



Fact Sheet: Fostering Education in Unite!

SUMMARY: EDUCATIONAL OFFERS IN THE UNITE! ALLIANCE

The Unite! alliance through a range of initiatives is fostering educational activities amongst and with the 9 partner universities. These endeavours offer added value by **fostering international collaboration, simplifying administrative processes, and providing both teachers and students access to diverse resources and infrastructures**. They are aimed at enhancing **collaborative teaching opportunities**, increasing attractive study offers for students, and help in further developing the inter-university digital campus i.e., **Metacampus as a single-entry point for students, teachers, and staff**. Unite! understands itself as a versatile **support platform** for teachers and students: Rather than setting agendas, **Unite! actively facilitates the stimulation of attractive educational offers throughout the alliance**.

These initiatives have already enabled several teaching collaborations and consequent study offers among the Unite! universities. However, despite the Unite! endeavours fostered so far, there are still **challenges in stimulating teachers/ teaching units to develop collaborative study offers** for Unite! Therefore, Unite! needs a **comprehensive and cohesive strategy to foster joint educational offers** provided by the partner universities.

The following overview presents Unite!'s current educational provisions in more detail.

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1. Introduction: Unite! Strategic Roadmap of Joint Educational Offers

One of the **key deliverables** for the **2nd Unite! funding phase (2022-26)** is the **Unite! Academic Catalogue, which must be developed through various intersections of Unite! Communities (Cm.)**.¹ As a point of departure to achieve this deliverable, **Unite!'s Cm. 4 (Innovative Teaching and Learning) and Cm. 5 (Flexible Educational Offers) are primarily tasked** with the development of:

- A catalogue of Unite! educational offerings i.e. the Unite! Academic Catalogue
- Unite! Joint Programmes and collaborative offerings and implementation of the European Degree
- Toolkit for the development of Unite! Joint programmes and collaborative educational offerings
- Unite! strategy for the promotion of Unite! educational offerings
- Unite! capacity building training package for highest pedagogical quality
- Mobility framework addressing administrative procedures, recruitment, infrastructure, support, and automatic recognition

To reach and attract students for these joint offers, virtual mobility will be supported by the Unite! digital campus—**Metacampus**², which is intended to play a significant role in creating **a one-stop learning management system accessible by all 9 partners**. Lastly, all these **initiatives are promoted and communicated within the alliance and to all the partners** by Unite! strategic communication team from **Cm. 9 (Strategic Outreach, Impact and Dissemination)**.

For the intersections between Cm. 2, 4, 5, and 9 to work coherently, **a strategic roadmap is required for fostering joint educational offers to test, adapt, and adopt through user experiences of teachers and students alike**.

2. Curricular and Co-Curricular Provisions

a. Joint Courses and Programmes

Unite! has **successfully introduced new educational offers in two formats** namely Joint Programmes and Short-term courses (*please see Annexe II for details*). Under these categories, the offers are wide ranging, from summer and winter schools, Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP), language courses, to novel learning formats.

b. Shared Curricular Offers

The 9 Unite! universities share a substantial number of curricular offers, many of which were launched **before the formal establishment of the Unite! alliance** in 2019 and were **mainly created based on bilateral agreements**. These existing offers span over a wide-ranging fields and academic levels, enhancing students' academic and cultural exposure. Since Unite!'s launch, **16 short-term courses and 5 internships (offers by a Unite! partner opened to Unite!)** have been opened by 8 partners to the alliance.

c. Shared/Joint Extracurricular Offers

Unite! also supports overall development in student life by supporting initiatives outside of academic skills as well, such as **3 hackathons, 1 book club, 4 virtual student fairs, 3 Unite!4Future competitions**³, **participation in the**

¹ Work Packages stated in the Grant Agreement are referred to as Unite! Communities/Cm. within the alliance.

² Metacampus is in the purview of Cm.2 Digital campus.

