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Higher Education Institution (HEI)

A) Applicant - HEI

1. What is the difference between a "full partner" and an "associated partner"?

Only higher education institutions can be regarded as "full partner institutions". Any other type of organisations should be regarded as "associated partners".

While "full partners" are concerned by and actively involved in all(/most of) the aspects linked to the management and implementation of the Action 1 consortium or Action 2 partnership activities, the "associated partners" are only concerned by or involved in specific aspects of it (e.g. promotion and awareness-raising of the consortium/partnership activities; identification of scholarship candidates; quality assurance aspects; sponsoring of specific activities; student hosting for study, research of professional placement purposes; dissemination of results, etc.)

Although "associated partners" can be involved in more than one of these aspects:

- if they are HEIs and
- if they host students as part of the mandatory study/research programme and
- if they are involved in the study/research programme recognition aspects,

they are expected to act as (/become) full partners, if not from the start of the consortium/partnership activities, then at least in the medium term.

As opposed to "associated partners", "full partners":

- can benefit from the grant
- must be involved in the consortium/partnership decision processes (in order to be approved by the Agency, changes in the content or structure of the project must be endorsed by all the "full partners")

- are fully involved in the EMMC implementation and the consortium's steering bodies (and not only in specific/targeted activities as the "associated partners "might be;)
- have the obligation to act as a host institution for students, delivering part of the degree
- under certain circumstances, can benefit from mobility scholarships for their scholars

Please note that the Erasmus Mundus Programmes also intends to award EU scholars scholarships in cases of non-EU "associated partners", if these receive students. However, the number of scholarships remains to be decided (and will depend on budget availability).

2. Can a co-coordinator manage two projects, or be involved in a second project as partner?

It is possible for a coordinator to submit two proposals with different consortium. Here the applicant would have to demonstrate that either the individual coordinator or the coordinating institution (or both) have the capacities to manage the two projects simultaneously.

An existing project coordinator may be involved as a partner in another consortium's proposal. Again the applicant would have to demonstrate that this would not diminish the capacities that would need to remain available for the successful implementation of the existing course.

3. On what basis are the student/doctoral candidates selected by EM joint programme consortia?

The student/doctoral candidate selection process is the responsibility of individual consortia. However the EM programme imposes a certain number of requirements which have to be met by all consortia. In order to guarantee that these requirements are actually met, newly selected consortia have to present to the Agency (together with their first list of scholarship/fellowship candidates) a "Student /Doctoral candidate selection procedure" that describes the way they intend to implement such a selection during the five consecutive editions (/intakes) of the joint programme.

The first requirement is that the entire process must be common and unique for the consortium as a whole. In other words, the students (/doctoral candidates):

- have to apply to the consortium and not to one of its partners, and
- have to undergo to a single and common application and selection procedure, defined and implemented collectively by the consortium partners.

The second requirement concerns the obligation to design an application and selection procedure:

- that guarantees the objectivity, transparency, fairness and equality of treatment of the entire process, and
- that respects the eligibility criteria defined in the Programme Guide for the identification of Category A and B scholarship/fellowship applicants, the need for a geographical balance among the candidates proposed and the timing of the entire process (and more particularly the obligation to provide potential candidates with enough time – at least 4 months - to prepare and submit their scholarship/fellowship application).

Although individual consortia are free to define their own application form and procedure, they must include a certain number of mandatory elements such as the candidate's personal data, proof of nationality, academic credentials (CV, certified copy of university diplomas and transcript of study results), proof of linguistic expertise, motivation and recommendation letters, etc.

Finally, consortia should also ensure that:

- candidates are fully aware of the programme's eligibility criteria (e.g. nationality, 12-month rule, application to 3 EMMCs max, may not be EMMC scholarship-holder etc.) and that they have respected these criteria when applying for their scholarship/fellowship.
- when applying for a scholarship/fellowship, candidates have had the possibility to consult all the necessary documents on the joint programme structure, content and key characteristics so as to ensure that they are fully aware of what will be expected from them if their application is successful;
- candidates are clearly informed of the scholarship/fellowship selection timetable and results notification procedure.

