort.

Assessment at this stage is deliberately enhancement-oriented, in line with the rest of the cycle: the purpose is to help good consortia become deliverable programmes. Where a proposal is weak on one dimension but strong overall, the Evaluation Committee's feedback should say what would fix it.

Partners should take note that building a Joint Programme from existing courses is a perfectly valid starting point. However, reviewers will look for evidence that the consortium has moved beyond simply assembling modules from different institutions. Successful proposals demonstrate how existing provision has been adapted and integrated into a coherent curriculum with shared learning outcomes, coordinated teaching and assessment, and a common educational vision.

6.1 Relevance

Maximum 10 points. Relevance assesses the extent to which the proposed Joint Programme responds to an identified educational, societal or labour market need and contributes to the strategic objectives of the INGENIUM Alliance. Reviewers will consider:

- alignment with the objectives of the Annual Education Call;
- contribution to the educational priorities of INGENIUM;
- consistency with the European Universities Initiative and the European Degree ambition;
- evidence of demand from students, employers or society;

- relevance to society and the labour market, as well as engagement with stakeholders;
- innovation and clear added value for students, employers and society
- complementarity between participating institutions.

Applicants should clearly explain why the programme is needed, why it should be developed jointly, and what added value the Alliance brings compared with a programme offered by a single institution.

6.2 Quality

Maximum 10 points. Quality evaluates the academic and organisational robustness and jointness of the proposed programme. Reviewers will assess both the educational design and the consortium's capacity to deliver a high-quality Joint Programme. Particular attention will be given to:

- the academic coherence and jointness of the curriculum;
- jointly defined learning outcomes;
- innovative teaching, learning and assessment methods;
- meaningful integration between partner institutions;
- student-centred programme design;
- inclusion and student-support services,
- governance and decision-making arrangements;
- quality assurance and transparent governance;
- feasibility of implementation;
- institutional commitment;
- alignment with the European Degree Criteria.

Strong proposals demonstrate genuine curriculum integration and shared academic ownership rather than simply combining existing modules from different universities.

6.3 Impact

Impact assesses the expected benefits of the Joint Programme for students, participating institutions, the Alliance and wider society. Reviewers will consider:

- the added value for learners;
- opportunities for international and intercultural learning;
- contribution to institutional cooperation;
- potential for long-term sustainability;
- contribution to the European Campus;

- potential to inspire future collaborative educational initiatives;
- engagement with stakeholders;
- dissemination and transferability of the programme model.

Applicants should explain how the programme will create lasting value beyond the initial cohorts and how it contributes to strengthening educational collaboration across the Alliance.

6.4 Qualitative scoring rubric

The rubric below links the qualitative bands used during pre-assessment and validation to the numeric scores in Table 2.

Table 3. Qualitative scoring rubric for Joint Programme evaluation

Criterion	Excellent	Good	Needs improvement
Relevance (max 10)	8–10. Strong, well-evidenced alignment with Alliance objectives and the European Degree ambition; compelling case for why the programme must be developed jointly.	5–7. Reasonable alignment with Alliance priorities; the rationale for joint development is present but could be stronger.	0–4. Limited or unclear alignment with Alliance objectives; the case for jointness is not convincingly established.
Quality (max 10)	8–10. Genuinely integrated curriculum with shared learning outcomes, coordinated assessment, robust governance and clear quality-assurance mechanisms; feasibility well evidenced.	5–7. Feasible design with adequate integration, but governance, quality assurance or assessment coordination need further development.	0–4. Curriculum reads as a collection of existing modules rather than a jointly designed programme; feasibility or governance not adequately addressed.
Impact (max 10)	8–10. Clear, well-evidenced benefits for students and institutions, strong prospects for sustainability, and a meaningful contribution to the Alliance's Joint Programme portfolio.	5–7. Positive expected impact, but sustainability or contribution to the wider portfolio not fully evidenced.	0–4. Expected impact not clearly demonstrated, or narrowly limited.
TOTAL (30)	24–30	15–23	0–14

6.5 How the decision is taken

Reviewers are not looking for a collection of existing modules from different universities. They will expect to see evidence that the consortium has developed a shared academic

vision, an integrated curriculum, common learning outcomes, coordinated assessment methods and clear governance arrangements. The following steps are taken in the General Call (not applicable for the Fast Track):

- Pre-assessment. Carried out in early January by the mixed transition groups, against the framework above.
- Validation and final selection. Made in late January by the Education Council, in line with the Next INGENIUM model.
- Results and feedback. Communicated by the end of January, including the rationale behind the decision and, where relevant, what would strengthen a resubmission.

