Munich Study Visit

Proceedings

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Erasmus Mundus Support Initiative

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GLOSSARY

AI   Artificial Intelligence

CARTO   Erasmus Mundus Master in Cartography – Mapping for a sustainable world

EACEA   European Education and Culture Executive Agency

EM   Erasmus Mundus

EMMA   Mundus Journalism

EMSI   Erasmus Mundus Support Initiative

EU   European Union

FAQ   Frequently Asked Questions

HEI   Higher Education Institution

IO   International Offices

LMU   Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

MaMaSELF   Master for Material Science powEred by Large scale Facilities

MEME   Erasmus Mundus Master Programme in Evolutionary Biology

MULTIPHASE   Erasmus Mundus Master in Multiphase Systems for Sustainable Engineering

QA   Quality Accreditation

TUM   Technical University of Munich

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Commission and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) are actively supporting the Erasmus Mundus Community through the Erasmus Mundus Support Initiative (EMSI), by organising a series of networking events across Europe and worldwide. The most recent event took the form of a Study Visit held in Munich, Germany, hosted by both the Technical University of Munich (TUM) and the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), on March 11th and 12th, 2024.

The Study Visit brought together some **35 administrative staff members** from both coordinating and partner higher education institutions (HEI). These were either **new staff from ongoing Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees** (**EMJMDs) or staff from newly selected Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters (EMJMs)**. The event was designed to provide an opportunity to learn effective management practices from the two experienced hosting universities and to encourage meaningful discussions, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among peers.

The Study Visit[1] kicked off with a warm welcome and introduction by Ghislaine Craeghs, Project Officer of EACEA. After some engaging activities to get participants comfortable with each other, Professor Dr.-Ing. Liqiu Meng, Chair of the Cartography EM programme at TUM, shared insights into the hosting university's EM experience. This introduction was complemented on the second day by a presentation from Andrea Blei of the LMU International Office. Throughout the two-day event, discussions were held in dedicated breakout sessions, focusing on **addressing recurrent challenges** including:

(i)   Student well-being and perspectives;
(ii)   Coordination between consortium partners;
(iii)   Selection procedures;
(iv)   Aligning administrative processes within own university; and,
(v)   Supporting students with housing.

In each session, participants were provided with template sheets for group activities, which were structured into sections covering challenges, solutions, barriers and enablers of those solutions, and proposed next steps for implementation[2]. They were tasked with completing these sheets during their discussions, using key words on post-it notes. Juliane Cron (TUM), Karin Kleinstück (TUM & LMU), John Parsch (LMU), Philomena Bodensteiner (LMU) and Franz Kogelmann (University of Bayruth), generously provided support to participants throughout these exchanges. Following each breakout session, a plenary debriefing enabled participants to collectively share the outcomes of their discussions.

This report has been compiled as a key outcome of the event, aiming to provide a comprehensive overview of the discussions held. It begins by outlining the profile and EM experience of each hosting university. It then offers a summary of the challenges and good practices shared by participants for each topic covered during the two-day event.

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[1] Please consult Annex I for the detailed programme of the Study Visit.
[2] Please consult Annex II for summarised versions of these completed exercise sheets for each topic.

2. MUNICH HOSTING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The following chapter offers an overview of the profile and EM experience of each hosting university.

2.1. Technical University of Munich (TUM)

2.1.1. Short profile

Established in 1868, TUM has consistently held the title of University of Excellence[3] since 2006, and regularly occupies top positions among German and European universities in national and international rankings[4]. Its seven schools offer a diverse spectrum of knowledge across various disciplines, including Computation, Information and Technology; Engineering and Design; Natural Sciences; Life Sciences; Medicine and Health; Management; and Social Sciences and Technology[5]. In addition to these, TUM has offices and research centres in several cities worldwide, namely in Beijing (China), Brussels (Belgium), Mumbai (India), San Francisco (United States of America), and São Paulo (Brazil)[6]. TUM also maintains strong connections with numerous partner universities across the globe, thus facilitating student and researcher exchanges, supporting collaborative projects, and contributing to the overall development of the university.

As of winter 2023/2024, the university offered 178 Degree programmes and had 52,580 enrolled students, with 45% of them originating from abroad. Among these, 1,129 students were enrolled in exchange programmes[7].

Given these credentials, the university was chosen to host the first day of the Study Visit at their main campus in Munich. The primary reason for their selection was their extensive experience in coordinating and/or collaborating as a full or associate partner in Erasmus Mundus programmes.

2.1.2. Experience in EM programmes

TUM is presently engaged in three different EM programmes, serving as both a coordinator and full partner:

1. Master for Material Science powEred by Large scale Facilities (MaMaSELF);
2. Cartography – Mapping for a sustainable world (CARTO); and,
3. Multiphase Systems for Sustainable Engineering (MULTIPHASE).

This involvement allowed them to offer valuable advice and share insights gained from their experience with participants who were either new to EM programmes or from newly selected ones. A comprehensive overview of these three programmes is provided below.

Table 1 Overview of the MaMaSELF EM programme

Master for Material Science powEred by Large scale Facilities	MaMaSELF
Description	

Established in 2007, MaMaSELF is a two-year master programme in Materials science. It is open to students with backgrounds in material science, physics, chemistry, and geoscience. The programme offers individual mobility schemes and places a strong focus on networking opportunities for students. In addition, MaMaSELF closely involves large scale facilities for research. Upon completion of the programme, students are awarded a multiple Master degree. More information can be found at https://www.mamaself.eu/.

Consortium[8]		**Associated partners**
🇫🇷	University of Rennes (Coordinator)	
🇫🇷	University of Montpellier	
🇩🇪	Technical University of Munich	🇧🇷 🇫🇮
🇩🇪	Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich	🇮🇳 🇯🇵
🇮🇹	University of Turin	🇨🇭 🇺🇸
🇵🇱	Adam Mickiewisz University	

Table 2 Overview of the CARTO EM programme

Cartography – Mapping for a sustainable world	CARTO
Description	

Established in 2014, CARTO is a two-year master programme in cartography and geoinformatics. It is open to students with a Bachelor degree in a discipline related to cartography, geo-information, geography, geodesy, geology or computer science. The programme offers a group mobility scheme, with all students attending the same institutions during the first three semesters and selecting their preferred one on the fourth to write their master's thesis. Upon completion of the programme, students are awarded a joint degree from all four partner universities. More information can be found at: https://cartographymaster.eu/.

Consortium		**Associated partners**
🇩🇪	Technical University of Munich (Coordinator)	
🇦🇹	Technical University of Vienna	
🇩🇪	Technical University of Dresden	🇦🇹 🇩🇪 🇨🇭
🇳🇱	University of Twente	

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[8] All flags appearing in the report have been produced by Freepik and retrieved from flaticon: https://www.flaticon.es/autores/freepik.