It should be noted that the decision to propose (or not) an EM scholarship/fellowship to an eligible student/doctoral candidate cannot be based on socio-economical reasons but only on the basis of its academic credentials. In other words, the student/doctoral candidate's financial means must not enter into account in the scholarship/fellowship decision process.

Consortia are responsible for ensuring that all candidates proposed fulfil the eligibility criteria defined in the EM Programme Guide. If a scholarship/fellowship is awarded to a student/doctoral candidate who does not fulfil one or more of these criteria, the Agency may ask for the reimbursement of the scholarship/fellowship awarded.

4. Is it obligatory to have third-country partners in an Action 1 Joint Programme?

No. The inclusion/participation of a third-country partner, as well as any other partner, in a consortium must result from the concrete added value this partner will bring to the joint programme and its participants, and by no means for external reasons independent of the programme's objectives.

In other words consortium partners, European and non-European, must play an active and structural role in the implementation of the joint programme and must be instrumental to its success.

5. Who is eligible for an Action 1 Joint Programme's student/doctoral candidate scholarship/fellowship?

For both masters and doctoral programmes, there are two types of student or doctoral candidate scholarships/fellowships.

Category A scholarships/fellowships are offered to:

- third-country candidates
 - who have the required academic credentials (as defined by the individual consortia) **and**
 - who are not resident **nor** have carried out their main activity (studies, training or work) in an eligible applicant country¹ for more than a total of 12 months over the last five years.

¹ See sections 4.2.1 and 5.2.1 of the Programme Guide to identify the eligible applicant countries. Please note that in order to be considered as such, the countries that are not Member States of the European Union need to have signed an agreement (or a Memorandum of Understanding or an EEA Joint Committee Decision) establishing their participation in the Erasmus Mundus Programme. If this is not the case, they are considered as third countries together with their institutions and individual nationals.

Category B scholarships/fellowships are offered to:

- European candidates **or**
- Third-country candidates that are not eligible for a Category A scholarship/fellowship **and** who have the required academic credentials (as defined by the individual consortia).

It is the consortium's responsibility to ensure that these eligibility criteria are fully understood and applied by the candidates when submitting their scholarship/fellowship application.

The Agency may ask the consortium to reimburse the scholarship/fellowship amount if it appears that it has been given to a student / doctoral candidate that did not fulfil the eligibility criteria.

6. How are the student/doctoral candidate “participation costs” calculated? How are they paid?

The student/doctoral candidate participation costs must be calculated by the consortia in accordance with their means and needs.

In other words, the individual participation costs amount should be defined taking into account the following parameters:

- a. How much does it cost the partner HEIs to implement and maintain an EM joint programme (taking into account that these costs must include all mandatory study/research activities expected from the students/doctoral candidates, including the insurance coverage²)?
- b. How much (/which) of these costs are covered by the partner institutions or other sponsors (including the EM programme flat rate for the consortium management costs)?
- c. What are the annual student/doctoral intake estimations?

In principle, the student/doctoral candidate participation costs should correspond to $(a - b) / c$

The corresponding participation costs (and what they give right to) should be clearly announced on the joint programme's web site.

Although there can be different participation costs for European and non-European students/doctoral candidates, the amounts must be the same for scholarship/fellowship holders and self-paying students/doctoral candidates.

The student/doctoral candidate participation costs are paid to the consortia as part of the scholarship/fellowship.

- For **masters programmes**, the participation costs amount included in the scholarship will vary in accordance of the actual amount defined by the consortium (with a maximum of 4000 or 2000 € per semester for Category A and B respectively)
- For **doctorate programmes**, the participation costs amount included in the fellowship is a fixed amount of 300 € per month for “non laboratory-based” research projects and 600 € per month for “laboratory-based” research projects.

² Any other extra costs that may be charged (e.g. for participation in fieldwork activities, internship), being compulsory or voluntary, must also be communicated to the student at application stage.

