Erasmus Charter for Higher Education

Application Manual

Closing date for electronic submission:

15 May 2013, 12:00h (noon), Brussels time

This is a web-based document and contains hyperlinks taking you to supporting documents if you read it on-line.
IMPORTANT REMARKS

• The award of an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) is a pre-requisite for all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) located in an eligible country and wishing to participate in the learning mobility of individuals and/or cooperation for innovation and good practices in the 2014-2020 EU programme for education, training, youth and sport proposed by the European Commission on 23 November 2011 (hereafter the Programme). All HEIs interested in participating in the Programme activities as of 2014 have to submit an application to this call for proposals¹.

• All ECHE applicants have to follow the full application process and fill in their application form providing accurate and detailed information. This application form needs to be carefully and thoroughly completed as it will be used for the selection and also for the monitoring of the HEI’s implementation of the ECHE principles under the Programme.

• The structure and content of the application form and the related eligibility and award criteria are explained in section I of this Manual.

• The procedure of submitting an ECHE application is explained in Section II of this Manual.

Please note that specific guidance and technical information on how to fill in the ECHE on-line application form are also provided within the on-line submission tool.

• The minimum system requirements for the ECHE on-line application are explained on the web site of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA):


This Manual is to be read in conjunction with the text of the Call for Proposals and the ECHE Annotated Guidelines. In the event of any discrepancy between the texts, the order of precedence of documents in the context of the Call for Proposals is:

(1) The official announcement of the Call for proposals in the Official Journal of the European Union

(2) The text of the Call as published on the website of the Commission and the EACEA

(3) The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education Annotated Guidelines

(4) The Application Manual

For reference please consult the ECHE webpage:


I. ECHE Application:

I.1. Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)

The Charter sets out the fundamental principles and the minimum requirements with which the higher education institution (HEI) must comply when applying for and implementing activities within the framework of the Programme.

The Programme aims at supporting the European modernisation and internationalisation agenda in higher education. By applying and signing the ECHE, the HEI confirms that its participation in the Programme is part of its own strategy for modernisation and internationalisation. This strategy acknowledges the key contribution of student and staff mobility and of participation in international cooperation projects, to the quality of its higher education programmes and student experience. The Charter aims in particular at reinforcing the quality of student and staff mobility and the monitoring of the institutions involved in it.
**Period of validity of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)**

Once approved by the European Commission and signed by the representative of the HEI, the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education remains valid for the full duration of the Programme, until the end of the academic year 2020/2021.

The compliance of the HEI with the ECHE will be monitored by the National Agency through visits, HEI reporting, participant reports, etc. In case non-compliance is identified, an action plan will be agreed between the HEI and the National Agency to solve the problematic issues. If the action plan is not implemented by the HEI within the agreed timeline, this will be reported to the European Commission and may lead to the withdrawal of the ECHE by the European Commission.

**I.2. ECHE Annotated Guidelines**

The objectives of these guidelines are both to provide support to HEIs in their self-assessment, as well as a means of internal and external monitoring of the way they implement their activities.

**I.3. ECHE Application form: structure and content**

- **General information-context.**
  
  In this section the applicant is requested to indicate in which language he/she wants the on-line tool to be displayed (EN, FR, DE) and in which language the application form is submitted (official EU languages).

  To be eligible, the application for the ECHE must be submitted in one of the 23 official languages of the European Union: Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Slovak, Slovene or Swedish.

  However, a translation into English, French or German is required for the questions related to the EPS – Overall Strategy in section D of the application form.

- **Section A: Applicant organisation, Legal representative and Coordinator**
The applicant is requested to provide the identification of the organisation, names and contact details of the legal representative and of the coordinator.

- **Section B: Statistics**

The purpose of these statistics is to put into context the actions and strategies the institution is asked to present in sections C and D. The statistics will help to estimate whether what is planned in sections C and D is realistic as regards the profile of the applicant institution and its operational capacity.

The information required concerns higher education only. The applicant should not include data on any other levels of education provided by its institution.