³ The competition encourages Unite! students to share their vision of a University of the future, by presenting concrete, original and implementable projects.



annual European Students Assembly, 50 virtual language tandems, seed funded student collaborations for external competitions e.g., rocketry associations, and a student festival amongst others.

d. Upcoming/Planned Activities

Several diverse offers are in the pipeline including:

- **MSCA-EJD on Biotechnology:** Application submission planned for Nov. 2024, with **joint teaching initiatives being planned at Master level.**
- **Unite! Guest Professorship:** **13 visiting professorships** offered at TUDa for Unite! partners, term variable (up to a max. of 2 years).
- **Unite! Virtual Fairs:** **4 fairs are planned** within the scope of Unite!’s 2nd funding phase for students and teachers
- **Unite! -Ed Future Conference:** 2nd Annual Unite! Education Conference, with focus on **“Sustainable Higher Education in the World of Generative AI”.**
- **U!Train: Unite! course on green travel** where 30 students will embark on a unique multicultural experience, traveling by train from Barcelona to Grenoble, engaging in academic and extracurricular activities
- **Unite! OER MOOC:** development of first **Unite! Open Educational Resources (OER) course to be offered on the Metacampus as a massive open online course (MOOC) in English,** with development of Unite! OER certification for future.

2.1 Facts and figures

- Existing bilateral collaborative offers:

Type of Programmes	Total no.
Double and Dual Degree Collaborative Programmes	50
Joint Master Programmes	20
PhD Collaborative Agreements	41
Joint Programmes	27
Joint Programmes with at least 2 Unite! partners	16

- New joint offers developed in Unite!

Type of Offer	Total no.
Joint Programmes (Established)	1
Joint Programmes (Under-development)	5
Joint short-term courses	8



2.2 Added value for the Unite! partners

- **For Students:** Increased **physical and virtual mobility for students** through joint programmes, traditional credit mobility, degree seeking mobility, short-term programmes, transnational internships, **more formats of internationalisation@home**, chance to **learn competency skills required in career development**, opportunities to find new partners for collaborative projects/competitions
- **For Teachers:** Opportunity to **strengthen (pre-existing) ties** between the partners' teaching units/faculties, opportunities to find new partners for collaborative projects/competitions
- **For Administrative Staff:** Opportunity to **strengthen (pre-existing) ties** between the partners' administrative units and cooperate with Unite! partners on a regular basis
- **For the Alliance:** Core benefit of acting as an alliance and **provide clear visibility through joint offers**

2.3 Outlook and Challenges

- **For Students:** an **effective tool for increasing virtual, blended, and physical mobility** for all Unite! partners. For continued exchange, Unite! should find ways to offer more long-term joint educational offers.
- **For Teachers:** current structures create **significant additional work alongside their regular teaching obligations** due to lack of formal recognition of workhours spent on development of offers in Unite!
- **For Administrative Staff:** extracurricular activities currently **demand considerable effort** from existing administrative staff with only **limited ERASMUS+ funding available**. For operating in a sustainable manner, such events require **dedicated resources at each partner university**.

3. Improving the Conditions for Joint Educational Offers

a. Academic Opportunities

Unite! currently facilitates various academic offers through its dedicated initiatives such as the Unite! Seed Fund, Virtual Exchange Credit Programme (VECP), and matchmaking events.

Unite! Seed Fund

The Seed Fund is Unite!'s **flagship initiative** for the promotion of education, research, and student activities. The fund – cofounded by the Unite! Erasmus+ project – provides financial support to innovative, co-creative and collaborative ideas from teachers, researchers, and students across the Unite! alliance. One of its three funding lines, **“Teaching and Learning”**, is specifically designed to **stimulate new joint educational offers** and **forge new teaching consortia within the alliance**. The first round of the Unite! Seed Fund in spring 2023 brought about a **peak in engagement of teachers and teaching staff with a total of 21 proposals submitted**.