While the participation costs are defined and allocated for the entire duration of the joint programme, consortia should only charge them on a semester basis or, if not possible because of institutional practices, at least on an annual basis.

7. How are the students/doctoral candidates enrolled in a joint programme covered in case of accident or illness (is there an insurance scheme in place)?

In order to ensure that all students/doctoral candidates enrolled in Erasmus Mundus joint programmes are fully covered during the study / research period, the Agency has drafted a set of minimal requirements applicable to the students/doctoral candidates' insurance coverage. These are available on this page:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/beneficiaries/beneficiaries_action_1_en.php

It is the consortium's responsibility to ensure that these minimal requirements are fully met and that the corresponding costs are included in the student/doctoral candidate participation costs in the joint programme.

The consortium is free to select the insurance company (/ies) and scheme(s) of its choice and can opt for:

- a single and common scheme covering all the students/doctoral candidates during the entire period of the joint programme and independently from their mobility track, or
- different schemes in accordance with the specific countries visited by each individual student/doctoral candidate.

If the second option is chosen, the consortium should ensure that the different schemes provide similar coverage to all students, independently from the country visited during the joint programme.

8. How are scholars benefitting from an Erasmus Mundus scholarship selected and funded?

In each of the five specific grant agreements offered to joint programmes' consortia in the context of their framework partnership agreement, a grant amount will be earmarked for funding the mobility costs of third-country and, if applicable, European, scholars.

Contrary to the student's scholarships, scholar's scholarships are not linked to the scholar's nationality but rather to country of the HEI employing the scholar concerned. In other words,

- "**Third-country scholar**" refers to a scholar enrolled in a third-country HEI (independently from the scholar's nationality) and selected to contribute to the delivery of the joint programme in the European HEIs of the consortium;
- "**European scholar**" refers to a scholar enrolled in a European HEI member of the consortium (independently from the scholar's nationality) and selected to visit a non-European partner or associated member of the consortium.

Programme consortia will be free to identify and select the visiting scholars during the entire period of the joint programme concerned.

When selecting their scholar scholarship-holders, consortia will have to ensure that:

- each individual scholarship³ is offered to a scholar coming from a different HEI,

³ A scholarship is understood as a three-month mobility period. If shorter visiting periods are implemented more scholars can come from the same HEI, but the total duration of their funded stay cannot exceed three months.

- the selected scholars demonstrate outstanding academic and/or professional experience and bring concrete added value to the course and the students
- a gender balance objective is included among the selection criteria
- different scholars (if not all at least some) are selected from one course edition to another.

The number of scholarships offered each year for the two categories will vary in accordance with the course duration, the consortium composition (/presence of third-country partners) and the existence of student mobility flows to non-European partners or associated members. In this context, “European scholar” scholarships will only be awarded to consortia offering student mobility tracks to non-European partners or associated members.

It should be noted that “European scholar” scholarships can never be used to cover intra-European mobility between European HEIs. This type of mobility must be covered by the teaching staff mobility grants offered by the LLP Erasmus programme.

Although each individual scholarship is calculated taking into account a maximum mobility period of three months, consortia may decide to invite/fund more scholars for shorter periods on the condition that each individual mobility flow lasts a minimum of two weeks.

9. How are individual EMMC student scholarships calculated and paid to the students?

The EMMC student’s scholarship is composed of three different parts⁴

a) The contribution to the student’s travel and installation costs

This amount varies in accordance with the course duration and, for category B scholarships, depends on the possibility of the students concerned to follow part of their course study in a third-country partner or associated member.

Since this part of the scholarship is supposed to cover the travel and first installation costs, it is important that those receiving Category A scholarships receive it as soon as possible after their arrival in Europe. The payment should however be split into two instalments if the course duration is longer than one year.

If applicable, for Category B scholarships, it should be paid to the student prior to the departure for the third-country partner / associated member.

b) The maximum contribution to the student’s participation costs in the EMMCs

This part of the scholarship will vary in accordance with the actual participation costs defined by the consortium for the two categories of students. If these participation costs are lower than the maximum contribution offered by the programme, the scholarship amount will be reduced accordingly.