- **Section C: General organisation of Programme activities**

NOTE: Section C (on respect of ECHE principles) consists of tick boxes only and tick boxes followed by questions to be answered in open comments space.

By applying for the ECHE, the institution commits to adhere to all its principles regardless of the types of activities the institution will actually apply for under the Programme. The applicant organisation is therefore required to tick each box next to each principle, thereby confirming its understanding of and commitment to it when it comes to implementing the related activities under the Programme. For more information on the principles, please refer to the ECHE Annotated Guidelines.

If the tick box is followed by questions, answers have to be provided in the space open for explanations.

The answering of all questions in this section is compulsory. A clear justification has to be provided in case a question is not relevant for the applicant organisation. It should be noted that information provided there has to be in line with the Erasmus Policy Statement (section D of the application form).

- **Section D: Erasmus Policy statement – Overall strategy**

The Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) sets out the institution’s overall modernisation and internationalisation strategy. In particular, the applicant organisation is expected to:
o describe its mobility target groups and geographical scope (within and beyond participating countries).

Under the Programme, the following types of higher education individual learning mobility can be funded:

- student credit mobility at short cycle, Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels between participating countries, and to and from non-participating countries, for studies and/or traineeships (work placements) in enterprises.

- HEI staff (academic and non-academic staff) mobility within HEIs or to other relevant organisations in participating and non-participating countries, to teach and/or to be trained. Staff from enterprises can also be supported to deliver training courses or workshops in HEI oriented towards real case approach.

- Joint Masters degrees for double/multiple/joint master programmes\(^2\) of outstanding quality, delivered by consortia of HEIs from participating countries (with possible participation of HEI from non-participating countries) to foster student degree mobility at Master level, and attract the best students to Europe.

o describe which types of cooperation projects for innovation and good practices it intends to implement, if any.

Under the Programme, the following types of cooperation projects relevant for higher education can be funded:

- Strategic partnerships to foster intense, structured and long term cooperation among HEIs and with key stakeholders (e.g. enterprises in particular SMEs; local/regional authorities; other education and research institutions; social partners; youth organisations and other relevant actors) to contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Modernisation

\(^2\) Integrated programmes offered by at least two HEI resulting in a single degree certificate issued by all participating institutions (joint degree) or separate degree certificates from each of the participating institutions (double or multiple)
Agenda for Higher Education and to promote as well cross sector cooperation with the other educational sectors.

- Knowledge alliances between higher education institutions and enterprises promoting creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship by offering relevant learning opportunities.

- International cooperation and capacity building projects between HEIs in the participating countries and the Partner countries (i.e. third countries) with the objective to support the modernisation and internationalization of Higher Education in the Partner countries.

   o Explain the expected impact of the HEI participation in the Programme on the HEI modernisation and internationalisation.

The applicant has to demonstrate its awareness of the possible actions to be funded under the Programme and highlight its priorities. Please note that the planned institutional activities do not have to include/respond to all actions supported under the Programme, but they must be realistic and answer institutional needs.

The EPS has to be published on the HEI’s web site within one month after the ECHE is awarded by the European Commission. In case the organisation decides to update the EPS during the course of the Programme, it has to inform the National Agency of its country.

- **Section E: Endorsement of the application**

  The organisation has to complete this section, print it, sign it and add the stamp of the organisation.

- **Section F: Annex to be attached to the application form and submission**

  The organisation has to attach a scan of the section E with the signature and the stamp of the organisation.
I.4 Eligibility

I.4.1 Eligible countries

HEIs established in one of the following countries are eligible to apply for an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education:

- the Member States of the European Union;
- Croatia³;
- the EFTA-EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and the Swiss Confederation⁴.

Please consult the website of the European Commission, the National Agencies or the Executive Agency EACEA for updates to the list of participating countries.

I.4.2 Eligible institutions

Applications for the ECHE can be submitted by higher education institutions established in countries eligible to participate in the Programme and recognised as higher education institutions by the competent authorities (National Authorities) of the country concerned.

