INGENIUM
European University

Host a challenge

A practical note for organisations hosting INGENIUM students

Challenge-Based Mobility (CBM) · October 2026

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A real problem, a few days, a fresh team

A Challenge-Based Mobility (CBM) brings one student, or a small group, from an INGENIUM university to your organisation for 5 to 14 days to work on a problem you actually have. They prepare online, work with a mentor you name, and present the result to the people who need it.

2–14
days on site, flexible
plus online phases

10
universities
in ten EU countries

€500–1,000
a week per student
for travel and stay

1
named host mentor
is all you need

Three shapes a challenge can take

Research-oriented
Students join a laboratory or research group and contribute to work already under way: a dataset to analyse, a method to test, a question to explore.

Practice-oriented
A project on a real operational or societal need: a process to improve, a service to redesign, a local plan to analyse. Students deliver something you can use.

Hybrid
An academic question with an external partner attached, or a practical brief that needs laboratory work behind it. Most interdisciplinary challenges look like this.

WHO CAN HOST

Companies and clusters, local and regional authorities, public agencies, NGOs, hospitals, research centres, innovation hubs and schools linked to one of the ten INGENIUM universities, as well as laboratories, departments and chairs of the universities themselves. A challenge can be research-oriented for a Phd or master's student close to their thesis, or more structured and exploratory for a bachelor student group.

What your organisation gains

Hosting takes days, not months, and the return goes well beyond the result itself.

Fresh eyes on a real problem

Motivated students with up-to-date methods look at an issue you have not had time for, and come back with evidence, options or a prototype.

Early access to talent

Meet future graduates in your field and see how they work before they enter the job market. A challenge is a natural first step towards an internship or a thesis.

An international perspective

Students from another country bring comparisons from their own region, and solutions can travel across ten regions in ten countries.

A door into ten universities

Each challenge connects you with an academic advisor and their department, and through them with research groups across the alliance.

Light commitment

No application to write. INGENIUM grants cover students' travel and stay, and the universities handle preparation, supervision and recognition.

A say in future skills

Shape how future professionals in your sector are trained. Your challenge can inform courses, micro-credentials and new collaborations.

THE MARK OF A CHALLENGE

At the end, students present their work to the people who raised the challenge. That moment is what makes the experience real for them, and it is where you see whether the result is useful to you.

Why it matters beyond one challenge

Challenge-Based Mobility is one of the new formats through which INGENIUM, an alliance of ten European universities, connects its students with the organisations and territories around them.

For your region

INGENIUM universities are rooted in their territories, many of them peripheral regions. Challenges bring talent to local problems and help regions keep and attract skilled people, supporting the "freedom to stay" and talent circulation.

For Europe's skills

Europe faces skills gaps in science, engineering, digital and health. Real challenges give students the practical skills employers ask for, in line with the EU's Union of Skills.

For the alliance

INGENIUM acts as a bridge between ten regions and their ecosystems. A problem raised in one region can be tackled by a student from another, and results travel back.

One challenge, many doors

Hosting a challenge is often the first step in a longer relationship. Organisations can go further at their own pace, with the same universities and the same contacts.

You can learn more about the different ways to collaborate with INGENIUM in this briefing document.

Internships, doctoral collaborations, knowledge-creating teams and micro-credentials are all part of the INGENIUM Annual Education Call. Ask the INGENIUM office of your partner university about any of them.

INGENIUM IN BRIEF

Ten mid-size universities from ten EU countries, with more than 170,000 students: comprehensive and research-intensive universities, universities of applied sciences, technical universities and a medical university. **All are closely engaged with the economic and social development of their regions.**

> *"This territorial rootedness, combined with our European vocation, positions INGENIUM as a bridge between local communities and the broader European project."*
>
> — INGENIUM Mission Statement, 2026

What hosting involves

Hosting is designed to be light. You bring the problem and a mentor; the universities take care of the rest.

Your organisation

- Offers a real challenge, or a rough idea to shape together
- Names a host mentor who guides the work day to day
- Provides a workspace or access to its site, data or people
- Completes the host profile and co-signs the Challenge Agreement
- Attends the final presentation and gives short feedback

The universities

- Prepare the student(s) and match them with your challenge
- Appoint an academic advisor, who keeps academic supervision
- Fund students' travel and stay through INGENIUM grants
- Agree the learning outcomes and recognise the work in the degree
- Settle practical and legal arrangements with you

The student(s)

- Prepare online before arriving
- Work on the challenge on site, from two days to two weeks, based on what you decide with them
- Respect your rules and any confidentiality agreed
- Deliver the agreed output
- Present the result to your team

Your time, phase by phase

Before **A few weeks**	One or two conversations to agree the challenge, the host profile in the Challenge Agreement, and a short online kick-off with the student(s).
On site **From 2 days to two weeks, flexible**	A welcome and an induction, a mentor available for questions, and check-ins at the rhythm you agree.
After **One or two weeks**	The final presentation, in person or online, a few minutes of feedback, and confirmation of the dates of attendance.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHALLENGE

- ✓ **Real and owned.** Someone in your organisation cares about the answer.
- ✓ **Sized for days.** It can move forward meaningfully in 5 to 14 days on site.
- ✓ **A clear output.** A report, an analysis, a prototype, a plan or a presentation.
- ✓ **Accessible.** Students can reach the data, places or people they need.
- ✓ **Open enough to shape.** Students learn most when they frame the problem with you.
- ✓ **A rough idea is enough.** Academics will help you turn it into a challenge.

The journey of a challenge

Five steps, from the first conversation to the final presentation. Dates are set case by case with you.

Share
Any time

Tell the INGENIUM office of a partner university about your challenge, or send the card at the end of this note.