However, if the participation costs are higher than the maximum contribution the amount will be added to the scholarship and it is expected that the difference is co-funded by the consortium (or external sponsors) and not by the scholarship-holders.

The contribution to the student’s participation costs can be collected directly from the scholarship by the EMMC consortium on the condition that the student has signed a “*student agreement*” in which the amount and the costs it covers have been clearly indicated. However, this contribution should be charged by the consortium on a semester’s basis or, if not possible because of institutional practices, at least on an annual basis.

⁴ See the “Scholarships table” on section 4.4 of the Programme Guide for details on the individual amounts concerned

c) *The monthly allowance*

The monthly allowance must be paid in full to the student from the beginning of the course in monthly instalments. Only under particular circumstances (formally approved in advance by the Agency) can these instalments cover more than one monthly allowance (for instance during the academic breaks, if the administrative services in charge of the payments are not operational.)

Because of this scholarship calculation method – and in contrast to the first phase of the programme – **individual category A and B student scholarships will vary from one EMMC to another** (because of its length, the composition and actual amount of participation costs), while **the monthly allowance amount will be identical for all students under each of the two categories.**

If a scholarship-holder withdraws (or is expelled) from the course, the remaining (/unpaid /uncharged) part of the scholarship will either be used for a non scholarship-holder enrolled in the course and included in the reserve lists submitted to and approved by the Agency or returned to the Agency at the end of the specific agreement concerned (*see question 24 What happens if a scholarship/fellowship holder is under performing? under B) HEI - Beneficiary and question 16 under B) Beneficiary – HEI on scholarship redistribution to reserve list students for more details*).

10. *How many scholarships are allocated to an EMMC?*

The number of scholarships/fellowships allocated to each joint programme (at masters or doctoral level) is decided on a yearly basis taking into account the budget available and the number of joint programmes concerned. Looking only at our current simulation, the average number of scholarship awarded would be 15 (ranging from 8 for the masters in their 8th edition to 18 for the newly selected ones). But experience has shown that these figures may vary substantially in accordance with the allocated budget (this is what happened last year).

For a new application though, it is important to confirm that the number of EM scholarships will not go beyond 15 during its first four editions of the EMMC, nor (probably) go above 20.

11. *How should an EM Joint Programme deal with the use of more than one language?*

Usually joint programmes with several tuition languages tend to recruit their students in countries/continents where the second language (in addition to English) is widely spread. Although this situation can affect the overall geographical balance of the students' cohorts, normally it does not put the joint programme in danger because of the lack of sufficient candidates.

What is important is to ensure an appropriate and thorough check of the linguistic expertise of the students at enrolment stage and during the first days of the course (in the host country concerned). EM joint programmes are supposed to be of an excellent academic quality and they should not be used for the language training of scholarship holders.

Some masters courses have also developed efficient and intensive language training facilities that are used by the students prior to their arrival in the (second) host country and that allow them to have an adequate linguistic expertise when they start their course.

12. *Will there be another Call for proposals to apply within the Erasmus Mundus Programme?*

Yes, the programme operates under an annual cycle of Calls for Proposals. So each November/December a Call for proposals will be launched for all three actions of the programme, with a deadline of the last working day of April the next year. (2011 Call launched in December 2010, with a deadline of 29 April 2011).

13. What kind of information should an EM Joint Programme Website (EMMC and EMJD) contain?

For the EMMC and the EMJD website several recommendations have been developed, which you can find on the following web page of the Executive Agency:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/beneficiaries/beneficiaries_action_1_en.php

B) Beneficiary – HEI

14. Can the composition of an EM consortium be modified after having been selected?

The relevance of the consortium composition and the contribution of each partner to the joint programme's implementation are key elements in the assessment and selection of a new joint programme's proposal. As a result, any change in this composition is considered as a major modification of the original proposal requiring a formal amendment of the framework partnership agreement.