For further information on the eligibility of institutions please contact the National Agency of your country. The list and contact details of all National Agencies are available at:


I.4.3 Eligibility criteria

- The electronic "Erasmus Charter for Higher Education" application form is completed and submitted by the deadline as set in the Call for proposals;
- The correct "Erasmus Charter for Higher Education" application form is used;

³ Croatia is expected to become a Member of the European Union as of 1 July 2013.

⁴ The ECHE can be awarded to a HEI of one of these countries provided that the country has signed an agreement with the European Union on its participation in learning mobility of individuals and cooperation for innovation and good practices under the Programme as of 2014.
- The application is written in one of the 23 official languages of the European Union;
- The applicant is established within one of the eligible countries;
- The applicant institution is recognised as a higher education institution by the National Authorities of the country where it is located;
- The application is not submitted by a consortium;
- The Part E "Endorsement of the application" bears the signature of the legal representative of the institution together with the stamps or seals of the institution.

I.5. Selection procedure and award criteria

Applicants are expected to fill in their application form providing accurate and detailed information. The application, in particular the EPS, needs to be specific to the institution and may not be drafted after a "model" or a general framework.

The application form will not only be used for the purposes of the selection but also for monitoring the HEI's activities under the Programme.

National Agencies have completed quality checks on the past performance of all HEIs which had been awarded an Erasmus University Charter within the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). The quality check focused on the following two criteria:

1. whether the HEI had participated in an Erasmus mobility activity from the academic year 2007-2008 to 2010-2011 or in an Erasmus centralised project;
2. whether the HEI was complying with the Erasmus University Charter fundamental principles.

HEIs which comply with both above criteria still need to submit a complete ECHE application, which in their case, will not be assessed by independent experts but used for monitoring purposes. They will have to publish the EPS of their application on their website once the ECHE will have been officially awarded (only after a positive outcome of all compliance and eligibility checks, the HEI will be considered for attribution of an ECHE Charter).
Applications of HEIs which fail to comply with one or both criteria will be assessed by the EACEA with the assistance of independent experts, similarly to all new applicants.

Award criteria for the assessment of the application form by independent experts:

1. Adherence to the principles of the ECHE.

2. Quality of the Application
   
   a. Clarity and completeness of the answers. Clear justification in case a question is not relevant for the applicant organisation.

   b. The conformity of the mobility and cooperation arrangements planned by the HEI with the ECHE principles.

   c. Clarity of the Erasmus Policy Statement and coherence between the institutional profile and priorities with the mobility and cooperation arrangements.

The final decision on the award of the Charter or rejection of the application will be taken by the European Commission on the basis of the recommendations of the experts and the ECHE Evaluation Committee, composed of a panel of European Commission and Executive Agency officials.

I. 6. Information on the selection results

The list of institutions awarded the ECHE is expected to be published on the website of the EACEA end of November 2013.

All applicants will also be informed individually by email/letter on the success or rejection of their application.

Subsequently, successful applicants will receive the ECHE awarded by the European Commission. The rector will have to sign it and publish it on the website of the institution.
II  Erasmus Charter for Higher Education – Application manual

Before you proceed to completing the application please read carefully Section I "ECHE Application" of the present Manual.

Please note that you cannot surpass the indicated limit of characters per text box.

II.1 Main functionalities of the on-line application form:

a) Icons available at the top of all screens

- Help - This is the section you are currently in. It provides you with guidance for completing each respective screen. You can print out “help” screens if you click on “print” at the bottom of the screen.

- Logout - This icon enables you to logout from your application. Please make sure you have saved your application before you log out.

b) Order to respect when filling in the application

Once you have been through the access and password screens, no order needs to be respected when filling in the application. You can navigate through the screens in any direction by clicking either on:

- “next” at the bottom of the screen to access the next screen of the application or

- “previous” at the bottom of the screen to access the previous screen of the application or

- the different parts of the application (Part A to Part F) displayed in the upper part of the screen or

- the different sections (e.g. legal representative – section A.2) displayed in the grey area on the left of the screen.
c) **How can you SAVE information completed in your application?**

- Click on “save” at the bottom of the screen.
- Information will automatically be saved whenever you navigate from one screen to another.