- Seed funding for three kinds of collaborative activities, including **“Teaching and Learning”**
 - Programme option **“Exploring”**: Up to **€10,000** per project
 - Programme option **“Developing”**: Up to **€80,000** per project
 - Total budget per call cycle for funding line “Teaching and Learning”: **€300,000** (application threshold: 5-7)
- Last call for proposals (spring 2023), new call open (Jan. 2024)
 - Applications (“Teaching and Learning” / total): **21 / 48**



- Successful applications (“Research and PhD” / total): **7 / 21**
- Number of Unite! universities involved: **9 (all partners)**
- Total funding disbursed for “Teaching and Learning” 1st cycle: **€299,575.2**
- **Seed funded offers in the pipeline from 1st cycle in 2023:**

Type of Offer	Total no.
Pedagogical/methodological tools	3
Joint short-term courses	5
Joint programme (proposal)	2

Unite! Virtual Exchange Credit programme (VECP)

The Virtual Exchange Credit Programme was established to address the obstacles of physical mobility during the pandemic. The underlying administrative process brought a sustainable change which helped support the development of future blended and virtual courses. This novel format provides students with academic opportunities without the added burden of planning a semester abroad. The VECP offers courses of several partners on one topic and is now running in three different areas namely –

- Language and communication/Global competence with 66 students in 2021/2022,
- Energy
- Architectural Engineering (7 partners)

The U! Framework Agreement for Digital courses and Virtual Exchange Activities and the Multilateral agreement for Unite! Virtual Exchange Credit Programme were developed to support further collaboration. Unite! is working towards incorporating the VECP courses into the study programmes as part of the elective courses.

Matchmaking events

Digital Health Matchmaking at Grenoble INP-UGA

On 22-23 January 2024, teachers, and researchers from all Unite! universities met at Grenoble INP-UGA for an in-person matchmaking event, focusing on the overall topic of Digital Health. The event helped to spark further collaborations in teaching as well as research.

- Participating teachers and researchers: 20
- Number of Unite! universities involved: 9
- Thematic focus areas
 - 1) AI in Imaging
 - 2) Data Sharing
 - 3) Contextualised Clinical Decision Support
 - 4) Telemedicine and Remote Healthcare Delivery



Unite! Seed Fund Matchmaking

For the second annual Seed Fund call (Spring 2024), the Unite! secretariat will organise a virtual matchmaking event, aimed at bringing potential project coordinators into contact with partners from the Unite! community. The two-hour event on 16 February 2024 will cover all funding measures, including Teaching & Learning. All participants will receive general guidance on proposal writing, and they will be given ample opportunity to discuss their project ideas in virtual breakout rooms.

b. Administrative support: Unite! Support Structures- Cm. 4 & 5

Unite! has two dedicated Communities providing administrative support to teachers creating joint educational offers.

Cm. 4 on "**Innovative Teaching and Learning**" is tasked with developing innovative pedagogy for different study formats, including **Joint programmes** for which Unite! criteria is already defined. In addition, the Cm. offers support and expertise for Joint Programme management during the planning phase, provide capacity building and tailored teacher training to academic and administrative staff.

Cm. 5 on "**Joint Educational Offerings**" is tasked with developing new formats, criteria, and processes for shared and joint courses, e.g. VECP, BIPs, summer schools and other **short-term programmes**, and Unite! marketing strategy for the catalogue of Unite! educational offers (Unite! Academic Catalogue).

c. Marketing Plan: Unite! Academic Catalogue

In Unite! Cm. 5 has developed a **marketing strategy for joint educational offers** aimed exclusively at students which includes **raising awareness of the Unite! brand**, **development of the Unite! Course Catalogue**⁴ on the Unite! Website⁵. and strengthening on-going student engagement. Cm.5 has also **appointed a Student Marketing Manager** who cooperates with the Strategic Communication Team.

In addition, Cm. 5 has **developed a criterion for Unite! Short term programmes** that include a system of marketing. Lastly, a **Unite! label has been developed for programmes** (min. 2 Unite! partners, free of charge to Unite! students) with usage of Unite! branding strategies, and promotion in Unite!'s official channels.

d. IT Infrastructure Support and provision

The **Unite! Digital Campus** plays a key role in Unite! educational offerings through two central IT infrastructures namely, the Metacampus (Learning Management System-LMS) and Unite! Agora (Business Management System).