In order to introduce such an amendment request, the consortium will have to describe the impact and added value of the new composition to the functioning of the consortium and the delivery of the joint programme. In particular, the role of the new partner and, if applicable, the modified role of the original ones (from the management and content point of views) will have to be presented in detail.

The decision to accept or reject the request will depend on its assessment by the Agency, carried out – if necessary – by external experts.

Because the consortium composition, the mobility tracks offered and the role/expertise of individual partners in delivering the joint programme constitute important elements in the scholarship/fellowship candidate's decision to apply to one consortia rather than another, it is necessary for the consortium composition to remain unchanged from the opening of the scholarship application period until the end of the study/research programme concerned.

As a result, requests to change the consortium composition will only apply as from the year following the amendment request (for instance if a consortium presents a request to modify its composition on 01/01/2011, if accepted by the Agency, the new composition will be applicable as from the 2012 intake of the joint programme and concern the corresponding scholarship/fellowship promotion campaign starting in autumn 2011⁵).

In order to allow the Agency to carry out the required amendment assessment, consortium composition modification requests have to be introduced at the latest on 15th May of the year preceding the intake concerned (15/05/2011 in the example above).

15. How to deal with a later arrival of a student?

⁵ Changes in the institutions delivering the teaching/research programme cannot occur during the programme's delivery period unless it is formally approved by the students/doctoral candidates already enrolled in it.

It is up to the consortium to decide if and to what extent a student can join the programme after the actual beginning of the course bearing in mind that such late arrival cannot lead to an extension of the course duration. In such a context, arriving a few months later may render it difficult for the student concerned to catch up with the rest of the class and to graduate on time.

Please note that in case of late arrival, the monthly allowance can only be paid as from the month of arrival of the student in the course.

16. Can the remaining part of a scholarship/fellowship amount be given to another student/doctoral candidate if there has been a withdrawal (or expulsion from the joint programme) of the original beneficiary?

EM scholarship/fellowships not used in full by their intended beneficiary student/doctoral candidate (because the latter has abandoned the joint programme for personal or reasons or because of under-performance) can indeed be given to another student/doctoral candidate under the following conditions:

- the student doctoral candidate must have been included in the relevant reserve list presented to and approved by the Agency in the context of the scholarship/fellowship selection procedure
- if possible, the geographical balance criteria should be respected;
- the new beneficiary student/doctoral candidate must be capable of completing the joint programme activities within the same period as all other students/doctoral candidates from the same cohort.

This last rule implies that the student/doctoral candidate belongs to the same cohort than the withdrawn one and that either he/she is already enrolled in the joint programme on a self-paying basis, or that the drop-out has taken place at an early stage of the joint programme, allowing thereby the new beneficiary to enrol later and nevertheless catch up on the activities missed.

The decision to reallocate a scholarship/fellowship to another student/doctoral candidate must be formally requested to and approved in advance by the Agency. The request must be introduced in the Erasmus Mundus Mobility Database.

17. Is there any possibility of transferring EM scholarship funding from Category A to Category B or vice et versa in order to compensate an under demand under one Category with an over demand in the other Category?

In the eventuality that the consortium is left with unused scholarships/fellowships (full or partial) following drop outs or no-shows either in Category A or B for which replacement in the given Category is not possible, a transfer of a maximum 20% can be requested to compensate for a possible over demand in the other Category (either A or B).

The 20% ceiling is based on the Category A budget. This possibility is available only during the implementation of a specific course edition, which means after the signature of the specific grant agreement. It can not be requested by a consortium, in anticipation nor during the scholarship selection phase to modify the planned partition of scholarship funds between the two Categories.

18. Do the EM scholars holding a scholarship have to come from different HEIs?

The minimum stay for a scholar is two weeks and the maximum is three months. So a maximum of **6 scholars** with a minimum stay of two weeks can come from the same HEI.

19. What measures can be taken to facilitate the visa procedure for non-European students?

It is the responsibility of the consortium and the student to ensure that the visa procedure is launched well in advance of the student's expected arrival date in Europe.

