

EUTOPIA PhD co-tutelle

Call guidelines 2025

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1. Background and overview

The EUTOPIA European University is an ambitious alliance of ten like-minded European universities:

the [Babes-Bolyai University](#) (Romania), [Vrije Universiteit Brussel](#) (Belgium), the [Ca'Foscari University of Venice](#) (Italy), [CY Cergy Paris Université](#) (France), the [Technische Universität Dresden](#) (Germany), the [Göteborgs Universitet](#) (Sweden), the [Univerza v Ljubljani](#) (Slovenia), the [Nova University Lisbon](#) (Portugal), the [Universitat Pompeu Fabra](#) (Spain) and the [University of Warwick](#) (United Kingdom). It was selected as one of the first Erasmus+ 'European Universities' pilot projects. The core mission of EUTOPIA is to promote a connected and inclusive academic community, addressing global and local challenges, advancing excellence, inclusion, impact and innovation.

Following on from the success to the Erasmus+ pilot programme in 2020 and to subsequent bids (EUTOPIA-TRAIN, EUTOPIA-Science and Innovation Fellowships), the partner universities have decided to open the PhD co-tutelle programme again this year. This call description details the programme functioning, funding scheme and practical modalities.

The EUTOPIA PhD co-tutelle programme supports high-quality PhD projects **in all research areas** co-supervised by academics of the EUTOPIA member universities. It offers PhD fellowships for 3 to 4 years, depending on the length of doctoral studies in the partner universities. It is expected to lead to high-quality research projects with global impact, providing exciting research opportunities for PhD or doctoral candidates. They shall take full advantage of the vibrant scientific environment of the EUTOPIA alliance (the following links give access the research pages of the six EUTOPIA partner universities active in the 2025 programme):

- [Babes-Bolyai University](#)
- [Ca'Foscari University of Venice](#)
- [CY Cergy Paris Université](#)
- [Technische Universität Dresden](#)
- [Nova University Lisbon](#)
- [University of Warwick](#)

The participating EUTOPIA universities will jointly operate the call but not every university will be HOME (meaning, funding) universities. They can still be HOST (meaning, secondary) partners – the degree of overall reciprocity will be considered when the universities evaluate the projects. This document describes the application procedure and requirements, the evaluation process and gives details about the funding conditions, operational modalities and implementation of the PhD fellowships.

Bilateral co-tutelle agreements will be made between the partner universities. Successful candidates will enter into an agreement governing the joint supervision of their PhD and obtain funding for the entire duration of their PhD according to the national legal frameworks – in most cases from a single employer for the length of the PhD. An example of such an agreement can be provided upon request.

The present call offers PhD fellowships for certain Home/Host configuration, but all listed universities can be Hosts. A maximum of 22 PhD fellowships are allocated by home institution (table below) :

	UBB	UNIVE	CY	NOVA	UW	TUD
Number of positions offered as HOME	2+	5	4	6	5	0
Number of positions offered as HOST (when known)			No pre-determined limit			No pre-determined limit

The fellowships will start between October 2025 and January 2026.

2. Application and selection process

2.1 Application

Applications are **to be submitted by the prospective supervisors** of the project. **An exception is made for UNIVE and NOVA** where it is the prospective PhD student who submits the application due to their internal and national funding requirements.

The deadline for submission is dependent on the HOME institution applied for. Each university provides an application link for proposals to be submitted. The links are listed on the EUTOPIA PhD co-tutelle call webpage.

The **same project can only be submitted once**, regardless of the Home or Host institution. Applications submitted after the respective deadline will not be considered.

Submissions should include:

- Completed application form
- Detailed description of the research project
- Academic CVs of both co-supervisors and CV of the PhD candidate(s)
- Letter of motivation from the PhD candidate(s) when already identified
- Letters/emails of support from Head of School/Department/Research Center/Doctoral School/Academic Unit, depending on each university (a support letter from the Head of Department is compulsory at University of Warwick)
- Letter of support from the Doctoral school/office of the co-host university confirming the eligibility and willingness to host the PhD student. **(New for 2025)**
- A scanned copy of the PhD candidate's Master's degree certificate and academic transcript (or highest degree obtained + Master's degree underway), when PhD candidates are already identified. Please note that pre-Masters candidates may not be accepted in some universities.