**NOTE:** Please make sure that you click on “save” before you leave the application by closing the Web browser.

d) **How can you CHECK which compulsory information still needs to be completed in your application?**

- On the first page (“General information”) and on the last page of the application (Part F – “Annex to be attached to the application form and submission”) you can check the missing information for the whole application, if you click on “Check All”.
- On every other screen of the application form you can check which information is missing on the specific screen if you click on “check” at the bottom of the screen.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** We strongly recommend doing this check regularly while filling in the application in order to avoid facing a large amount of missing compulsory information or eventual copy/paste or typing errors at the very end of your application.

e) **How can you PRINT out the Charter application?**

- You will NOT be able to use the print button of your web browser. You should use the print button of the on-line form at the bottom of the screen.
- You can print your application at any stage of completion.
- You cannot print separate parts of the application but only the entire application.
- Part E "Endorsement of application" has to be printed, signed and stamped by the authorised legal representative of your institution. You will have to scan and upload it under part F "Annex to be attached to the application form and
Please note that you will not be able to submit your application without having uploaded the Endorsement form.

After having submitted your application, date and time of submission will be indicated on each page of the print-out, as a guarantee that the print-out is IDENTICAL TO THE FINAL VERSION SUBMITTED ON-LINE (only the endorsement page will not have these indications as it is an uploaded document).

f) **How can you overcome general printing problems?**

First of all please make sure that your PC meets the minimum requirements. It should contain in particular an updated version of "Acrobat reader". You can find this information as well as a recent version of "Acrobat reader" to download in the "About this site" section on the ECHE website.

Please do not use the print button of your web browser but the print button of the on-line form at the bottom of the screen.

If a blank document is displayed instead of your application when you try printing it, please press "F5" on your keyboard in order to make a "refresh" of the screen.

In general, we strongly recommend that you save your application on your PC and print it from there. You can save the application as a pdf file on your hard disk by following these steps:

- Click with the right mouse button on "print". A window with several options will be displayed.

- Select "Save target as..." The window "file download" will be activated and the window "save as" opened.

- Select the drive and folder in which you wish to save your application as a pdf file (E.g.: "charter"). You can individualise the name of the pdf file if you wish to do so. You can for example include your ECHE number in the file name ("29000_annual ECHE_applic").
g) How can you SUBMIT your application?

- Once you have duly completed your application, please click on “submit” in Part F to submit your application electronically.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Please click on "submit" ONLY when you are sure that you have COMPLETELY finalised your application including the upload of the scan of the "Endorsement of the application" page. Please note that once you have submitted your application you will NOT BE ABLE TO MODIFY IT ANYMORE.

You will nevertheless still have access to your application in “read-only” mode to consult and print it out later if you wish to do so.

**How can you be sure that you submitted your on-line application correctly?**

- A confirmation will be displayed at the bottom of the screen “F. Annex to be attached to the application form and submission” immediately after you have submitted your application.

- Subsequently an electronic acknowledgment of receipt will be sent to the e-mail address of the Legal Representative as indicated in section A.2 of your application.

Please note that the list of received applications will also be published on the ECHE webpage by the end of May 2013.

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt or find your application reference number in the list of received applications, please immediately contact the ECHE Helpdesk at EACEA-ECHE@ec.europa.eu.

h) What should you do if you encounter technical problems while creating or operating the ECAS account or when filling in the on-line application?

In case of technical problems related to the creation or management of the ECAS account please contact the Executive Agency by sending an e-mail to:

EACEA-HELPDESK@ec.europa.eu
In case of other difficulties while completing the application form, please contact the Executive Agency by sending an email to:

EACEA-ECHE@ec.europa.eu

This will be the fastest and most efficient way to obtain assistance.
II.2 SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THIS SCREEN

II.2.1 Entering the application

You must choose one of the two options proposed:

**OPTION 1: Current EUC holder (LLP programme 2007-2013 Erasmus University Charter selections)**

Please insert your username and password, provided in the e-mail sent by the EACEA on 26/03/2013. Thereafter some fields of section A are pre-filled automatically with your data from previous selections. You may then continue completing your application form.