As soon as the student's application is approved, the consortium should provide him with the necessary guidelines on how to apply for a visa for the relevant host country.

Making reference to the EM official scholarship notification letter and to any other relevant support documents, the consortium should liaise with the appropriate authorities – European embassy in the student's home country, Ministry of foreign affairs and local authorities in the European host country – in order to ensure that student's status (and the programme's intra-European mobility requirements) are well understood and taken into account accordingly.

Because of their privileged links with their local ministerial authorities (education, foreign and interior affairs), Erasmus Mundus National Structures can also provide valuable support to the consortia and their third-country students in facilitating obtaining the visa and/or residence permit.

Should the above measures prove to be insufficient, the consortium should contact the Agency and this latter will ask for the support of the EU Delegation in the third country concerned.

Consortia should bear in mind that **the entrance visa to the EU is only the first visa requirement students/doctoral candidates will have to fulfil** in order to complete their joint programme's activities. Because of the mobility requirement within the joint programmes' regulations, most of the students/doctoral candidates will need to obtain additional visas in order to move to their second/third/etc. host HEI. The corresponding visa procedures may prove to be as or even more difficult than the initial one and consortia are strongly recommended to address them as soon as the student/doctoral candidate has started his/her doctoral activities.

20. What type of degree must be awarded to successful masters students or doctoral candidates?

All students / doctoral candidates who have successfully completed their study / research programme must be awarded a joint, double or multiple degree that is fully recognised by the relevant authorities of the countries concerned.

- **A Double or Multiple Degree** corresponds to two or more national diplomas issued by two or more partner HEIs from different countries and recognized officially in the countries where these degree-awarding institutions are located.
- **A Joint degree** is a single diploma issued by at least two partner HEIs from different countries and recognized officially in the countries where these degree-awarding institutions are located. In accordance with the Erasmus Mundus Programme Decision, "programmes resulting in the award of joint degrees shall be promoted"

Within the same consortium a **combination of double, multiple and joint degrees** could be found in accordance with the student's mobility track and the possibility of the HEIs concerned to deliver or not a joint degree.

While double or multiple degrees are usually delivered only to students that have studied in the degree-awarding institutions, joint degrees can be delivered (/endorsed) by partner institutions that have not been visited by the student concerned. This should be considered as the highest degree of joint programme's integration.

Although not all partner HEIs have to be degree-awarding institutions, it should be a consortium's aim to ensure that all partners become degree-awarding institutions before the end of the five consecutive editions of the joint programme.

21. How should the consortium act if a third-country national fails the residence condition (e.g. he/she has been a student in Europe)?

A student in this case is only eligible for a Category B scholarship. However, the student will be liable for a third-country rate of participation charge. As the Category B Scholarship will only fund half of that, the student will have to fund the other half. The University administrations will expect this because lines of co-funding based on EU nationality do not apply, and also there are real extra costs.

This problem results from the fact that initially Cat A and B scholarships were intended for non-EU and EU students respectively.

This being said, the eligibility of non-EU student to Cat B scholarships creates indeed a problem since the "EM Programme contribution to the participation charges" is different for the two categories, while university policies/practices on fees are solely linked to the nationality/residence (EU or non-EU) of the students.

In order to address this issue, consortia are recommended to do the following:

- Consortia should define participation charges (/fees) for EU and non-EU students
- The consortium's "non-EU fees" will be applied to Cat A scholarship holders. If these fees are higher than the maximum EM programme's contribution to cat A scholarships (i.e. € 4000 /semester), the consortium should waive the difference between this contribution and the real fees
- The consortium's "EU fees" will be applied to European Cat B scholarship holders. If these fees are higher than the maximum EM programme's contribution to cat B scholarships (i.e. € 2000/semester) the consortium should waive the difference between this contribution and the real fees.
- The consortium's "non-EU fees" will be applied to non-European Cat B scholarship holders, under the following conditions:
 - if these fees are higher than the maximum EM programme's contribution to Cat A scholarships (i.e. € 4000/semester) then the difference should be shared between the consortium (i.e. = consortium "non-EU fees" minus "maximum EM programme's contribution to Cat A scholarships") and the student (i.e. = "maximum EM programme's contribution to Cat A scholarships" minus "maximum EM programme's contribution to Cat B scholarships")
- If these fees are higher than the "maximum EM programme's contribution to Cat B scholarships" but lower or equal than the "maximum EM programme's contribution to Cat A scholarships" than the difference could be covered solely by the student;