Selection at this stage confirms that a proposal may proceed into development.

7. From Full Proposal to an Accredited Joint Programme

Selection through the INGENIUM Annual Education Call represents an important milestone in the development of a Joint Programme. However, it does not constitute the final approval to launch the programme. Rather, it marks the beginning of a collaborative development phase during which the consortium transforms the initial proposal into a fully designed, institutionally supported and accredited study programme.

During this phase, academic and administrative teams work together to refine the curriculum, establish governance arrangements, prepare the necessary documentation for institutional approval and accreditation, and ensure that the programme can be successfully implemented across all participating institutions.

The duration of this phase will vary depending on the complexity of the programme, the number of participating institutions and the accreditation requirements. In many cases, programme development may take between one and three years before the first cohort of students can be admitted.

7.1 Establishing the consortium and the governance framework

Following selection, participating institutions should formally confirm their commitment to the programme and establish the consortium responsible for its development. At this stage, partners should start drafting the cooperation agreement, establish the governance arrangements required for programme delivery and long-term management and proceed to:

- confirm the Lead Institution and nominate academic and administrative representatives of all partners;
- establish the Joint Academic Committee;
- agree on communication and decision-making procedures;
- define clear roles and responsibilities;

- agree on decision-making procedures;
- consider quality assurance processes;
- agree on mechanisms for programme review and continuous enhancement.

The consortium should operate as a collaborative partnership, recognising that responsibility for the programme is shared by all participating institutions.

Good Practice

Develop the Cooperation Agreement early. It will evolve throughout programme development and serves as the foundation for accreditation.

7.2 Designing the integrated curriculum

The consortium should at the same time confirm the detailed design of the programme. Starting from the proposal submitted, this stage normally includes:

- defining the graduate profile;
- defining admissions procedures;
- reviewing and refining programme learning outcomes;
- designing the curriculum and study plan;
- allocating teaching responsibilities;
- agreeing teaching, learning and assessment methods;
- designing mobility pathways;
- defining student support services;
- engagement with stakeholders and associate partners and labour-market needs;
- integrating digital and collaborative learning activities where appropriate.

Regardless of whether the programme originates from existing curricula or is developed from scratch, the objective is to create a coherent educational experience. All aspects of the programme need to be included in the cooperation agreement. Additionally, several annexes need to be drafted as well, such as: a Student Agreement, a Student Handbook, CVs of academic staff, data protection and GDPR agreements, model of diploma and diploma supplement, and any other related document.

Good Practice

The development phase should not be viewed simply as preparing documentation for accreditation. It is an opportunity for the consortium to build a shared academic culture, establish long-term collaboration and co-create an educational experience that reflects the collective strengths of the participating institutions.

Successful Joint Programmes are rarely developed by a single coordinator working on behalf of the consortium. Instead, they emerge through continuous dialogue between academic staff, administrative services and institutional leadership across all partner universities.

7.3 Institutional approval and accreditation

Before a Joint Programme can be offered to students, participating institutions must obtain the approvals required under their respective institutional and national regulatory frameworks or under the European approach.

Depending on the countries involved and the chosen award model, this may include:

- internal academic approval;
- institutional governing body approval;
- external quality assurance review;
- national accreditation procedures;
- application of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes;
- interviews with the corresponding EQAR-registered Quality Assurance agencies.

Programme teams should engage institutional quality assurance and legal services at an early stage to ensure that accreditation requirements are fully understood and incorporated into the programme design.

7.4 Implementation and continuous enhancement

Once accreditation has been obtained, the consortium should prepare for the launch of the programme, including:

- admissions procedures;
- student recruitment;
- marketing and communication;
- mobility arrangements;
- digital learning environments;
- staff training;
- student support services;
- monitoring and evaluation processes.