Table 3 Overview of the MULTIPHASE EM programme

Multiphase Systems for Sustainable Engineering	MULTIPHASE
Description	
MULTIPHASE is a two-year master programme in multiphase systems. It is open to students with a Bachelor degree in a discipline related to Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Physics, Computational Engineering and Civil Engineering. The programme offers a group mobility scheme, with all students attending the same institutions during the first three semesters and selecting their preferred one on the fourth to do an internship. Two winter schools and an 18 months-long project driven by industrial partners are also offered. Upon completion of the programme, students are awarded three degrees from three universities. More information can be found at: https://cartographymaster.eu/.	

Consortium		**Associated partners**
🇫🇷	Mines Saint-Etienne (Coordinator)	🇦🇷 🇧🇷 🇨🇦 🇨🇱
🇮🇹	Polytechnic University of Turin	
🇩🇪	Technical University of Munich	🇩🇪 🇯🇵 🇿🇦 🇺🇸

2.2. Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU)

2.2.1. Short profile

Established in 1472, LMU also holds the distinction of being a University of Excellence and stands as one of the leading research universities in Europe. With 18 faculties and several campuses all over Munich, LMU offers a diverse spectrum of knowledge across various disciplines, including, among others, Law, Economics, and Social Sciences; Humanities and Cultural Studies; Medicine; and Natural Sciences. The institution cooperates in student exchange programmes with nearly 550 partner institutions worldwide, engages in various international alliances with other universities, and maintains strategic cooperation partnerships and networks with renowned universities in Europe, North America and Asia[9].

In winter 2023/2024, the university offered 327 degree programmes, including 30 English-taught Master programmes, and had a total enrolment of 54,082 students. Of these, 20% were international students from 140 different countries. In addition, LMU welcomed over 950 incoming exchange students and sent out 1,300 outgoing students per academic year[10].

Given these credentials, the institution was chosen to host the second day of the Study Visit at their main campus in Munich. The primarily reason for their selection was, once again, their extensive experience in coordinating and/or collaborating as a full or associate partner in Erasmus Mundus programmes.

2.2.2. Experience in EM programmes

LMU is presently engaged in three different EM programmes, serving as full partner:

1. Master for Material Science powEred by Large scale Facilities (MaMaSELF);
2. Erasmus Mundus Master Programme in Evolutionary Biology (MEME); and,

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[9] Last accessed on 05/04/2024 and available at: https://erasmus-networks.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-03/2024.03.12%20-%20Presentation%20LMU%20Blei.pdf.
[10] Last accessed on 05/04/2024 and available at: https://erasmus-networks.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-03/2024.03.12%20-%20Presentation%20LMU%20Blei.pdf.

3. Mundus Journalism (EMMA).

LMU's involvement in EM projects allowed them to offer valuable advice and share insights gained from their experience with participants who were either new to EM programmes or from newly selected ones. A comprehensive overview of the programmes is provided below.

Table 4 Overview of the MEME EM programme

Erasmus Mundus Master Programme in Evolutionary Biology	MEME
Description	

Established in 2010, MEME is a two-year research-oriented master programme in evolutionary biology. It is open to students with a Bachelor of Science in Biology or related fields and sufficient background in evolutionary biology or related disciplines. The programme offers individual mobility schemes, with two available options in the first two semesters, and institutions of their choice for the last two. In addition, every August, a summer school is held for MEME students across all cohorts, ranging from those just starting their programme to those about to graduate. Upon completion of the programme, students are awarded a double degree from two partner universities. More information can be found at: https://www.evobio.eu/.

Consortium	Associated partners
University of Groningen (Coordinator)	
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München	
Uppsala University	
University of Montpellier	

Table 5 Overview of the EMMA EM programme

Mundus Journalism	EMMA
Description	

EMMA is a two-year master programme in journalism, media and globalisation. Though established in 2005, LMU only recently joined in 2021, with the first cohort of students arriving at LMU in Winter 2023/2024. The programme is open to students with backgrounds in Art/Humanities or related fields, and with prior journalistic experience. All students attend the same institution during the first year and select their second-year university based on their specialisation. Selected students have the option to choose a third country in the second semester. Upon completion, students receive a unique Joint Degree. However, due to German legislation, those attending LMU are awarded a double degree and thus receive one Master's degree certificate from the coordinating institution and another one from LMU. More information can be found at: https://mundusjournalism.com/.

Consortium	Associated partners
Aarhus University (Coordinator)	
University of Amsterdam	
Charles University in Prague	
City University of London	
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München	

3. DISCUSSIONS

The following section provides a summary of the challenges and good practices shared by participants for each topic discussed over the course of the two-day event.

3.1.   Student well-being and perspectives

Erasmus Mundus programmes differ greatly from other master's programmes as they require multiple mobility and adaptation to new environments. While these features offer significant advantages to students, they can also pose physical and psychological challenges when navigating unfamiliar cultures, lifestyles, housing markets, course formats, and networking opportunities. Providing students with **reliable and readily-available institutional support** before their arrival and throughout their stay is therefore essential for ensuring their well-being and enhancing their Erasmus Mundus experience.

3.1.1. Providing support before students' arrival

International students often experience difficulties obtaining **visas and residence permits** in European countries. Participants observed that despite Erasmus Mundus Masters being European Union (EU) programmes, there is no uniform **European Study Visa**. As a result, visa processes vary significantly across Member States, requiring students to apply for them separately for each country of their mobility path. While this procedure is in the hands of the consulates, universities can expedite it by proactively sending the list of potential scholarship holders to the relevant competent authority upon finalising the admissions list.

Securing affordable and suitable **accommodation** in each host country is also among the first challenges students face in Erasmus Mundus programmes. This challenge is significant enough that an entire discussion was dedicated to it on the second day. For specific best practices on addressing this issue, please refer to section *3.5. 'Supporting Students with Housing'*.

As students prepare for their arrival in their new host countries, they require strong support from their university to address their questions and concerns effectively. To manage the typically high volume of inquiries, all partner institutions must coordinate closely and implement necessary measures to provide adequate support. Preparing a **comprehensive student handbook[11]** for the overall study cycle from application to graduation can help anticipate some of these inquiries. This handbook should include all aspects related to visa applications, housing search, insurance procurement, scholarship fund management, programme course preparation, scheduling, etc. It should be updated on an annual basis.

Moreover, the Scottish Association for Marine Science (EMJMD ACES-STAR)[12] has established a **private Facebook page** for students and administrative staff, providing them with a safe space to discuss various matters, including accommodation. If students contact them through Instagram or other platforms, they are redirected to this group. It is, however, crucial to closely monitor these social media communications, as delays in administrative staff responses can lead to misunderstandings among students.

Lastly, enabling **networking opportunities** between current and incoming cohorts, as well as between alumni and students, can help institutions in directing specific inquiries towards potentially more valuable sources of information. These networking events can be arranged through activities like online webinars.