Applications where the PhD candidate has not yet been identified may be considered but strong priority in the selection will be given to complete projects having already identified a PhD candidate or a short list of PhD candidates. Applicants must explain their motivation for the choice of the proposed candidate(s) and indicate their ranking of the potential candidates, if more than one has been identified.

To be eligible, submissions must be made via the application link provided by the HOME universities.

2.2 Evaluation and selection

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Quality of the proposed research project:
 - a) relevance to the current topic of the scientific fields
 - b) topicality and originality
 - c) suitable methods, and feasibility
2. Qualifications of the researchers:
 - a) track record of the co-supervisors
 - b) quality of preselected candidate(s)
3. Added value of the cotutelle
 - a) Individual pertinence of each partner
 - b) Complementarities and synergies made possible through this cotutelle

4. Institutional pertinence of the proposal
 - a) Pertinence in regard to the priorities of the research team
 - b) Relevance to strategic interests of the university
 - c) Degree of reciprocity between the universities

The proposals will go through a peer review process (for parts 1 to 3):

- Each university will provide an evaluation for each project that are associated to (whether they be Home or Host).
- The evaluation of the projects will include an evaluation by university leadership (VP/rectors of research) to evaluate the alignment of the projects with the institutional priorities and whether there is a form of reciprocity (this relates to the “effort” made by each partner in the Alliance – applicants are not expected to address this issue).
- In the case of applications where a PhD candidate has not been identified yet, funding decisions will be conditional on the validation of suitable candidate(s), in accordance with the eligibility criteria (see parts 3 and 4).
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Application results are expected to be released by end of June 2025 by the HOME universities.

3. Conditions and modalities of the PhD co-tutelle fellowships

Each PhD co-tutelle fellowship will be hosted by two EUTOPIA partner universities. The students will enroll in both partner universities each year during the whole duration of the PhD co-tutelle programme.

For the implementation of the PhD fellowships and other practical modalities, applicants are expected to **indicate a Home and a Host Institution in their application**. **The same project can only be submitted once, regardless of the Home or Host institution.** These indications will be considered by the evaluation committees and, if possible, confirmed during the selection process, but may be modified if necessary.

Candidates are expected to spend a significant amount of time at both partner institutions (at least 12 months in each) and at least 50% of their time at their Home Institution. In general, it is strongly advised that candidates start their PhD in their Home institution.

Enrollment in the two partner universities opens numerous opportunities to the PhD candidates in the scope of the PhD co-tutelle programme. They access all services and support from both universities including doctoral training programmes, professional orientation, libraries, student life services etc. They are fully integrated in the two research environments of their co-supervisors: research centers, scientific networks etc.

The implementation of the PhD co-tutelle programme will be governed by bilateral cotutelle agreements (see part 1) taking into account national and local regulations of each university. The following sections gather general information relevant for the agreements.

3.1 Funding

Funding for the PhD fellowships offered in the present call comes from the partner universities. Financial support for the PhD or doctoral candidates therefore follows the national rules and standards of each university.

Financial support for the PhD or doctoral candidates covers, for all universities, a 3 to 4-year PhD fellowship/stipend. According to the universities’ practices, it may be complemented by a travel/research allowance and the payment/exemption of tuition fees by the university. Certain co-tutelle PhD fellowships in this call are jointly financed by the partner institutions, according to processes outlined in the bilateral

agreements. In the case of full financing of the student's fellowship by one university, this university will be the student's Home Institution. NOVA PhD fellowships are financed by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) (applicable for NOVA HOME projects). The student will receive funding for the duration of the PhD co-tutelle programme according to the practices of their Home Institution, either by being employed by the university and receiving a salary or by receiving a stipend.

