



UNIVERSITÀ DI PARMA

GLOBAL HEALTH CHALLENGE - SUSTAINABILITY IN PHARMACEUTICS

**ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Programme call for
applications**

Contract n.: 2022-1-IT02-KA131-HED-
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**Co-funded by
the European Union**

The University of Parma (Italy), jointly with the University of Paris-Saclay (France), the University of Helsinki (Finland), the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) offer the opportunity to participate in an ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Program (BIPs). The Blended Intensive Program is officially approved by the EU in the framework of the ERASMUS+ 2021/2027.

BIPs are one of the new and innovative formats of student mobility introduced by the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Program. These programs, jointly developed by multiple higher education institutions, feature advanced and innovative pedagogical approaches that combine short-term face-to-face (physical) mobilities with portions of virtual learning.

BIPs are inherently transnational and transdisciplinary, as curricula are developed and taught together by partner institutions in different countries. The combination of in-person and virtual learning spaces allows students and mentors to experience and exchange highly collaborative, challenge-based, and research-stepped methods of teaching and learning.

During the mandatory virtual component of the program, participants will have the chance to enhance and refine their expertise concerning Business development, managing, sustainability in sciences and ice breaking skills development, aligning with the European Commission's commitment to leverage digital technologies for education and foster sustainability methodologies above all.

Total number of participants per institution:

The Blended Intensive Program is open to a limited number of participants from each partner institution, and each institution will independently decide how many candidates select. The number of participants agreed will not exceed 25.

BIP calendar (both virtual and physical periods)

The Virtual program will start on **6th of May 2024** and will end on the **31st of May 2024**. It is divided in 2 parts: on Monday/Tuesday, students will meet with selected speakers to improve their soft skills and gain awareness on topics such as Business development, managing, sustainability in sciences. On Thursday/Friday the candidates will meet with mentors to practically implement the skills gained.

The in-place program will be held in **Parma** and will start on **3rd of June 2024** and will end on **the 7th of June 2024**. On the final day, there will be a session where candidates will showcase the skills they have acquired.

ECTS credits (with credit equivalents for non-ECTS partners)

The successful completion of the program, both in its physical and virtual parts, awards 4 ECTS.

Teaching methodologies

Face-to-face lectures, on-field class, case-studies presentations, self-learning, and online group meetings for data analysis and discussion.

Venue for the physical period of attendance

The physical part of the BIP will take place in **Parma**. From 3rd to 6th of June, it will be held at the **Aula Bandiera of the rettoreto dell'Università di Parma** (Parma, via dell'Università 12, 43121). The final session will be held on the 7th of June at the **Centro Santa Elisabetta, Campus Universitario di Parma**, Parco Area delle Scienze, 95, 43124 Parma PR.

The call for applicants

Description of the program

The University of Parma (Italy), in collaboration with the University of Paris-Saclay (France), the University of Helsinki (Finland), and the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), offers its students the opportunity to participate in an intensive blended program (BIP). The intensive blended program is officially endorsed by the EU under the ERASMUS+ 2021/2027 framework. This year, the course is in its second edition and is coordinated by the University of Parma, where the in-person component takes place.

Never before has human well-being and healthcare taken such a central role in public interest as it does now. The development of new technologies and the ability of small entrepreneurial entities to address clinical/therapeutic needs require the adoption of dynamic teaching methodologies sensitive to labor market changes. The overall aim of this project is to facilitate the transition from student life to active and professional life in the pharmaceutical and biotechnological fields. To this end, the project aims to enhance skills such as initiative development, self-confidence, and the effective application of all knowledge acquired by students at a fundamental level (hard skills), as well as cross-cutting competencies and soft skills. In order to complete this project, participants will need to establish connections between these different competencies and enhance their presence by engaging in a self-entrepreneurial situation, managing the creation of a business in collaboration with colleagues. Emulation and positive pressure are generated by the competition among various teams formed around a common project in the field of Health.

Motivation at the basis of the BIP

The BIP initiative aims to pool the diverse competencies and skills from the four participating universities, delivering them to students hailing from distinct European regions. By doing so, students can absorb these insights in Parma and potentially adapt them to their own regional contexts.

Program learning objectives

Participating in this BIP program provides students, as well as mentors, with a unique opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge, and to leverage from the precious insights of expert. Across all the virtual modules, students will be guided by instructors through a journey from knowledge to action, addressing the complexities of various topics including business development, managing skills, and sustainability in science. They will learn to navigate the intricacies and conflicts often associated with these issues, enhancing their education, fostering awareness, and contributing to human, professional, and institutional advancement. Moreover, they will actively engage in fieldwork, data analysis, data presentation, entrepreneurship and collaborate through online meetings beyond the whole week spent in Parma.