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[11]   Consult   CARTO's   Student   Handbook   for   reference   (2023).   https://cartographymaster.eu/wp-content/documents/CARTOGRAPHY_Student_Handbook.pdf.
[12] The EMJMD ACES-STAR is the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in AquaCulture, Environment and Society-STAR: https://www.emm-aces.org/.

3.1.2. Providing support during students' stay

While it can be assumed that students no longer require support once they have settled in their host country, the reality is quite different, as they navigate cultural, language, and background differences. Indeed, **integrating with local students and adapting to a new culture**, lifestyle, weather, and higher education system can be challenging for international students. Without a proper support structure, this adjustment process can lead to feelings of isolation and frustration.

To ensure a smooth integration of international students, institutions can implement a **buddy or mentor system** to pair them up with local students at their arrival. The latter can help them through administrative formalities, language translation, recreational trips, and even invite them to cultural events with personal friends and family. This facilitates their integration into the academic and social aspects of university life. Additionally, organising **social and/or sport events**, including a Welcome Week at the beginning of each semester, facilitates integration and adaptation to their new environment. The CARTO EM programme integrates 30% of its lecture time within an interdisciplinary learning environment with other international Master programmes to cultivate a close-knit community atmosphere. Preparing a **Travel Guide** and offering information on fun activities (particularly during dark winters), can also inspire them to explore the city and immerse themselves in its culture.

In addition to implementing a buddy system, other methods to assist students in overcoming language barriers include integrating **courses in local languages** into the curriculum to prepare students for their time abroad. **Multilingual staff** available at each partner university are indispensable to support international students in overcoming these obstacles.

Lastly, students report to experiencing stress related to the **workload of the programme** or even to the **differences in the higher education system** compared to that of their country of origin. To address these challenges, institutions offer **preparation courses** for international students to familiarise themselves with the programme's content and course delivery, as well as **training sessions on exam-taking strategies**. Some consortia also organise **summer and/or winter programmes** for those who wish to catch up on coursework during breaks in the academic calendar, enhance their learning experience, and/or pursue specialised interests. Regarding mental health, TUM highlighted the importance of providing **psychological counselling services** for students at each partner university.

Overall, effective facilitation of international student support requires hands-on administrative staff, as well as institutional commitment in order to ensure that resources and structures are in place to support international students throughout their Erasmus Mundus journey. Additionally, some participants have highlighted that, while universities play a crucial supporting role, there are limits to their assistance, as students are ultimately adults responsible for their own academic and personal development. **Balancing institutional support with student autonomy** is key to creating a conducive environment for international student success.

3.2. Coordination between consortium partners

EM programmes are distinguished by the collaboration among multiple HEIs worldwide to provide an integrated educational experience for students. The success of these programmes hinges on effective cooperation between partners, which serves as a key source of added value for EM Masters. However, this collaborative endeavour is not without its challenges, particularly due to disparities in national and local regulations, cultural differences, and academic approaches among partners. In this sense, flexibility, team building, and simplified procedures are demonstrated to be facilitators for a smoother and more streamlined coordination between partners.

3.2.1. Addressing administrative and organisational challenges

Partners cooperate in administrative processes and daily management tasks that must be jointly agreed and implemented, such as handling the transcript of records, reporting to the EU, managing accreditation requirements, etc. While participants indicated a usual willingness among partners to cooperate, stemming from the inherent spirit of EM programmes, this cooperation is not always as seamless as desired, rooted in differences of diverse nature.

One of the notable differences pointed out by participants related to **academic calendars**. In some countries, the exams period (regular and/or retake exams) coincides with the start of the semester in the subsequent country on the student's mobility path. This overlap can induce stress and present obstacles for students to catch up with activities of the next semester. Consequently, HEIs often **provide options** for remote exams or even on-site exams at the next HEI to accommodate students facing this specific situation.

Overlapping calendars can also pose challenges for administrative tasks such as **transcript issuance**. To address this issue, at LMU, the programme coordinator prepares all necessary documentation and preliminary transcripts of records for partner institutions. This proactive measure can mitigate the fact that the absence of these documents may hinder the student's enrolment in the next HEI.

Participants also identified challenges related to fulfilling **reporting obligations to the EU**. EM Master programmes entail reporting requirements to the EU, which can pose difficulties if internal deadlines are unclear or subject to various institutional deadlines. Additionally, submitting reports to the EU can be hindered by the absence of templates. To address this, participants declared that having a **consortium template for drafting deliverables** could streamline the reporting process. Furthermore, participants suggested an EU-level solution: **establishing a library of EU templates for reporting** would facilitate compliance with reporting obligations and enhance efficiency in the reporting process.

Dealing with non-paying self-funded students might be another issue that some institutions must address. To mitigate this risk, some measures can be taken. For instance, the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (FLOODRisk)[13] implements strict payment deadlines and requires self-funded students to pay fees in advance. Additionally, requesting bank or financial statements from self-funded students can help verify their financial capacity to meet tuition obligations.

In managing these administrative processes, effective **student data exchange and management** are essential. Participants have adopted two distinct approaches in this regard: enrolment of students in each partner institution, granting access to student data and ensuring administrative autonomy at each institution; or alternatively, some participants advocate for streamlining the process by centralising enrolment under the programme coordinator.

Moreover, there are additional differences of a more general nature that can impact cooperation and present challenges in reaching agreements between partners. These differences may stem from varying ways of working which are influenced by the type of institution, its objectives, and of course different cultural backgrounds that can exacerbate these challenges, particularly within large consortia of partners. These structural differences are inherently more complex to resolve through practical solutions. However, participants have suggested several "soft" measures that could help bridge these gaps, primarily centred around **fostering communication, team-building, and flexibility**:

- Designating an administrative point of contact within each partner institution;
- Facilitating regular monthly online meetings and specific administrative gatherings;
- Organising team-building events and face-to-face meetings, as well as immersive weeks between partners;

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[13] FLOODRisk is the Erasmus Mundus Programme on Flood Risk Management: https://www.floodriskmaster.org/.

- Hosting conferences that bring together all partners and organising committees, involving students and industry stakeholders; and,
- Embracing an adaptive approach to coordinators' methodologies, such as the University of Malta's (FLOURISH)[14] practice of adapting to the enrolment and admission systems of their coordinating partner.

Lastly, another common challenge highlighted by participants is the **varying levels of institutional commitment** to meeting the requirements of managing EM programmes. This commitment often varies depending on whether the HEI is a coordinating university or a partner institution. Participants also cite a lack of support within their own institutions and insufficient budget allocation for EM staff. To address these challenges, **establishing clear objectives, detailed plans with strict deadlines, and robust partner agreements** can be instrumental in prevention and resolution. Also, initiating discussions on financial aspects such as budget allocations, tuition fees, and participation costs at the programme's outset is crucial to mitigate lack of resources during the outset of the programme, as well as involving other administrative offices within the HEI to support with workload distribution.