The Metacampus' intends to enable **access to all Unite! partners' LMS via one central entry-point** for all students and teachers in the alliance. It holds the **potential to expedite educational offers, increase virtual mobility and**

⁴ Through the support of Unite! Agora platform where shared educational offerings are collected: [Unite! Educational Offerings Catalogue | Unite Agora \(unite-university.eu\)](#)

⁵ Which provide an overview of all available educational offerings for students via the Unite! Website [Unite! Student Catalogue – UNITE! University \(unite-university.eu\)](#)



enhance digital user-friendliness for teachers and students in the future. At present, it is awaiting educational offers to test and refine usage and technical support. Currently **most Unite! educational offers use partners' LMS**.

Unite! Agora is the platform developed under the umbrella of aUPaEU⁶, which showcases research and education infrastructure resources, **initiates matchmakings through its noticeboard** (R&I and beyond) and **collects data, e.g., for the Unite! academic catalogue** in a coherent and user-friendly fashion. Agora has received **very positive reception by users** due to its clean look, user-friendliness, and its adaptability and further use will probably increase.

3.1 Facts and figures

- Status 2022: clear benefits for teachers to offer courses on Metacampus are difficult to grasp
 - Course needs to be created on Metacampus (not in partner system)
 - Administrative requirements for students and teachers remain or are even increased
- Currently, mostly extracurricular offers are available on the Metacampus and Unite! offers use partner LMS instead

3.2 Added value for the Unite! partners

- **For Students:** opportunities for innovation through Seed Fund, **attractive and novel study offers, easy to access overview of all available educational offerings** and to be accessed via only one LMS, the Metacampus
- **For Teachers:** financial **support for development of new offers via seed fund, logistical support** to boost joint offers, collaborator **matchmaking through Agora noticeboard** and upon full activation of Digital Campus (i.e. all Unite! Partner LMS connected to the Metacampus) no additional workload to provide courses within Unite.
- **For Administrative staff:** Seed fund projects allow support from Cm. 4 and Cm.5 for teachers, Agora is a user-friendly platform to communicate services. Whether certain parts of administration can be partially eased via Metacampus needs to be clarified
- **For the Alliance:** Creating more Joint Educational Offerings that bring innovative teaching and learning seamlessly to students clearly shows the benefits of being an alliance as intended from the beginning. It will clarify Unite!'s identity and enhance Unite!'s visibility.

3.3 Outlook and Challenges

Although various support systems exist in Unite! Cm. 2, 4, 5 are facing challenges in encouraging joint educational offers.