It goes without saying that, for these two last cases, any (additional) financial support from the consortium aiming at reducing the student's direct contribution to these fees is highly recommended and seen as a good practice.

While this solution is not straightforward but in view of the above mentioned constraints, we believe it is the fairest one since it preserves the consortium's interest and treats all students on an equal footing.

22. Can a student/doctoral candidate scholarship/fellowship be put on hold?

A student/doctoral candidate scholarship/fellowship can be put on hold if the student/doctoral candidate has to temporarily abandon the joint programme **because of serious health or family reasons**.

In no circumstances can the scholarship be temporarily interrupted because of a student's insufficient performance. In such circumstance, the scholarship must be cancelled (see question 24, *What happens if a scholarship/fellowship holder is under performing?* for more details).

If a student/doctoral candidate has to temporarily abandon the joint programme, the scholarship/fellowship payment must be interrupted until the student/doctoral candidate is again physically present at his/her host institution and actively participating in the study/research programme.

If, despite the temporary absence, the student/doctoral candidate can catch up on his/her studies or research activities without needing to extend the originally agreed study/research period, the monthly allowances corresponding to the interruption period could be paid to the student/doctoral candidate if this has been requested and authorised by the Agency in advance.

If on the contrary, the absence is too long and requires an extension of the originally agreed study/research period, then the consortium must request an extension of the specific agreement eligibility period to the Agency. Such an extension will be granted after the reception and approval of the relevant documents (justification of the student's absence), and will lead to an amendment of the specific grant agreement.

The extension period cannot exceed 12 months and cannot give rise to additional funding for the consortium or the student.

23. Can a consortium apply different participation costs to EM scholarship-holders and non holders?

No. Participation costs must be agreed collectively, taking into account the needs and means of each participating HEI. In this context, they have to reflect the consortium joint assessment of the EMMC running costs and the contribution required from each individual student to these costs.

The only difference possible (although not required by the programme) concerns the European and non-European masters students for which consortia can define different participation costs in accordance with the legal framework in place in the countries represented in the consortium.

24. What happens if a scholarship/fellowship holder is under performing?

It is the consortium's responsibility to ensure that enrolled students/doctoral candidates have all the academic, research, linguistic or personal competences required to successfully follow the joint programme.

In view of the important demand for EM scholarships/fellowships (around 8% success rate for EMMC scholarships in 2009), it is not acceptable to continue paying the scholarship/fellowship to students/doctoral candidates who do not demonstrate such competences and who will clearly not be capable of successfully completing their joint programme activities.

Although these competences should be at verified at the application stage during the assessment of the student/doctoral candidate credentials and, if necessary through interviews with the candidates, consortia are invited to organise competence controls during the initial months of the joint programme in order to assess the real level of the students/doctoral candidates, in comparison

with the joint programme's predefined benchmarks. If a scholarship/fellowship holder does not reach these benchmarks, the consortium must assess if he/she could improve and successfully complete the joint programme. If the assessment result is negative, then the consortium must inform the student/doctoral candidate accordingly and stop the scholarship scheme. If the consortium believes the student/doctoral candidate can improve, it can continue to pay the scholarship scheme but must at the same time, define concrete improvement objectives for the student/doctoral candidate concerned and ensure these objectives are actually met.

It is of crucial importance that the consortium competence benchmarks are defined well in advance and clearly communicated to the student/doctoral candidate at the enrolment stage, together with the competence assessment procedure, timetable and possible consequences on the student/doctoral candidate's enrolment in the joint programme and on the EM scholarship/fellowship.