Furthermore, implementing a general good practice of creating a programme **Sustainability Committee**, as the University of Malta's EM programme (FLOURISH) does, can help address funding gaps and seek resources to sustain the programme effectively and ensure long-term viability.

3.2.1. Accommodating different regulatory frameworks

A recurring concern raised by participants revolved around the **disparities in regulations, at institutional, national, and even local levels**. Each partner operates within its own regulatory framework, sometimes making it challenging to find solutions that fit for all. These regulations significantly influence programme implementation, affecting processes such as evaluation, certification, and notably, the arrangement of joint diplomas. The process of arranging joint diplomas poses a considerable challenge as it requires unanimous agreement among all partners. Some countries may prohibit joint diplomas altogether or impose stringent requirements, further complicating matters.

Ultimately, partners and staff are often constrained by these regulations, making it difficult to overcome differences. Participants stressed the importance of **institutional flexibility** in reaching successful agreements. Major decisions affecting all partners typically fall under the purview of the Programme Board. Participants also emphasised the need for additional information or guidance from the EU in dealing with these complexities and harmonising processes such as accreditation or the implementation of joint master's degrees, which would facilitate greater consensus among partners.

3.2.2. Aligning academic and evaluation criteria

The academic systems among partner institutions also vary, encompassing **differences in teaching approaches and student evaluation methods.** While distinctions in academic approaches exist, based on participants' feedback, the most pressing challenges lie in harmonising student evaluation processes.

One proposed solution is to **develop a common evaluation form** and share it with all partners to ensure alignment across semesters. However, **integrating grading systems and converting grades** can be burdensome. Grading systems differ across countries, and even institutions within the same countries, like LMU and TUM. For example, in France, a grade of 20/20 is rarely awarded, making a score of 15/20 considered excellent. However, this translates differently in Germany, where a 15/20 equates to a 2.5, which may not be viewed as favourable. To address this, **conversion schemes** reflecting real achievements are necessary.

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[14] FLOURISH is the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master in Resilience in Educational Contexts: https://flourishproject.mt/.

In the case of MaMaSELF, developed over 12 years, a conversion system has been established to accurately reflect grades attained across French, German, and Italian universities. MaMaSELF issues two official transcripts to each student: one with the original grades and another with the converted ones. Both certificates must be issued to provide students with comprehensive documentation of their academic performance. It is important to note that while regulations permit this, ongoing monitoring of grade conversions is essential.

Dealing with failing students poses a significant challenge in academic settings. As a proactive measure to manage them, institutions can implement regular meetings with administrative staff to **monitor student progress**. These meetings should assess factors such as attendance and academic performance to identify struggling students early on. Also, the University of Malta (FLOURISH) has adopted alternative assessment methods such as assignments and presentations, particularly suited to programmes like psychology and education.

Reactive actions shared by participants to manage failing students include allowing them to **retake exams**, particularly less critical ones, at their next institution. Professors can coordinate with other institutions to arrange for invigilators from partner institutions to oversee the retake exams, ensuring fairness and academic integrity. Alternatively, suggesting that students leave the programme may be necessary in some cases, or students may need to retake the entire year, leading to the suspension of their scholarship.

3.3. Selection procedures

Given the appeal of the scholarships provided by Erasmus Mundus programmes, it is not surprising that consortia receive large volumes of applications from interested students. Attracting suitable applicants, screening these submissions, and ultimately selecting the right students pose significant challenges for the Erasmus Mundus administrative staff.

3.3.1. Attracting suitable applicants

Many participants highlighted difficulties in **attracting European applicants**, as well as **self-funded students**. In addition, depending on the field of the programme, certain consortia encounter challenges in attracting **female or male applicants**. Indeed, fields within applied sciences typically receive a higher number of male applicants, whereas fields such as education or psychology tend to attract more female ones.

Investing resources in promoting the programme through **social media** is crucial for reaching the desired audience. TUM and LMU, for instance, take pride in having two-thirds of students self-funded in the MaMaSELF programme as a direct result of effective promotional efforts. In addition, attending **events and career fairs** at European institutions can also facilitate the recruitment of local students. Certain consortia also leverage **gender ambassadors and network connections** to encourage applications from individuals of all genders. In any case, having a **common communication strategy** within the consortia and leveraging partners' participation in networking events can help attract the target applicants.

Regarding self-funded students, the University of Picardie Jules Verne (i-MESC)[15] collaborates with **industrial partners to provide scholarships** for those without an Erasmus Mundus one. Additionally, participants proposed offering unfunded positions to top applicants who were not selected as EM scholarship holders.

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[15] i-MESC is the Interdisciplinarity in Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion Erasmus Mundus Joint Master: https://i-mesc.eu/.

3.3.2. Processing applications

Many participants highlighted the challenge of managing **large volumes of applications**, with the University of Pompeu Fabra (EMAI)[16], for instance, receiving around 1,000 submissions, yet ultimately accepting only 30. This, alongside EM staff's preference for **individually evaluating each application**, often leads to them needing to work overtime, including weekends or even during vacation breaks.

Effective coordination among partners can significantly streamline the selection procedure. Some participants involve their own university's central admissions office in the process, tasking them with conducting an initial screening of all submitted applications according to predefined criteria. They then rank the remaining applications and distribute them among partners for a more comprehensive assessment of applicants, often involving interviews. Others, on the other hand, opt to carry out the selection process collectively. This is exemplified by the MaMaSELF consortium, wherein all partners, including TUM and LMU, convene in Munich for two and a half days to collectively review all applications.

Moreover, defining **common rejection criteria** can assist in effectively managing applications. While some consortia choose to adhere to the highest admission standards from all involved institutions, others prefer to adopt those from the university with the strictest admission criteria. In either scenario, these should be agreed upon at the beginning of the partnership. Note that some participants voiced their desire for the Commission to assist in defining objective selection criteria.

Furthermore, establishing a **multileveled evaluation process** can help filter through large volumes of applications. Take, for example, the approach employed by the University of Pompeu Fabra (EMAI), which consists of the following five steps:

1. **Pre-screening phase**: Applications undergo a preliminary check for administrative validation.
2. **Pre-selection**: An initial analysis is conducted to verify compliance with minimum requirements.
3. **Selection Ranking**: All eligible candidates are then ranked by the programme's Academic Committee based on predefined criteria, including academic excellence, practical and professional experience, etc. Some consortia use global rankings as part of their selection criteria (e.g. Shanghai Ranking, Times Higher Education, etc.). In these cases, it is imperative that these rankings are discipline-specific, official, and up-to-date.
4. **Interviews** of shortlisted candidates.
5. **Final selection**: Students are selected according to the ranking and the outcomes of the interviews. The final selection considers additional criteria such as nationality, country of residence, specialisation tracks, gender and inclusiveness.

Other good practices discussed included shortening the application period to one or two months to prevent an overwhelming number of submissions, providing little to no flexibility to students regarding deadlines, and maintaining strict adherence to requirements. For instance, if a student fails to upload their passport in the application process, the university assumes they do not have one and systematically reject the applicant.