The final exam will consist of a presentation of an idea by the teams, taking into consideration market analysis, business development, SWAT analysis and other parameters.

Language of Teaching

All the modules and courses are taught in ENGLISH language (B1 minimum level required, B2 preferred for candidate selection).

Program content, detailing physical and virtual components

Virtual period

The programme consists of **16 hours** of short lessons and training with mentors that will be made available for all the participants starting on the 6th of May.

There are four main sessions, divided as follows:

Session 1 (4h):

Presentation of the BIP programme, ice breaking. In the first part of the virtual meeting, students will be asked to present a pitch (1 minute ca), in order to introduce to each other. How to build a solid body of soft skills such as, for instance, presenting data to experts will be discussed. In the second part of the 1st session, students will be divided in teams and will start working at the final idea with the help of the mentors.

Session 2 (4h):

Sustainability. Speakers will be recruited by the University of Helsinki. In the field of biotechnology, sustainability is a paramount factor involved in research, development, and application. This session delves into the intersection of biotechnology and sustainability, exploring how advancements in biotech can contribute to environmental preservation, resource efficiency, and societal well-being. With the help of experts in the field, participants will examine innovative approaches to the use of therapeutic molecules, highlighting practices that minimize ecological footprints and promote circular economy principles. Moreover, the session will address ethical considerations surrounding biotechnological interventions in agriculture, healthcare, and pharmacy, emphasizing the importance of responsible innovation and equitable access to biotechnological solutions. Through case studies and interactive discussions, attendees will gain insights into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in achieving sustainable development goals through biotechnology, fostering a holistic understanding of the role of biotech in shaping a more sustainable future. In the second part of the 2nd session, students will be divided in teams and will start working at the final idea with the help of the mentors.

Session 3 (4h):

Business plan and economy. Speakers will be recruited by the University of Parma and KUL. This session will delve into the intricate dynamics of entrepreneurial ventures within the biotech sector. With the help of expert in the field, the participants will explore the essential components of crafting a robust business plan tailored specifically to biotechnological innovations. Topics covered will include market analysis, revenue models, funding strategies, and regulatory considerations unique to the biotech industry. Through case studies and interactive exercises, attendees will gain practical insights into navigating the financial landscape of biotech startups, identifying opportunities for investment and growth, and mitigating risks inherent in biotechnological ventures. Moreover, the session will address the broader economic implications of biotechnology, examining its role in driving innovation, creating jobs, and fostering economic growth. By the end of the session, participants will be equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to develop and execute successful business strategies in the dynamic and rapidly evolving biotech landscape. In the second part of the 3rd session, students will start working at the final idea with the help of the mentors.

Session 4 (4h):

Management, International collaboration and start up company. Speakers will be recruited by the University of Parma and Paris-Saclay. This session will explore key strategies and challenges in

navigating the entrepreneurial landscape of biotech startups. With the help of experts in the field properly collected, participants will delve into the intricacies of effective management practices tailored to the unique demands of biotechnological ventures, including team building, project management, and resource allocation. Moreover, the session will examine the critical components of launching and scaling a biotech start-up, from ideation and product development to market entry and growth strategies. Additionally, participants will explore the significance of international collaboration in fostering innovation and expanding market reach in the biotech industry. Through case studies and interactive discussions, attendees will gain insights into successful approaches to building and managing biotech start-ups, leveraging international partnerships, and navigating regulatory frameworks across different jurisdictions. By the end of the session, participants will be equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to drive sustainable growth and competitiveness in the global biotech market. In the second part of the 4st session, students will start working at the final idea with the help of the mentors.

Physical module

The program will consist of **16 hours** in physical presence at the university of Parma.

The main event of the physical module program foresees a visit to two important Italian companies: “Chiesi Pharmaceutical”, multinational leader in the field of inhalator drugs, and “Davines”, world leader in the cosmetic fields. Each visit will be guided by team leaders at the respective companies. Taking the students on visits to multinational cosmetic and pharmaceutical companies offers a number of benefits, enriching their educational experience and providing invaluable insights into the industry. These visits serve as a bridge between theoretical knowledge acquired in the virtual sessions and real-world applications, fostering a holistic understanding of the pharmaceutical and cosmetic sectors. Cosmetics are nowadays indispensable market items, straddling the border between beauty products and well-being objects. Firstly, visiting a multinational cosmetics company exposes students to the intricate processes involved in product development, manufacturing, and marketing within the cosmetics industry and regulatory affairs. They gain firsthand exposure to cutting-edge technologies, formulation techniques, and quality control measures employed by leading cosmetic companies. Witnessing these processes in action enhances students' understanding of cosmetic science, equipping them with practical knowledge that complements their academic studies.