Successful implementation depends on close coordination between academic staff and administrative services across all participating institutions. Programme teams should also establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring and improvement, including:

- regular meetings of the Joint Academic Committee;
- student feedback through a specific INGENIUM Community Questionnaire;
- external stakeholder consultation;
- periodic curriculum review;
- quality assurance reporting;
- graduate employability monitoring;
- preparation for reaccreditation where required.

Continuous enhancement helps ensure that Joint Programmes remain academically relevant, financially sustainable and aligned with the evolving objectives of the European Higher Education Area.

Programme teams are encouraged to remain actively engaged in the INGENIUM Joint Programmes Community of Practice after programme launch, contributing lessons learned, sharing innovative practices and supporting the development of future Joint Programmes across the Alliance.

7.5 Community of Practice

The INGENIUM Joint Programmes Community of Practice (CoP) provides a collaborative environment in which academic and administrative staff involved in Joint Programme development can exchange experiences, share templates, documentation and lessons learned. Furthermore, the Community of Practice enables knowledge generated through individual Joint Programme projects to be shared across the Alliance, ensuring that experience gained by one consortium benefits future programme development.

The Community of Practice supports collaboration by facilitating:

- exchange of experiences between programme teams;
- peer learning and mutual support;
- sharing resources, documents, and templates
- dissemination of good practices in curriculum design, governance and quality assurance;
- knowledge shared about accreditation and regulatory challenges;
- identification of opportunities for collaboration with other INGENIUM educational initiatives.

The Community of Practice provides a space for learning and knowledge exchange across the Alliance.

8. Timeline at a glance

The development of an INGENIUM Joint Programme is a progressive process that extends from the initial programme idea to the enrolment of the first student cohort. While the exact duration will vary depending on the complexity of the programme, the number of participating institutions and the applicable accreditation procedures, programme teams should generally expect the process to take between one and three years.

The timeline below provides an indicative overview of the principal stages involved in developing a Joint Programme. It is intended as a planning tool only.

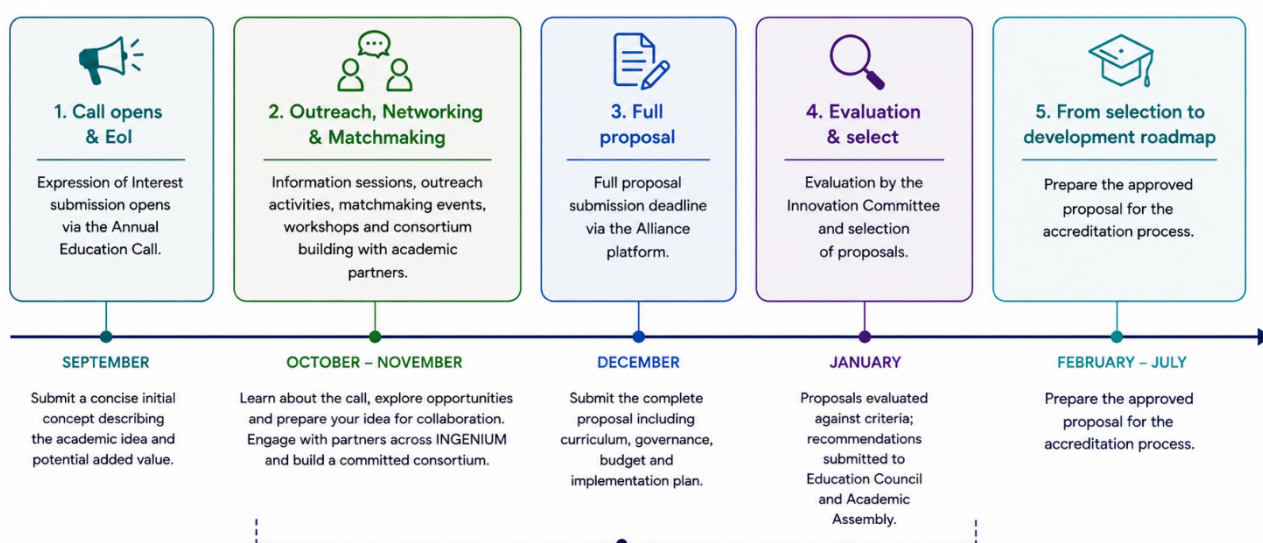


Table 4. 2026/2027 Annual Education Cycle

Milestone	Date	What happens
Idea Generation	Continuous	Identify the educational opportunity, discuss the concept with potential partners and explore alignment with INGENIUM priorities.
Expression of Interest opens	Mid-september	Named lead academic, initial partner interest, and academic rationale
Partnership Development, staff networking and study plan development	October – November	Consortium widened towards genuine multilaterality; outline proposal sketched.
Expression of Interest closes	Mid-november	Eols for the general call must be submitted. Not compulsory to submit a Full Proposal.
Full Proposal	Mid-december 2026	Develop and submit the complete proposal, including curriculum, governance and implementation plan.