It is worth noting that, when inquired about **automating** aspects of the process, participants provided negative feedback emphasising the need for applications to undergo a **thorough qualitative evaluation**.

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[16] EMAI is the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master in Artificial Intelligence: https://www.upf.edu/web/emai.

3.3.3. Supporting students throughout the application process

Students tend to have many inquiries throughout the application process. Their **heavy reliance on support** can overwhelm the admission staff, who are already busy evaluating large volumes of applications.

To mitigate this influx of inquiries, it is imperative for consortia to ensure that admission requirements are clear, updated and readily accessible on the programme's website. Preparing an **application guide** for students and incorporating a **Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQ) page on the website can also serve this purpose. Additionally, integrating a **document checklist** within the application can help guide students and reduce the number of incomplete applications received.

Several participants observed that students nowadays prefer to receive information from universities in **video or audio formats**. This can be accomplished through social media platforms, by recording and posting short videos featuring interviews with current cohorts and student representatives. A noteworthy example was given by the University of Malta (FLOURISH), which recorded a podcast addressing FAQs and uploaded it to their website. Given that managing social media platforms requires the investment of human and time resources, some participants allow students to handle the content creation aspect of these platforms. Others, however, do not consider social media as institutional enough to be deemed a reliable source of information for their university.

Some students seek feedback after being rejected. Universities can refer them to the criteria outlined on the website. If students persist in seeking further clarification, institutions may choose to provide them with their evaluation form directly. Moreover, providing accessible **appeal forms** on the programme's website, along with **clear deadlines** for appeals, can assist institutions in managing them effectively.

Finally, avoiding scheduling the application period during vacation breaks can help prevent staff from having to respond to student inquiries during their time off.

3.3.4. Accepting the right students

Many participants highlighted the **restrictive nature of EU-defined quotas** for EM scholarships, as they often receive applications from highly qualified students who cannot be accepted because their nationality is already represented. These quotas may also inadvertently **foster biases** during the evaluation of applications.

Moreover, universities have noted a **disparity between students' applications and their actual qualifications** for certain nationalities. Pompeu Fabra University (EMAI), for instance, disclosed that they **incorporate highly technical questions** during the interview phase of the selection process, as these queries often aid interviewers in filtering candidates effectively. Interviews play, indeed, a vital role in distinguishing motivated students from those merely seeking a tuition-free master's degree. **Integrating videos** into the application process can serve a similar purpose, enabling admissions staff to discern this distinction from the very beginning of the process. Lastly, the University of Limoges (EMIMEP)[17] works with an **Excel file to record critical data** from former students and their respective universities, organising this information by country. This system assists them in gaining a clearer understanding of students' actual performance based on their background.

Linked to this disparity is the challenge of identifying applicants who have **heavily relied on Artificial Intelligence (AI)** technologies, such as ChatGPT, in their applications. Implementing AI detection measures has become crucial in recent years. Some participants have addressed this issue by **incorporating personalised or targeted questions** in the application process, as responses that are overly generic or similar can be readily identified as AI-generated. Others have **engaged professors** in

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[17] EMIMEP is the European Master for Industry in Microwave Electronics and Photonics: https://www.erasmus-mundus.emimep.eu/.

the admission process, as they are often more adept at recognising the use of these technologies than administrative staff. Additionally, requiring students to sign an **Ethics Code** may serve as a deterrent against using AI in their applications.

Finally, to combat **fraud in applications**, some consortia require a notarised copy of qualifications and passports. German universities, in particular, engage **Academic Assessment Centres at German embassies** to meet with students, often from China and India, to verify that they genuinely meet the admission criteria, including English proficiency levels.

3.4. Aligning administrative processes within own university

EM programmes have unique characteristics and usually must be managed independently, which can make them somewhat isolated within their respective institutions. Alignment of administrative processes with central services can become challenging due to institutional regulations and structures and, in some cases, high reliance on personal relationships. Awareness, flexibility, and networking are seen as useful tools to enhance intra-institutional cooperation.

3.4.1. Shaping internal organisation

When looking within their own institution, participants expressed that in some cases, requirements of programme implementation can collide with institutional or local regulations. Examples of such conflicts may include discrepancies in admission criteria, credit transfer policies, or financial procedures. Two approaches to address these conflicts were exposed by participants: (i) **Exemptions from internal regulations**, seeking exemptions from internal regulations for EM programmes can provide flexibility in adhering to consortia instructions without violating institutional policies: and (ii) **Clear hierarchy of regulations**, establishing clear guidelines regarding the supremacy of regulations, whether local or programme-specific, helps mitigate conflicts and ensures consistency in decision-making processes.

At a practical level, **internal organisation and alignment issues** often arise in administrative processes, particularly concerning coordination with International Offices (IO), quality assurance procedures, and visa support for students. These challenges usually arise from unclear or insufficient distribution of resources and responsibilities. According to participants, **securing support from university higher-level decision-makers** is crucial for obtaining necessary resources for an efficient programme management.

Depending on the institutional context, **strategies for overcoming organisation issues may vary**. Some institutions may benefit from greater **decentralisation**, allowing faculty-level autonomy in programme management. In contrast, others may opt for more **centralisation** by integrating EM staff into existing central services, facilitating knowledge exchange and resource allocation.

Furthermore, dependency on central control systems can pose difficulties for EM programmes that present their own characteristics (e.g. international students, different deadlines). For instance, a participant reported delays in scholarship payments to students due to the financial system requirement of opening of a national bank, which is often burdensome and complex for international students. Challenges related to the common application system were also reported, often attributed to **unsuitable software applications** that may not adequately accommodate the specific information needs of EM programmes, thus, increasing the need of manual processing of applications. IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (IMETE-C)[18] has introduced a new IT system to help deal with this

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[18] IMETE-C is the International Master of Science in Environmental Technology and Engineering: https://www.imete.eu/.

problem, as it allows customisation of specific streams, making it easier to incorporate tailor-made features to meet the unique needs of EM programmes.

3.4.2. Communication and coordination between services

Communication within the institution emerged as a common concern among participants, highlighting both the lack of visibility of EM programmes within their own institutions, as well as the lack of communication and connection between administrators and various services/offices within the institution.

Participants highlighted the importance of **encouraging awareness raising and knowledge sharing,** both among EM programme coordinators and with central services. Internal networking initiatives, such as the joint organisation of open days and welcome events or the creation of a learning community for coordinators, are seen as effective practices to facilitate face-to-face contact and foster relationships between administrative staff and programme coordinators.

At the same time, when communication between administrative management staff and the various services or offices of the institution exists, this can be slow, convoluted and inflexible. The allocation of responsibilities within the university, including between different services and aspects, may be unclear, which increases communication problems. Additionally, a lack of experience with EM programmes within institutional central services further complicates matters. Cultural differences also play a role, particularly in HEIs located in countries where English is not widely spoken. Language barriers can hinder effective communication and the involvement of other services, as English may be necessary for communication. In some cases, staff may even refuse to use English in other administrative offices.