Shape
Before

An academic advisor and the student(s) turn it into a challenge that fits a programme. You agree the details and co-sign.

Prepare
Online

A short online kick-off with your mentor. Students read up and draft a work plan.

Host
2 days–2 weeks

Students work with you on site. Your mentor guides them; the academic advisor stays in touch.

Present
At the end

Students present the result to your team. You give short feedback and confirm attendance.

YOUR PART IN THE CHALLENGE AGREEMENT

Each challenge is set out in a Challenge Agreement completed by the student(s), their academic advisor and your organisation.

Before the stay, you complete the host profile, agree the challenge and its deliverable with the students, and sign.

After the stay, you add short feedback and confirm the dates of attendance.

INSURANCE, CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

These points are settled for each challenge in the Challenge Agreement, between the university, the student(s) and your organisation, before anyone travels.

If the work involves confidential information, say so early: the agreement records what is confidential, who may use the results and how.

Ideas for every kind of host

Illustrations, not a closed list. You can propose a concrete challenge, or just a general idea that our academics shape with you.

	Host	Example challenge	What you could receive
	Companies and clusters	Optimise the scheduling of maintenance teams. A cluster or chamber can gather short briefs from several member firms.	*A scheduling model and recommendations*
	Local and regional authorities	"How can we reduce heat stress in our historic centre in summer?"	*Hotspot map and priority actions, presented to the planning team*
	Laboratories and research centres	Analyse an open marine dataset, or test a method on samples already collected.	*Data analysis and a method note*
	Hospitals and health organisations	Improve one step of a patient pathway.	*Process map and redesign proposals*
	NGOs and civil society	Design an awareness campaign adapted to a local context, or measure the reach of a programme.	*Campaign concept or impact snapshot*
	Development agencies and innovation hubs	A pool of short problem statements from the start-ups and small firms you support.	*Concrete proposals for the firms in your portfolio*
	Schools and education authorities	A STEM outreach week in which university students run workshops for pupils.	*Workshops and reusable teaching materials*
	University labs, departments and chairs	A question from work already under way, open to students from other INGENIUM universities.	*Contributions to ongoing research, possible thesis links*

Questions hosts ask

Short answers to the questions we hear most often. For anything else, contact the INGENIUM office of your partner university.

Q Who covers the costs?
Students' travel and stay are covered by INGENIUM grants, around €500–1,000 a week depending on destination. If hosting creates specific costs for your organisation, they can be discussed case by case.

Q Who is responsible for the students?
The academic advisor at the home university keeps academic supervision. Your host mentor guides the work day to day and is the students' first contact on site.

Q How much time does it take?
A few conversations before, a mentor available during the stay, and the final presentation. See "What hosting involves".

Q Insurance, confidentiality and IP?
Settled for each challenge in the Challenge Agreement, between the university, the student(s) and your organisation, before the students travel.

Q In which language?
Most challenges are worked in English, the working language of the alliance. If you need another language, say so when the challenge is agreed.

Q Bachelor, master and Phd students?
All three. Bachelor challenges tend to be more structured and exploratory; master and PhD challenges allow more autonomy, specialisation and research.

Q How many students?
One student or a small group, possibly from different INGENIUM universities. You decide how many you can host.

Q What if the result is not what we expected?
Real challenges sometimes end without the expected answer. Students are assessed on how they framed and tackled the problem, and you still gain evidence, ideas and an outside view.

Q Can we offer a challenge without hosting it?
Yes. You can propose a challenge for the shared INGENIUM challenge pool without hosting students yourself.

Q Do we need to be an associate partner?
Any external stakeholder can be part of challenge based mobilities. If you are not yet in contact, the INGENIUM office of the nearest partner, or the Technical Secretariat, can make the link.

How to get involved

Three steps to your first challenge. You do not need to write an application.

1 Describe it

Use the card on the next page, or simply write a few lines about the problem and who it affects.

2 Send it

To the INGENIUM office of the university you work with, or to the Technical Secretariat.

3 Shape it together

Academic colleagues get in touch to shape the challenge with you and find the right students.

The ten INGENIUM universities

University of Oviedo
Oviedo · Spain

Xamk, South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences
Kotka and Mikkeli · Finland

Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences
Karlsruhe · Germany

Munster Technological University
Cork and Kerry · Ireland

University of Rouen Normandy
Rouen · France

"Gheorghe Asachi" Technical University of Iași
Iași · Romania

University of Skövde
Skövde · Sweden

University "G. d'Annunzio" of Chieti-Pescara
Chieti and Pescara · Italy

University of Crete
Heraklion and Rethymno · Greece

Medical University – Sofia
Sofia · Bulgaria

CONTACT

INGENIUM Technical Secretariat ingenium@uniovi.es

More on Challenge-Based Mobility: ingenium-university.eu › Challenge-Based Mobilities

CHALLENGE CARD

Offer a challenge

Complete what you can and send it to the INGENIUM office of the university you work with, or to ingenium@uniovi.es. A rough idea is enough.

Organisation Name · city · country · website	
Contact person Name · position · email · phone	
Linked INGENIUM university If you already work with one	
Challenge title A few words	
The problem What happens now, who is affected, why it matters	
What students could deliver Report, analysis, prototype, plan, campaign…	
Type of challenge	☐ Research ☐ Practice ☐ Hybrid ☐ Not sure
Fields or disciplines e.g. data science, urban planning, nursing, marketing	
Level	☐ Bachelor ☐ Master ☐ Either
Hosting	☐ We can host on site, up to ….. students ☐ Challenge pool only, without hosting
Possible period Months or dates that suit you	
Working language(s)	
Good to know Confidentiality, access, safety, anything else	

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