If a consortium decides to stop a student/doctoral candidate scholarship/fellowship it must ensure that the beneficiary has been properly informed in advance and has been able to appeal in accordance with previously agreed procedures.

Although it is obliged to stop the scholarship/fellowship payments in case of clear insufficient performance, the decision to expel or not the student/doctoral candidate from the joint programmes remains with the consortium.

The decision to stop the scholarship/fellowship must be definitive. In other words, consortia are not authorised to withhold the payments until the student/doctoral candidate performance eventually improves.

If a third-country scholarship-holder is expelled from a joint programme for performance reasons, the consortium may use part of the remaining scholarship/fellowship amount to reimburse the student travel costs to return to his/her home country.

25. How and when are the scholarships/fellowships and the joint programme management flat rate paid to the consortium?

The EU grant – composed of the individual scholarships/fellowship and the flat rate amount for the consortium management – is paid on an annual basis in order to fund each of the five consecutive editions (/intakes) of the joint programme.

The first pre-financing payment, corresponding to 70% of the total grant, is launched after the signature of the Specific Grant Agreement by the Beneficiary and the Agency (usually around July).

The second pre-financing payment, corresponding to the remaining 30% of the grant, is launched upon reception and approval by the Agency of the "Second pre-financing request" submitted by the beneficiary and in which the latter confirms that at least 70% of the first pre-financing has been spent.

26. What is the purpose of the "consortium agreement" and the "student / doctoral candidate agreement"?

As from the second phase of the programme, all approved consortia (at doctoral or masters level) must have these two documents approved by the Agency prior to the signature of the first specific grant agreement (and the payment of the corresponding grant).

The "**consortium agreement**" (EMMC or EMJD Agreement) is a document that guarantees the institutional commitment and support of all partner HEIs within the joint programme.

In this context, the “consortium agreement” should clearly describe

- the functioning of the joint programme and its implementation mechanisms from the academic, administrative and financial points of view,
- the role and responsibility of each individual partner, together with the specific (academic, administrative and financial) support they have agreed to provide the consortium with

The consortium agreement must be endorsed/signed by the highest authorities of the partner HEIs and must be valid for the entire duration of the framework partnership agreement.

The “**student / doctoral candidate agreement**” is a document signed by each individual student/doctoral candidate enrolled in the joint programme and the relevant consortium authorities (e.g. the coordinator/contact person in the first host HEI).

The purpose of this document is to clearly specify the rights and responsibilities of each of the two parties and to ensure that the students/doctoral candidates are fully aware of the joint programme implementation mechanisms from the academic, administrative and financial points of view.

In order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts between the two parties, it is recommended for the “student/doctoral candidate agreement” to be as comprehensive as possible and to be communicated to the candidate well in advance of his/her enrolment in the joint programme. It is considered a good practice to publish the agreement model (together with any other relevant document) on the joint programme’s web pages next to the student/doctoral candidate application section.

For scholarship/fellowship holders, the student/doctoral candidate agreement should clearly specify the conditions attached to the awarded grant as well as its payment mechanisms.

It should be noted that the doctoral candidates’ employment contract does not replace the “doctoral candidate agreement” since the latter must include aspects that are specific to the joint programme and that are not necessarily covered by the employment contract.

Models of “consortium agreements” and “student/doctoral candidate agreements” can be found under: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/tools/good_practices_en.php

27. What are ethical issues?

Even though doctoral candidates can implement doctoral research project in all disciplines, some research areas may be subject to specific national legislation on ethical grounds.

Consequently, the Erasmus Mundus Programme will not finance research activities in such areas that are contrary to the national legislation of the country (/ies) where this research takes place.

When defining the research topics that will be proposed to doctoral candidates, EMJD consortia must ensure that none of these topics would be contrary to the ethical regulations in the countries where the research would take place. Where applicable, the consortium will have to obtain the necessary approvals from local/national authorities before the start of the research activities and submit these support documents to the Agency.

More information on ethical issues in general and the areas that should be taken into account can be found under: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html