

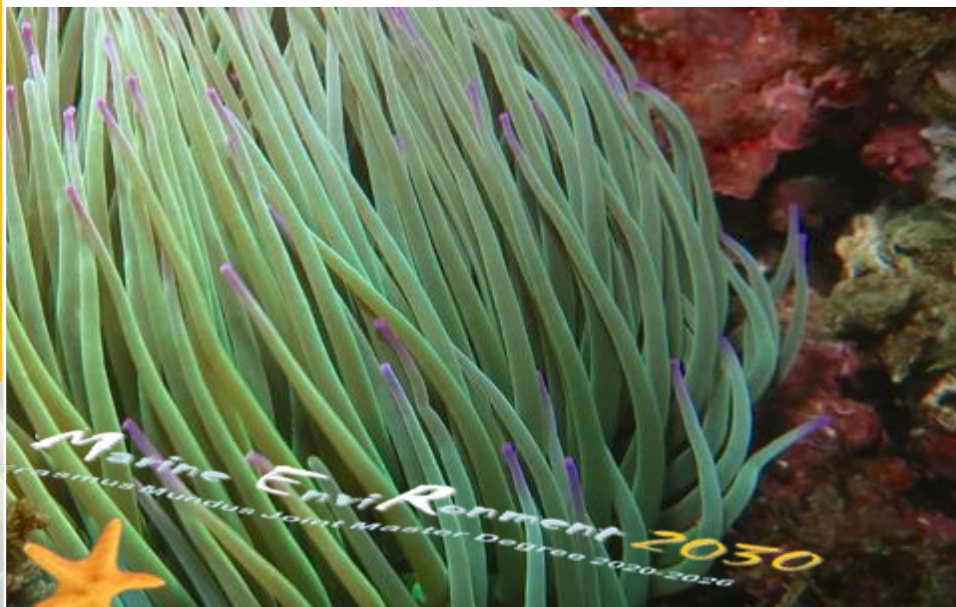
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Marine Environment

MER2030 EMJMD GENERAL INFORMATION

2021-2026



www.mer2030.eu



With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

A Erasmus+ EMJMD (120 ECTS)

MER2030 EMJMD is a Joint European MSc programme aimed at forming multidisciplinary graduates of transverse research profile, by attracting highly qualified and motivated students from around the world into a fully integrated world class EU MSc programme.

The MER MSc programme provides students with competences and skills to develop their marine career in the following fields:

- Integrated coastal zone management
- Protection of marine and estuarine environments
- Adaptation to global climate change
- Assessment of marine ecosystem health
- Conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage
- Ecosystem approach for marine resources management

Both staff exchange and student mobility are promoted under a balanced ECTS scheme. Every student must spend at least 30 ECTS each in three different Partner Universities.

Successful students will achieve a Multiple MSc degree (120 ECTS) awarded by the three Partner Universities through which the studies have been undertaken.

MER Consortium Secretariat

R&D CENTRE FOR EXPERIMENTAL
MARINE BIOLOGY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY
(PLENTZIAKO ITSAS ESTAZIOA; PIE-UPV/EHU)

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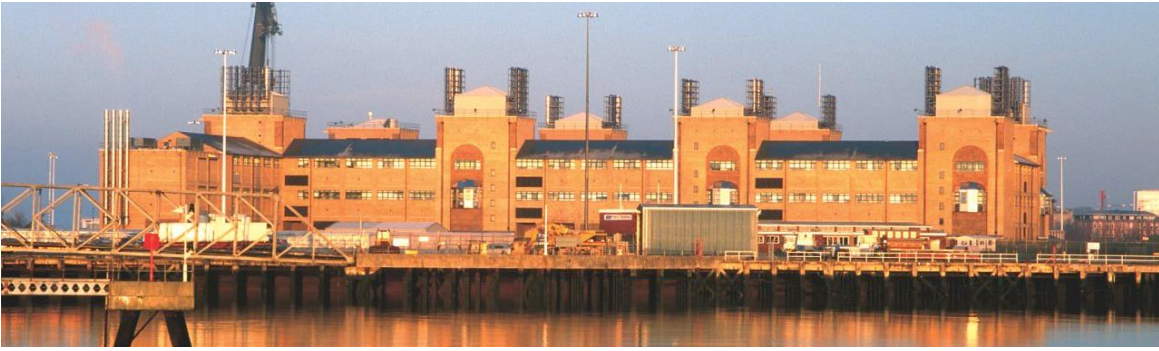
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www.merconsortium.eu



The MER Consortium

The European MSc in Marine Environment (MER) is a Joint European MSc programme focused on the marine environment and its protection, conservation and valorisation, conceived by four leading universities in the field of the marine environment (U Southampton, U Bordeaux, U Liège, U Azores, U Basque Country) with the invaluable contribution of a global network of Associates.