This highlights the **crucial role of the coordinator in EM programmes** to build trustful relationships with all services within the institution, including housing, enrolment, and the international office. Such relationships facilitate collaborative work and ensure that assistance is readily available where needed.

In some institutions, as reported by LMU, the IO plays a key role in facilitating communication and coordination between programme coordinators, legal departments, and university boards. Acting as a link between various stakeholders, the IO promotes EM programmes through various channels and facilitate administrative processes such as consortium agreements and EU mandates.

3.5. Supporting students with housing

Both LMU and TUM have identified housing and accommodation in Munich as a significant challenge encountered by Erasmus Mundus students, leaving the international offices of the universities feeling somewhat powerless in their ability to provide adequate support. While housing challenges vary among cities, this feeling was echoed by many of the participants in attendance. Given the significant impact of such issues on students' well-being and mental health, institutional support is crucial to enhance their Erasmus Mundus experience. Below are the key takeaways from their discussions.

3.5.1. Challenging housing market for international EM students

Firstly, the **nature of the Erasmus Mundus programmes**, which prioritises short-term mobility, presents a challenge when engaging with landlords, as they typically show little interest in offering short-term rentals or holding accommodations during vacation breaks for incoming cohorts.

In addition, EM students face **stiff competition** amid a high demand for accommodation in student residences, where available rooms are often insufficient. They are also compelled to navigate the private housing market, which often involves face-to-face castings and interviews – an impractical process for international students.

Applying for residence in student accommodations often requires submitting an **enrolment certificate** issued by the university, which may not always be obtainable in time. Moreover, landlords or rental agencies frequently demand students to include a **residence permit** with their application, a document that, like visas, requires time to be issued by the relevant authorities.

Lastly, **cultural differences** also contribute to these challenges, as some students encounter language barriers or even discriminatory attitudes from landlords, who may not speak fluent English and/or harbour scepticism towards foreigners, especially those from non-European countries. The latter have, in fact, complained to universities that students from certain backgrounds do not properly clean or ventilate their accommodations, thereby damaging them for the next tenants.

Given these challenges, it is crucial for institutions to **cultivate and sustain relationships** with landlords, private agencies and even municipalities. This initiative can help raise awareness about EM programmes within the local housing market, encouraging landlords to recognise the potential of accommodating EM students. The IO of the University of Kragujevac (EMMBIOME)[19], for instance, has implemented a **registry of landlords** willing to accept Erasmus students. These landlords usually charge additional fees compared to domestic students due to the shorter duration of Erasmus students' stay. Creating a registry of landlords can also serve to document the reliable ones, as well as those with a problematic track record, thereby preventing further bad housing experiences. This list can be regularly updated with the input from students.

Similarly, the Polytechnic University of Turin (HySET)[20] provides an Accommodation Service for its students called 'Cerco Alloggio', which offers fully furnished and equipped flats to offsite and international students in the city of Turin. Through a **database of certified apartments**, the service identifies suitable accommodations and offers support through a digital and physical helpdesk. This helpdesk addresses requests from property owners and assists students throughout their rental period. The platform is multilingual, searchable and accessible to people with disabilities[21].

Moreover, institutions should **enable networking opportunities** between current and incoming cohorts, as well as between alumni and students, to facilitate the transfer of accommodations among them. Establishing a system where cohorts or local student associations can share housing announcements would be instrumental in achieving this goal. For instance, some universities have set up a social media group for students on platforms like Facebook, while others use their intranet to disseminate these announcements. It is also important to highlight that certain cities are home to large Chinese or Indian communities, which can be of incredible value for students from these nationalities in their search for accommodation. Institutions can actively assist the latter in connecting with their respective communities.

Regarding the previously mentioned cultural barriers, some EM programme coordinators accompany students to castings and interviews to assist them with language and other practical matters. Implementing this support is, however, not always feasible as it is very time- and energy-consuming.

In any case, institutions must try to anticipate enrolment numbers to forecast the students in need of housing and implement the necessary measures to support them.

3.5.2. High financial costs for students

Cities like Munich are known for their **high costs of living**, often **draining students' scholarship money**, which cannot be adjusted to the varying living expenses of the different cities. Residing on the

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[19] EMMBIOME is the Erasmus Mundus Master in Biomedical Engineering: http://emmbiome.eu/.
[20] HySET is the Master's Degree in Hydrogen System and Enabling Technologies: https://hysetmaster.polito.it/.
[21] Additional information is available at https://cercoalloggio.com/torino/polito. The service is part of the broader 'Torino Student Housing' project, aimed at supporting students in finding good quality accommodation while also supporting the refurbishment of non-rented flats. The initiative engages various stakeholders including property owners, building companies, registered professionals, etc.

outskirts of these areas is not always feasible, as the cost of living there can be comparable to that of the centre. Plus, aside from Indian or Chinese students, who may be more used to lengthy commutes, most students are unwilling to endure them.

In addition to the high rental prices, **deposits are also very expensive**. Compounding this issue, some banks (e.g. Crédit Agricole) restrict students from withdrawing more than a certain amount of money at once, and often lower than the required deposit amount. Finally, some students fall victims to **fraudulent housing scams**, where they advance money before receiving keys to their accommodations, for instance.

During discussions, participants stressed the importance of **informing** students about these issues, particularly those concerning fraud, as scams often follow similar patterns. Some programme coordinators also advise students to allocate their scholarship money by saving in less expensive cities for later use in the more costly ones. These types of information can be integrated into the **student handbook** mentioned in section *3.1. 'Students well-being and perspectives'*.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The Erasmus Mundus Master programmes are certainly distinctive, offering significant advantages to both students and staff members. However, their uniqueness may sometimes conflict with national and institutional regulations and structures that have yet to fully adapt to the innovative and international nature of EM programmes. In this context, the Study Visit provided a forum for participants to actively discuss the daily challenges they encounter in managing and administering EM programmes, fostering a sense of solidarity in shared experiences. Moving forward, these discussions can continue in the Erasmus Mundus Community Platform, introduced during the Study Visit. The aim of this platform is precisely to support communication among the MS community by providing a space for participants to share their thoughts and connect with their peers.

The key ingredients for success that most prominently emerged in discussions entail maintaining flexibility at all levels of the programme, adopting a hands-on approach to coordinating these programmes, and actively networking with key stakeholders. These include internal central and faculty administrations, consortium partners, local public authorities and landlords. The ultimate goal is to provide students with the finest Erasmus Mundus experience and ensure the sustainability of the programme.

The European Commission and EACEA would like to sincerely thank TUM and LMU for hosting the Study Visit. Special thanks are extended to the Erasmus Mundus administrative staff members for their active participation and for sharing valuable insights. The results of the study visit will be considered in the conceptual design of future EMSI activities and events.