Visiting a multinational pharmaceutical company offers students a unique opportunity to explore the pharmaceutical industry's diverse facets, from research and development to regulatory affairs and distribution. They gain insights into the stringent regulatory requirements governing pharmaceutical production, ensuring safety, efficacy, and compliance with international standards. Additionally, students witness the collaborative efforts between multidisciplinary teams, including pharmacists, chemists, and biomedical engineers, in developing life-saving medications.

Furthermore, these visits provide students with exposure to industry professionals, including scientists, researchers, and executives, allowing for networking opportunities and mentorship possibilities. Interacting with industry experts enables students to gain valuable career advice, insights into emerging trends, and potential internship or employment opportunities.

Finally, visiting multinational companies enhances students' soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and critical thinking. Engaging in guided tours, presentations, and interactive sessions fosters effective communication and collaboration among students, enhancing their ability to work in multidisciplinary teams—a crucial skill in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries.

The rest of the time will be devoted to implement the soft skills gained, giving the possibility to the candidates to develop and present their idea. The final day will be a unique opportunity for the students to measure their approaches to the development of novel ideas, presenting the results of their study in front of an audience of experts. Start-up founders and market analysts will be present in the evaluating committee. Such an experience provides students with a platform to showcase their

creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills. Presenting in front of seasoned professionals allows students to receive constructive feedback and validation, which can boost their confidence and validate their ideas. Exposure to diverse perspectives from experts in various fields offers students a broader understanding of their project's potential implications and applications. By engaging with scientists, market experts, and entrepreneurs, students gain insights into market trends, technological advancements, and potential challenges they may encounter in their endeavors. This will represent invaluable assets in the progress of their academic and professional careers.

Eligibility and participation criteria

Participation to the program is open to students of the following disciplines and/or degree programmes:

- **University of Parma**
Pharmacy and CTF. PhD in Drug sciences.
- **University of Paris-Saclay**
Any discipline related with contents related to the BIP
- **University of Helsinki**
Any discipline related with contents related to the BIP
- **Katholieke Universiteit Leuven**
Any discipline related with contents related to the BIP

Each participating University in the program will establish internal criteria for candidate selection, including the number of candidates and the requirements necessary for selection.

Eligibility and participation criteria for the University of Parma

To apply for this program, students must be regularly enrolled for the academic year 2023/2024 in the fourth or fifth year of a master's degree in LM-13 (PHARMACY OR CTF) or a doctoral program. There are 4 positions available, 2 of which are reserved for doctoral students. At the time of application, candidates must demonstrate proficiency in English at level B1/B2 (CEFR). A level B2 will be considered preferable

At the time of the application submission, applicants must demonstrate proof of English language competence at the B1/B2 level (CEFR). This can be certified by the University of origin (see application procedures below. Level B2 will be a preferential criterion.

Applicants should expect to hear back about the result of their application by 30 April 2024.

Selected students must communicate their acceptance or withdrawal within 3 days from the publication of the selection results by contacting their university program coordinator (see below).

Selected students will be contacted with further instructions upon completion of the selection procedures.

How to apply

Students interested in participating should fill out the application form published in the website by **22nd April 2024**.

The application form must contain the following attachments:

- *Copy of valid ID or passport;*
- *Transcript of Records (A certificate of enrolment at the home University with a list of passed exams and grades);*
- *Language certificate (If not already present as an exam in the Transcript of Records);*
- *Motivation letter (containing, if applicable, previous experiences abroad);*
- *CV*
- *Other documents and certificates (optional).*

Selection criteria and procedures

The Commission responsible for selecting candidates is composed as follows:

(President) Prof. Fabio Sonvico
(Member) Prof. Ilaria Zanotti
(Member) Prof. Marco Pieroni

There are **4** positions available, to be distributed among doctoral students (2 positions) and undergraduate students (2 positions).

In case the number of applications exceeds the available positions, doctoral candidates' CVs will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Duration of doctoral program	up to 4 points
Publications or conference participations	up to 8 points
Scientific-professional and language skills	up to 4 points
International experience	up to 4 points

In case of a tie, preference will be given to the candidate in the least recent doctoral cycle.

In case the number of applications exceeds the available positions, undergraduate students will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Grade average	up to 8 points
Motivational letter in English	up to 6 points
Certified language skills	up to 4 points
Number of credits earned relative to years of enrollment	up to 2 points

In case of a tie, preference will be given to the older candidate

Financial support

As a part of the ERASMUS+ Program, financial support may be guaranteed by the selected student's home University. Each partner university is responsible for the management of the financial aspects of the mobilities in accordance with the provisions of the competent ERASMUS+ National Agency.

No financial support is available for students from the University hosting the physical part of the Programme (University of Parma), as they will not be travelling for purposes of participation in this program (non-mobility participants).

Contacts

University of Parma (Coordinator)

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