The MER2030 EMJMD is the result of the experience achieved by the MER Consortium along with preceding Joint MSc programmes. The MER2030 EMJMD stems from the currently ongoing MER+ EMJMD (2017-2022), which was the continuation of the European MSc in Marine Environment and Resources (MER EMMC) run between 2013 and 2019.

The origin is the MER MSc started in academic year 2006-2007, as an integrated Joint programme of high quality initially recognised and funded by National programmes: Top Master in Basque Government ranking 2007-2011; Spanish Education Ministry Quality Award 2007-2012; Spanish Education Ministry Mention to Excellence 2011-2014), Cooperative French-Spanish MSc support programme (Ministries of Foreign Affairs; 2011-2013), and Mediterranean Office for Youth (MOY) Label 2012-2014.

The original aim the MER MSc was to cover marine

environment and resources areas altogether. Yet, since the MER+ EMJMD phase the programme profile has evolved to be more focused onto the marine environment (protection, conservation, ecosystem services) and its interactions with marine resources).

Further on, the MER2030 EMJMD has been improved to respond to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030. The Decade's goal is to integrate science-based knowledge on the marine environment into decision-making process to support management, to be equitably shared with communities vulnerable to ocean changes, and to support sustainable Blue Economy. The Decade's challenge is to achieve a clean, healthy, resilient, predictable, safe, sustainably harvested and "transparent" Global Ocean by 2030, on the basis of the Ocean Science.

These challenges constitute the backbone of the MER2030 EMJMD programme.

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton



université
de **BORDEAUX**



UAc
UNIVERSIDADE
DOS AÇORES



Universidad
del País Vasco Euskal Herriko
Unibertsitatea

Marine environment

Socio-economic background

The marine realm is the largest component of the Earth's system that stabilizes climate and support life on Earth and human well-being.

In 2002, the UN General Assembly prioritised actions to enhance protection of the worldwide marine environment and to improve the scientific understanding and assessment of marine and coastal ecosystems for management purposes.

In response to the increasing concerns in relation to the state of Europe's oceans and seas the EU established the EU Habitats Directive (1992), the Water Framework Directive (2000) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2006). The need for such policies stems from the economic, social, and environmental importance of the seas in Europe; the vision is that of a Europe with a dynamic ocean economy in harmony with the marine environment supported by excellence in ocean science (COM(2005)504, Brussels 24-10-2005).

In 2016, the OECD recognised that growth prospects for the ocean economy and its potential for employment creation will be successful only if ocean health is duly preserved (The Ocean Economy in 2030, OECD 2016).

The OECD's statement is aligned with the emerging "One Ocean - One Health" paradigm: all human, animal and environmental well-being

is connected and by working to improve these areas together, a healthier world can be established; as such, research and conservation programmes should study marine life in the context of their environment and connections to humanity..

The global integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment (IOC-UNESCO First World Ocean Assessment; 2016) showed that today's oceans are seriously degraded. Moreover, since climate change, global population growth and multiple environmental stressors will have significant impacts over the coming decades, adaptation strategies and science-informed policy responses are urgently needed.

Thus, the UN recently proclaimed the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 to support efforts to reverse the decline in ocean health and gather ocean stakeholders worldwide behind a common framework to ensure that ocean science can fully support countries in creating improved conditions for sustainable development.

Needs analysis

Companies, consultancies, agencies, and research institutions are committed to the compliance of international recommendations and

conventions, together with European Directives and regulations. Pollution and climate change effects are a matter of increasing concern for governments, scientists and society.

Graduates with a balanced background between blue growth and green innovation are required. The growth of a number of marine industries over recent decades, such as offshore renewables and aquaculture, points to greater levels of exploitation and hence demand for trained staff who understand the marine environment. The Ocean Economy in 2030, (OECD, 2016) states that growth prospects for the ocean economy will be successful only if ocean health is duly preserved.

Companies, consultancies, agencies, and research institutions require high quality graduates, who can make a difference in the management of the marine environment and understand global assessment tools and integrated approaches regarding ocean-human health.

The One Health concept approach benefits both the marine life and the human health by keeping the entire environment healthy; and decision-making tools and frameworks for conserving the human-ocean ecosystem health are being developed.

Overall, there is a need for marine scientists prepared to respond to the societal needs identified as pivotal



challenges of the UN DOSSD 2021–2030:

- A clean ocean where sources of pollution are identified and removed
- A healthy and resilient ocean where marine ecosystems are mapped and protected
- A predictable ocean where society has the capacity to understand current/future ocean conditions
- A safe ocean where people are protected from ocean hazards
- A sustainably harvested ocean ensuring the provision of food supply
- A transparent ocean with open access to data, information and technologies..