Please note that you will have to introduce the username and password only once for the first entry to the ECHE online application form. For the subsequent connections to the ECHE online application form, you will need to introduce only your ECAS account credentials.

**OPTION 2: New applicant**

You will be redirected to the first page of the ECHE online application form on which you indicate the name of your organisation and country.

Click "Next" to open the ECHE online application form cover page.
II.2.2 Identification as per sections of the ECHE online application form

Identification of the institution

- Please fill in the official name of your institution in the national language of your country (using Latin characters). In case you need to correct this data, you will only be able to do so in the ECHE online application form itself under section A1.

- Please select from the drop-down menu the country in which your institution is located. In case you will need to correct this data, you will only be able to do so in the application under section A1.

- Please click on “Next” at the bottom of the screen in order to create your application.

II.2.3 Application introduction

On this screen you will find the following information in “read-only” format, which cannot be modified:

- Programme
- Action
- Call
- Deadline for submission

Please fill in the following fields:

- Application Language - the ECHE online application form is available in three languages: EN, FR and DE. You can choose the language you prefer working with at the top of the screen. You can switch between these three languages at any time when completing the application without losing information.

- Correspondence language – choose EN, FR or DE. This is the language that will be used by EACEA for all future correspondence by email or by mail. Please make sure that it is correct.
➢ If applicable, you MUST fill in your previous Erasmus University Charter number under the Lifelong Learning Programme (e.g.: 227440-IC-1-2007-1-AT-ERASMUS-EUC-1).

➢ **Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall strategy) language** - in this section you are requested to indicate the original language in which you introduce your Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) in Part D of the application form. A text can be inputted in any of the official languages of the European Union.

However, please note that if the original language of the Erasmus Policy Statement is different from English, French or German, a translation in one of the three application languages (EN, FR, DE), is required for the three questions related to the EPS in section D. Please indicate your choice of language (EN, FR or DE) for the EPS translation.

*Please click on “Next” at the bottom of the screen or on “Part A” in the upper part of the screen to access the next part of the application (Part A: Institutional Profile, section A.1 “Applicant organisation”).*
A.1 Applicant organisation

Information on your institution:

- In the first text field, you will have to insert your Participant Identification Code (PIC), in case your organisation has already one. The Participant Identification Code (PIC) is a 9 digits unique identifier attributed to every organisation that has previously participated in EU Research funded programmes (number attributed through the EFP7 Participant Portal) in order to be able to submit an application (or to be a partner in an application) in the Research domain.

- You will find the official name of your institution in the national language of your country (in Latin characters) as you indicated in the previous screen where you were asked to create your application. You can correct the name, if necessary.

- Please provide the official English translation of the name of your institution.

- Please provide the Acronym for your institution.

- The Erasmus ID code was created to identify HEIs that are eligible to participate in Erasmus activities by the competent National Authorities. The Erasmus ID code is created automatically and made of:

  1. the first letter of the country

  2. a maximum of 7 characters of the city (for very small city/village the nearest city will be taken)

  3. a number identifying the institution.

For successful institutions, which have participated in the Erasmus programme before, the previous Erasmus ID Code assigned will appear automatically.

For institutions, which have never participated in the Erasmus programme before, an Erasmus ID Code will be assigned by the EACEA at a later stage, if the institution is awarded a Charter.

- Please indicate the full legal address of the institution including street name,
post code, town and country. The introduction of the correct address is very important for any future correspondence with your institution.

- Please remember to provide the Internet address of your institution.

Please click on “Next” at the bottom of the screen or on “Legal representative” in the grey column on the left of the screen to access the next part of the application (Section A.2 “Legal representative”).
A.2 Legal representative

The Legal representative is the person authorised to represent the organisation in legally binding agreements.