3.2 Eligibility criteria (supervisors / PhD students)

All co-tutelle PhD projects will be jointly supervised by permanent researchers from the candidate's Home and Host Institutions. The proposed PhD projects should be anchored in the scientific collaboration between the supervisors.

The eligibility for students and supervisors to the co-tutelle PhD programmes of this call is governed by the partner universities rules and shall be defined in the bilateral co-tutelle agreements. PhD or doctoral candidates must meet the minimum entry requirements for PhD programmes at each partner university involved in their co-tutelle PhD programmes (noteworthy items to check : entry diplomas, security clearance, etc.). Supervisors in both the home and host institution should meet local and/or national regulations defining the minimum requirements for PhD supervision (see below for details).

3.3 Project endorsement

According to each university's rules, applications to this call will be endorsed by the Head of School / Department / Faculty / Research Center / Doctoral School etc. to which the supervisors and PhD candidates are affiliated in order to ensure activities align with their priorities. Additional constraints can be integrated in the endorsement request, such as the availability of sufficient resourcing within the entities to which the co-tutelle PhD programme is affiliated, as well as health, safety and ethical requirements. Endorsement can be optional or compulsory depending on each university's rules and will be part of the application documents. From 2025 onwards, a letter of support is required from the co-host university doctoral school/office confirming the eligibility and willingness to host the PhD students at their institution.

3.4 Reporting

Annual reporting will be compulsory for each PhD co-tutelle programme: students and supervisors will be subject to the standard reporting requirements of their Home and Host Institution. Modalities of the reporting shall be defined by the partner universities and it is possible that students/supervisors will have to comply to the reporting modalities of both partner universities. It is imperative that applicants, and later on doctoral students, remember that they are attached to two universities and they cannot "ignore" either of them.

Information gathered through the reports will be shared between all EUTOPIA universities.

3.5 Defense and diplomas

All PhD co-tutelle fellows will be eligible to receive a double diploma, one from each partner university.

Defense rules of both partner universities shall apply to each PhD co-tutelle defense. Rules and modalities shall be defined in the bilateral agreement.

3.6 Training programme

PhD students participating in this co-tutelle programme will have the opportunity to follow a training programme during their doctoral studies in both universities, jointly defined by the partner institutions on the basis of their standard doctoral training programmes.

The contribution of each university to the PhD student's training programme will be defined in their bilateral agreement, taking into account the duration of the student's stay in each institution. The courses delivered by one university to the student will, as far as possible, be recognized by the other institution. The requirements of each university with regard to the PhD student's training programme will, as far as possible, not be additional but complementary and take into account the duration of the PhD student's stay in each university.

4. Further information and contacts

For further advice, please contact:

Babes-Bolyai University:

- Chis Teodora, Interim Head of the secretariat the Institute of Doctoral studies at UBB., teodora.chis@ubbcluj.ro, Tél: +40-264-405 362
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- Dr. rer. nat. Mihaela Aluas, Institutional Representative of the Doctoral Schools on internationalization, ethics and academic integrity mihaela.aluas@ubbcluj.ro

Ca' Foscari University of Venice:

- Patrick Heinrich, Rector's delegate for Eutopia PhD, patrick.heinrich@unive.it

CY CergyParis University:

- Anne-Sophie Vallageas, International Cooperation Assistant, anne-sophie.vallageas@cyu.fr, Tél : 33(0)1 34 25 67 07

Technische Universität Dresden:

- Dr. Barbara Könczöl, Head of Unit, Technische Universität Dresden barbara.koenczoel@tu-dresden.de, Tél : + 49 351 463 42683

Nova Lisbon University:

- Rita Ferreira, Research Manager at Funding & Scientific Strategy Unit, NOVA Research and Innovation Support Division, eutopia.phd@unl.pt, Tél : +351 210496 457

University of Warwick:

- Rhiannon Martyn, from the Doctoral College, r.martyn@warwick.ac.uk