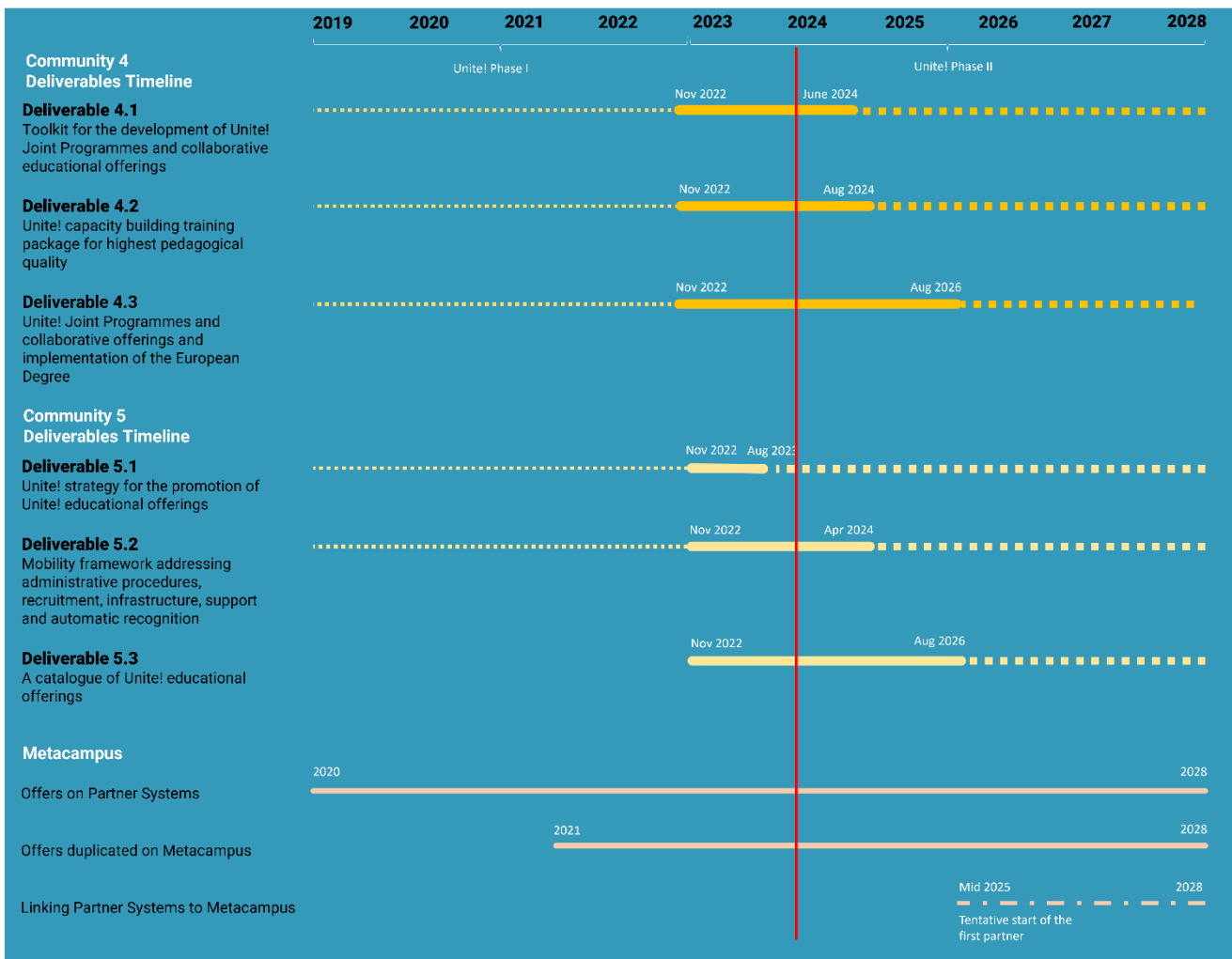
- **For Students: increased** use of Agora for collaborations due to user-friendliness, benefit from Unite! Student Catalogue with targeted branding

⁶ A University Partnership for Acceleration of European Universities (aUPaEU) is a collaboration of partners from Unite! and EPICUR (Horizon Europe project coordinated by UPC). It creates methodologies, sustainability plans, coaching services, and tangible digital technologies using an acceleration agora to achieve integrated, shared, and long-term R&I transformations through collaborative efforts



- **For Teachers:** providing courses on Metacampus **creates additional work-load due to duplication with institutional LMS and no clear benefits to them, need institutional boost to develop joint offers**
- **For Administrative Staff:** challenges in motivating teachers/teaching units due to lack of clear benefits, **need institutional governance support to incentivise creation of joint offers to teachers**, internal regulations or not enough directive may hinder connection of partner LMS to Metacampus,
- **For the Alliance: Academic offers, administrative support and the Metacampus are interdependent and can only reach that goal together.** The Metacampus is in an interim phase which means even more workload for teachers without the benefits presently. Yet this phase of testing is necessary to reach the full Unite! vision and Metacampus potential by connecting the partner systems. It requires clear and timely commitment from each Unite! partner to support this mission (technical enabling). Connection aimed to be piloted by WS 2025 for the first partner.

Annex I: Unite! Project Timeline





Annex II: Full List of Unite! Educational Offers

1.1. New Unite! Joint Programmes

No.	Course	Names of Unite! Partners	Number of Unite! Partners	Number of students	Year
On-going					
1.	Unite! M.Sc. on Communications Engineering and Data Science (CoDaS)	Aalto, Grenoble INP-UGA, ULisboa	3	NA	From 2021
Under Development					
2.	MAKES Manufacturing Adaptive Key Enhancers for a Sustainable Industry (Industry 4.0), Master, Grenoble INP-UGA, EMJM	NA	NA	-	NA
3.	eMAI-UNITE European Master on Responsible Artificial Intelligence, TUDa, EMJM	NA	NA	-	NA
4.	GreenChips-EDU: Nurturing the Future of Microelectronics for a Sustainable Tomorrow	TU Graz, PoliTo, TUDa, UPC, Grenoble INP-UGA and ULisboa	6	-	2023
5.	Unite! Graduate School for Excellence in European Speech and Language Technologies	NA	NA	-	2023
6.	Unite! Doctoral school	All 9 partners	NA	-	2024