- Please provide full personal identification data for the legal representative of your institution.

- Please indicate the official postal and email address of the Legal representative. Please note that this address will be used for sending the acknowledgment of receipt of your application and for any further official correspondence related to this Call for Proposals. It is therefore important to avoid any mistake in the email address.

- The country in which your institution is located is displayed in “read-only” format. This information is retrieved from the very first identification screen where you were asked to provide the name of your institution and the country where it is located.

Please click on “next” at the bottom of the screen or on “Coordinator” in the grey column on the left of the screen to access the next part of the ECHE online application form (Section A.3 “Coordinator”).
A.3 Coordinator

The Coordinator is the person responsible for coordination and management of mobility activities, international cooperation and/or centralised Erasmus actions.

- Please provide full personal identification data for the Erasmus coordinator of your institution.

- Please indicate the full professional mail and e-mail addresses of the coordinator.

- The country in which your institution is located is displayed in “read-only” format. This information is retrieved from the very first identification screen where you were asked to provide the name of your institution and the country where it is located.

**Please click the respective box and insert the relevant complete address details if different from those provided for the organisation.**

Please click on “Next” at the bottom of the screen or on the icon for Part B on the top of the screen to access the next part of the ECHE online application form (Section B “Statistics”).
B. Statistics

Note: The information required in part B of the ECHE online application form concerns higher education only. You should not include data on any other levels of education provided by your institution.

Please fill in the relevant figures in the corresponding boxes.

You can use one sign after the comma, if necessary.

Please click on “Next” at the bottom of the screen to access the next part of the ECHE online application form or on the icon for Part C at the top of the screen (Section C “General organisation of Programme activities”).
C. General organisation of Programme activities

Please tick all the boxes in this section. In this way you express your commitment to the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education principles.

The answering of all questions in this section is compulsory.

In case a question cannot be answered by the applicant, a clear justification has to be provided. It has to be in line with the Erasmus Policy Statement (section D of the ECHE online application form).

Please click on “Next” at the bottom of the screen or on “Part D” in the upper part of the screen to access the next part of the ECHE online application form (Part D “Erasmus Policy Statement”).
D. Erasmus Policy Statement – Overall strategy

For an overall explanation of the requirements relevant to this section, please refer to part I.3 of this Manual.

The three questions in this section constitute the Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall strategy) of the organisation.

Please note that you may provide the EPS in the language of your application. However, if the chosen language is different from French, English or German, the translation of the EPS text into either English, French or German is mandatory. For the purpose of the required translation a second box will be opened where the applicant should introduce the relevant EPS translation in one of these three languages.

Please click on "Next" at the bottom of the screen to access the next part of the ECHE online application form (part E. "Endorsement of the application").
E. Endorsement of the application

To complete this part the applicant will need to fill in the required fields and tick the acceptance box. The Applicant will then be able to print the Endorsement form. The Endorsement form should be signed by the Legal representative of the organisation and stamped. Please be advised that the scanned copy of this document should be electronically saved to allow the upload in the following section.

Please click on "Next" at the bottom of the screen or on "Part F" in the upper part of the screen to access the next part of the ECHE online application form (Part F "Annex to be attached to the application form and submission").
F. Annex to be attached to the application form and submission

Please click the "browse" button to locate and select the scanned version of the endorsement form. Please first make sure that the document has been duly signed by the Legal representative of the organisation and stamped. Upload the document.

Click on the "Open" button within the browse window to confirm the file selection and then click on "Save" to complete the upload. Once your endorsement form has been successfully uploaded you will see the filename of the file displayed on-screen along with the date and time of the upload.

If you upload the wrong endorsement file and need to replace it with a different one, simply perform the upload again (there is no delete button). Only the most recently uploaded file is retained.

Submission

Applicants should check the content of the application form in order to ensure that all compulsory fields are properly filled in. If some information is missing, it will not be possible to submit the application form. Once you are satisfied that your application is finalised, submit it by clicking on the "Submit" button.