Looking to the future, the European Commission intends to consult Erasmus Mundus consortia and stakeholders to draw on their expertise in shaping the future direction of Erasmus Mundus in the framework of the Erasmus+ successor programme 2028-2034.

Annex I – Study Visit Programme

Day I: Monday, 11th March at TUM (Arcisstraße 21; Building 0501, Room 2100)	
Time	**Session**
13:30 – 14:00	*Registration and welcome coffee*
14:00 – 14:10	**Welcome and introduction** • Ghislaine Craeghs, Project Officer, EACEA
14:10 – 14:30	**Icebreaker – Getting to know each other**
14:30 – 14:55	**Erasmus Mundus Community platform – How to get involved**
14:55 – 15:20	**Introduction to the Erasmus Mundus experience of TUM** • Professor Dr. -Ing. Liqiu Meng, Chair of the CARTO, TUM
15:20 – 15:50	*Coffee break*
15:50 – 16:50	**Testimonies & best practices (Breakout session I)** *Topic: Student well-being and perspectives* • Juliane Cron, Programme Coordinator of CARTO, TUM • Dr. Franz Kogelmann, Dean of the European Interdisciplinary Master in African Study, Univeristy of Bayreuth • Zihan Liu, Alumni, TUM • Sasanka Madawalagama, Alumni, TUM
16:50 – 17:15	**Debriefing session in plenary**
17:30 – 18:30	*Campus tours of TUM and LMU*
19:30 – 21:00	*Networking dinner*
Day II: Tuesday, 12th March at LMU (Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1; Room W 401)	
Time	**Session**
09:00 – 09:30	*Arrival and registration*
09:30 – 09:35	**Welcome to Day II**
09:35 – 10:00	**Introduction to the Erasmus Mundus experience of LMU** • Andrea Blei, Head of Erasmus+ Coordination & Incoming Mobility, LMU International Office
10:00 – 11:00	**Testimonies & best practices (Breakout session II)** *Topic: Coordination between consortium partners* • Juliane Cron, Programme Coordinator of CARTO, TUM • Karin Kleinstück, Programme Coordinator of MaMaSELF, TUM/LMU • Dr. Philomena Bodensteiner, Programme Coordinator of MEME, LMU • Dr. Franz Kogelmann, Dean of the European Interdisciplinary Master in African Study, Univeristy of Bayreuth
11:00 – 11:15	**Debriefing session in plenary**

11:15 – 11:30	*Coffee break*
11:30 – 12:30	**Testimonies & best practices (Breakout session III)** *Topic a: Selection procedures* • Juliane Cron, Programme Coordinator of CARTO, TUM • Professor Dr. John Parsch, Programme Coordinator of MEME, LMU *Topic b: Aligning administrative processes within own university* • Karin Kleinstück, Programme Coordinator of MaMaSELF, TUM/LMU • Dr. Philomena Bodensteiner, Programme Coordinator of MEME, LMU • Dr. Franz Kogelmann, Dean of the European Interdisciplinary Master in African Study, Univeristy of Bayreuth
12:30 – 12:45	**Debriefing session in plenary**
12:45 – 13:45	*Networking lunch*
13:45 – 14:45	**Testimonies & best practices (Breakout session IV)** *Topic a*: Supporting students in search for housing • Karin Kleinstück, Programme Coordinator of MaMaSELF, TUM/LMU *Topic b: Selection procedures* • Juliane Cron, Programme Coordinator of CARTO, TUM • Professor Dr. John Parsch, Programme Coordinator of MEME, LMU *Topic c: Aligning administrative processes within own university* • Dr. Franz Kogelmann, Dean of the European Interdisciplinary Master in African Study, Univeristy of Bayreuth
14:45 – 15:15	**Debriefing session and closing of study visit**

Annex II – Workshop Results

What are the challenges?

Housing & accommodation

Financial barriers (incl. tuition fees, housing…)

Visa & residence permits

Stress related to mobility scheme

Workload of study programme

Cultural & background differences

Integration & adaptation to local culture & students

Language barriers

How can these challenges be overcome?

Having a 'reliable landlords' list

Networking between current & new cohorts

Networking between EM students & alumni

Liaising with municipalities, private agencies, etc.

Sending list of EM students to consulates

Offering preparation courses

Preparing a detailed student handbook

Setting up a social media group (e.g. Facebook)

Implementing a buddy or mentor system

Organising social/sports events (incl. welcome)

Organising summer/ winter programmes

Preparing a student travel guide

Offering local language courses

STUDENT WELL-BEING AND PERSPECTIVES

What barriers and enablers might affect the implementation of your solution(s)?

Hands-on administrative staff

Institutional commitment and support

International staff at each partner university

National & EU rules

Institutional policies

What steps should be taken to put your solution(s) into action?

Creating & updating information, handbooks, guides, etc.

Building & maintaining relations with other offices

Figure 1 Exercise sheet on student well-being & perspectives completed by participants

COORDINATION BETWEEN CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

What are the challenges?

- Intercultural differences
- Big consortium of partners
- Differing goals
- Respecting EU reporting deadlines
- Accreditation
- Differing academic systems (e.g. evaluation)
- Differing academic calendars
- Handling day-to-day student issues
- Dealing with failing students
- Dealing with non-paying self-funded students
- Arranging a joint degree
- Lack of budget to dedicate to EM staff

How can these challenges be overcome?

- Having clear common goals
- Having a strong, clear partnership agreement
- Having an admin. point of contact in each partner
- Organising periodic in-person events & meetings
- Organising specific admin. meetings
- Having a library of templates for reporting
- Harmonising accreditation information at EU level
- Co-supervising thesis
- Aligning & converting grades
- Issuing transcripts with & without converted grades
- Preparing detailed plans (e.g. graduation)
- Allowing remote exams
- Having one single enrolment (coordinator)
- Allowing students to retake exams in another partner
- Suspending scholarships of failing students
- Requiring self-funded students to provide a bank statement
- Requiring self-funded students to pay in advance
- Having an EU guide for joint masters and degrees
- Discussing budget incl. tuition fees & participation costs
- Establishing a sustainability committee

What barriers and enablers might affect the implementation of your solution(s)?

- National and local regulations
- Team building
- Simplified procedures
- Flexibility

What steps should be taken to put your solution(s) into action?