1.2. Joint Short-term courses offered by Unite! Partners

No.	Course	Unite! Partners	Number of Unite! Partners	Number of students	Year
Short term courses					
1.	INSPIRED International Project Week for Interdisciplinary Research-Oriented Digital Learning	TU Darmstadt ULisboa, KTH	2	47 50	2020 2021
2.	ULisses Unite! University of Lisbon Interdisciplinary Studies on Sustainable Environment and Seas	ULisboa, TU Darmstadt	2	78 15	2021 2022



	(ULISSES) with a focus on “Oceans without Plastic”				
Short-term courses: Winter and Summer Schools					
3.	Unite! Spring School on Sustainable Energy, PoliTO	All Unite! partners	7	151	2021
4.	Unite! Summer School on Human-Centered Machine Learning, Aalto (BIP)	UPC, PoliTo, TUDa, Aalto	4	60	2022
5.	Unite! Biomass Winter School - U! Bio, Grenoble-INP (BIP)	KTH, Aalto, TU Graz, Grenoble INP-UGA	4	NA	2023
6.	Heat loss in buildings and sustainability: local approaches to global problems, PoliTO	PoliTO, UPC, Umea University (non-Unite! partner)	2	NA	2023
7.	ProtoLAB Design & Build Workshop (BIP), Wroclaw Tech	Wroclaw Tech, TUDa	2	68	2023
8.	Sustainable Urban Regeneration of La Tronche, Grenoble (BIP)	Aalto, TUDa, Grenoble INP-UGA	3	42	2022

1.3 Courses offered by one Unite! partner for all alliance students

No.	Course	Organizing Unite! Partner	Number of students	Year
Short-term courses				
1.	Aalto Digital Business Master Class. An intensive short-term course Digital Business Master Class online	Aalto	16 12	2020 2021
2.	RILEM: Computational Methods for Building Physics and Construction Materials	TU Darmstadt	21 14	2021 2022
Short-term courses: Winter and Summer Schools				
3.	Summer Course on Nordic Biomaterials	Aalto	NA	Since 2021
4.	Summer Course on Scale-up Leadership	Aalto	NA	2022
5.	Summer Course on Climate, Health and Architecture	Aalto	NA	2022
6.	Communications engineering and data science summer course (BIP)	Aalto	NA	2023
7.	Design thinking and Product development (BIP)	Aalto	NA	2023



8.	SEEP Summer school, arranged by CLUSTER	KTH	19 14	2021 2022
9.	Ginsén, Grenoble International Smart Engineering Summer School Micro & Nanotechnology	Grenoble INP-UGA	1 11	2021 (online) 2022 (on-site)
10.	Ginsén, Grenoble International Smart Engineering Summer School Smart Energies	Grenoble INP-UGA	1 6	2021 (online) 2022 (on-site)
11.	ESONN (European School on Nanosciences and Nanotechnologies),	Grenoble INP-UGA	NA	2023
12.	Cultural Heritage in Context: Digital Technologies for the Humanities. "Heritage-Driven Community Resilience. Six Endangered Cultural Natural Sites" International Summer School	PoliTO	NA	2023
13.	EAA Summer School for Young Acousticians	PoliTO	NA	2023
14.	3E+ Summer School	Wroclaw Tech	NA	2023
15.	The European Summer School in High Pressure Technology (ESS-HPT)	TU Graz	NA	2023
16.	Summer School Chemistry (together with University of Novi Sad)	TU Graz	NA	2023
17.	SWITCH	Wroclaw Tech	NA	2023
18.	The many uses of Plants (Chemistry-Biology-Health graduate school)	Grenoble INP-UGA	NA	2023
19.	Food Science and Culinary Arts	TU Graz	NA	2023
20.	Winter School Energy	TUDa	NA	2022
Other courses				
21.	Language Courses	15 courses by 6 partners	NA	2022-ongoing
22.	Global Competence courses	5 courses by 3 partners	NA	2022-ongoing