Milestone	Date	What happens
Pre-assessment	Early January	Mixed transition groups review proposals.
Validation and selection	Late January	Innovation Committee take the decision.
Results communicated	End of January	Teams receive the outcome and feedback.

Table 5. *The longer development roadmap (indicative)*

Period	Roadmap stages
Year 1	Detailed curriculum design, governance arrangements, quality assurance planning and consortium agreement.
Year 1–2	Internal approvals, external quality assurance and national or European accreditation procedures.
Year 2	Accreditation submission and decision. Marketing, admissions, student recruitment, staff preparation and programme launch.
Year 2–3	Implementation of Joint Programme. Monitoring and periodic review begins.

Exact durations vary by level (doctoral programmes typically move faster through accreditation than multilateral bachelor's programmes), by country, and by how many partners are involved in awarding.

Good Practice

Allow sufficient time for programme development. Designing an integrated Joint Programme, securing institutional approvals and completing accreditation are complex processes that require close collaboration between academic staff and administrative services. Programme teams should therefore view Joint Programme development as a medium-term collaborative project rather than a short-term application exercise.

9. Frequently Asked Questions

This section brings together the questions most commonly raised by academic staff and partner institutions. It is intended as a quick-reference companion to the sections above. Each answer points back to the relevant section for full detail.

► What is the difference between a Joint Programme and a Dual+ Pathway?

A Joint Programme is a new degree requiring formal accreditation, jointly designed from inception (Section 2). A Dual+ Pathway enriches a dual degree that already exists and requires no new accreditation (Pathway Guide). If your degree-level relationship with a partner doesn't exist yet and needs formal accreditation to be created, this guide is the right one.

► **Do we need a minimum number of partners?**

There's no fixed minimum, but the alliance's strategic priority is broad, multilateral consortia with genuinely integrated delivery rather than bilateral arrangements with light shared design (Section 2.1). A two-partner proposal with minimal shared curriculum is better suited to a Cornerstone or Modular Pathway.

► **How long does it take to go from idea to enrolling students?**

Plan for more than one Annual Education Cycle. It takes typically two to three academic years from selection to first cohort, depending on the accreditation routes involved (Section 7 and Section 8). Next INGENIUM's own target reflects this: only two new Joint Programmes are expected to be initiated, not necessarily fully accredited, by M24.

► **Can a Joint Programme proposal be top-down rather than staff-initiated?**

Yes. The call distinguishes transparently between bottom-up proposals from staff and top-down proposals responding to an alliance strategic priority. Both are assessed against exactly the same framework (Section 5.1 and Section 6).

► **Who signs the Consortium Agreement?**

It must be signed at the highest institutional level of every participating partner. This is a binding, institution-level commitment.

► **Do we have to pursue the European Degree Label?**

It is not compulsory to apply for the Label, but it is advised since new programmes should be aligned with the European Degree Criteria and requesting the Label would therefore be a logical next step. For new Joint Programmes, the alliance has committed that 100% of new programmes will incorporate the European Degree Label criteria in their cooperation agreements from inception (Section 2).

► **What if our proposal is not selected in this cycle?**

You receive feedback on what would strengthen a resubmission. Given the strategic weight of this category, it is also worth discussing with the WP3 task team whether a lighter route, such as a Dual+ Pathway, or further consortium-building before resubmitting better fits where the idea currently stands.

Have a question that isn't covered here? Contact the INGENIUM Secretariat, who can route it to the right team.

10. Related documents

- INGENIUM Annual Education Call Guide.
- INGENIUM Joint Quality Assurance Policy.
- D4.1 Joint Programmes Report.

Annex 1. Joint Programmes EoI Form

Annex 2. Joint Programmes Final Application Form

Annex 3. Joint Programmes Selection Checklist