- Building & maintaining relations with partners

Solutions at EU level

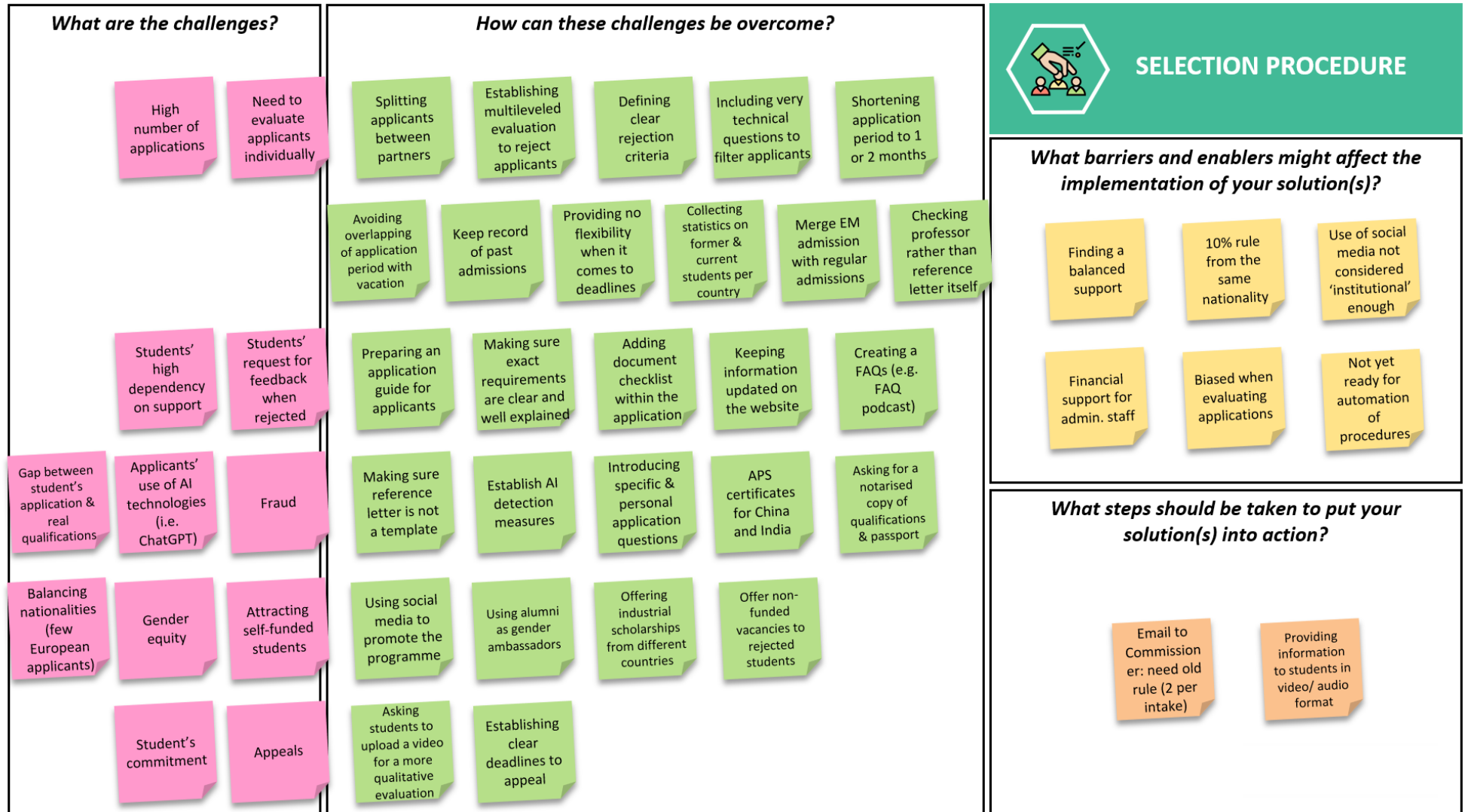*Figure 2 Exercise sheet on coordination between consortium partners completed by participants*

SELECTION PROCEDURE

What are the challenges?

- High number of applications
- Need to evaluate applicants individually
- Students' high dependency on support
- Students' request for feedback when rejected
- Gap between student's application & real qualifications
- Applicants' use of AI technologies (i.e. ChatGPT)
- Fraud
- Balancing nationalities (few European applicants)
- Gender equity
- Attracting self-funded students
- Student's commitment
- Appeals

How can these challenges be overcome?

- Splitting applicants between partners
- Establishing multileveled evaluation to reject applicants
- Defining clear rejection criteria
- Including very technical questions to filter applicants
- Shortening application period to 1 or 2 months
- Avoiding overlapping of application period with vacation
- Keep record of past admissions
- Providing no flexibility when it comes to deadlines
- Collecting statistics on former & current students per country
- Merge EM admission with regular admissions
- Checking professor rather than reference letter itself
- Preparing an application guide for applicants
- Making sure exact requirements are clear and well explained
- Adding document checklist within the application
- Keeping information updated on the website
- Creating a FAQs (e.g. FAQ podcast)
- Making sure reference letter is not a template
- Establish AI detection measures
- Introducing specific & personal application questions
- APS certificates for China and India
- Asking for a notarised copy of qualifications & passport
- Using social media to promote the programme
- Using alumni as gender ambassadors
- Offering industrial scholarships from different countries
- Offer non-funded vacancies to rejected students
- Asking students to upload a video for a more qualitative evaluation
- Establishing clear deadlines to appeal

What barriers and enablers might affect the implementation of your solution(s)?

- Finding a balanced support
- 10% rule from the same nationality
- Use of social media not considered 'institutional' enough
- Financial support for admin. staff
- Biased when evaluating applications
- Not yet ready for automation of procedures

What steps should be taken to put your solution(s) into action?

- Email to Commissioner: need old rule (2 per intake)
- Providing information to students in video/ audio format

Figure 3 Exercise sheet on selection procedures completed by participants

What are the challenges?

- Lack of EM experience at institutional central services
- Lack of programme's visibility in own institution
- Lack of connection among institutional services/ offices
- Refusal to help + complicating processes
- Refusal to use English
- Differing local academic traditions
- Issuing a joint diploma & supplement
- Alignment of study and exam regulations
- Alignment of QA procedures
- Real workload vs. allocated budget
- Application platform/ software

How can these challenges be overcome?

- Involving other central offices
- Going to the right committee to overcome challenges
- Being the line of communication between services/ offices
- Integrating EM staff into regular central services
- Having the 'big conversation' from the very beginning
- Preparing a handbook with practical information for colleagues
- Facilitating internal learning community of programme coordinators
- Actively promoting programme to institutional decision makers
- Allowing exemptions from institutional regulations for EM Masters
- Having written procedures
- Hiring additional dedicated EM staff
- Having an honest discussion on the workload
- Using a different/tailored workflow within application platform
- Manually processing on Excel sheets (for applications)
- Use alternative tools to collect information (e.g. Google forms)

ALIGNING ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES WITHIN OWN UNIVERSITY

What barriers and enablers might affect the implementation of your solution(s)?

- Institutional regulations
- Human pride
- Networking
- Flexibility

What steps should be taken to put your solution(s) into action?

- Regular meetings with different offices

Figure 4 Exercise sheet on aligning administrative processes within own university completed by participants

Figure 5 Exercise sheet on supporting students with finding accommodation completed by participants