Career profile

Ocean Science combines a variety of disciplines (physical, geological and chemical oceanography as well as marine biology) that study and provide data on the global marine environment, integrates new societal needs, and encourages new partnerships among oceanographers working in different disciplines leading to new discoveries about the ocean's role in climate regulation and coastal ocean processes. Ocean Science can support business operations (fisheries and aquaculture ...) as well as conservation and management activities or coastal communities. Thus, an integrated, multidisciplinary approach is essential for a career in Ocean Science. Ocean health, biodiversity conservation, pollution control and sustainable resources management are linked intimately and require multidisciplinary team work

and the integrated action of professionals with complementary expertise capable of understanding each other and promoting synergies.

Moreover, new profiles of qualified scientists and technologists are needed at the borders of classical disciplines. For example, ocean acidification and its consequences can only be understood properly and addressed by merging concepts at molecular and cellular levels, with concepts of chemical oceanography, i.e. by exploring the ocean both through the microscope and remote sensing systems. Likewise, by considering responses over a time-scale of minutes, together with consequences at a time scale of decades or centuries. This approach may be achieved by different specialists, but the latest trend is to incorporate people able to integrate all these diverse concepts, instruments and time-scales.

Scientists and technologists with such a wide-ranging profile are becoming leaders in marine research. In contrast, competences and skills achieved by most existing Master programmes in marine science lack such cross-boundary competence.

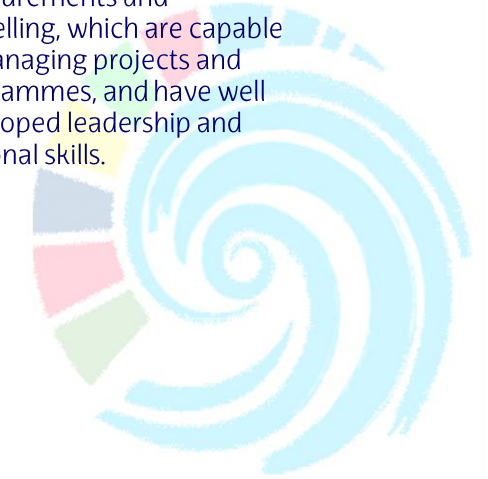
Career prospects

Successful completion of this programme will prepare the student for a leadership role in various marine sectors such as conservation and environmental management, non-governmental organisations and all levels of government from local to global.

Employers in the public and private sectors require top

quality graduates as managers, planners, policy makers, researchers or advisors who can make a difference in marine environment management.

They need people who have the ability to think through complex issues, who can analyse the marine environment through field measurements and modelling, which are capable of managing projects and programmes, and have well developed leadership and personal skills.



United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development
2021-2030



A Joint European MSc Programme

Suitable for students with a good biological, geological and chemical background, the programme runs full-time over 24 months (120 ECTS) and consists of advanced courses (90 ECTS) and a Master Thesis, with a dissertation (30 ECTS).

Every student follows an individually-tailored study programme, by combining the different complementary disciplines that can be studied at each of the Partner universities:

- Advanced Oceanography & Coastal Zone Management, in UBx
- Advanced Oceanography & Coastal & Oceanic Environments, in Soton
- Marine Environmental Monitoring & Ecosystem Health Protection, in EHU
- Biodiversity Conservation & Ocean modelling, in ULiège.
- Conservation and Management of Marine Resources and Ecosystems in UAc.

Throughout the coursework, students can make a selection between th between seven alternative mobility pathways:

- A1 (UBx-UPV/EHU-Soton)
- A2 (UBx-UPV/EHU-ULiège)
- A3 (UBx-UPV/EHU- UAc)
- B2 (Soton-UPV/EHU-ULiège)
- B3 (Soton-UPV/EHU-UAc)
- C1 (UAc-UPV/EHU-Soton)
- C2 (UAc-UPV/EHU-ULiège)

Irrespective of the mobility pathway, all the students follow together Semester 2 in EHU.

Through any of the pathways, the students have the opportunity to travel, from molecular biology to remote sensing issues and from short-term phenomena (e.g. tides and intertidal variability) to long-term issues (e.g. ocean acidification); thus achieving a translational science background, with a topical bias towards each partner's expertise.

The MSc Thesis research is undertaken during Semester 4 (30 ECTS) and consists of a 5-6 month research under the supervision of a PhD holder. Upon completion of the MSc Thesis the student should demonstrate sufficiency for research in order to undertake the realisation of the PhD Thesis work, or a professional activity as researcher. The thesis should be written up and defended in front of an International Examination Board following the consensus procedure approved by the MER Consortium JPB.



Aims

The programme is aimed at:

- forming multidisciplinary graduates of transverse research profile in a fully integrated world class Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree
- developing the student's critical understanding of technical and scientific tools together with excellent management abilities and personal skills
- achieving high academic standards, supported by recognised quality assurance (QA) procedures and by the implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programm
- promoting both staff exchange and student mobility under a balanced ECTS scheme
- building a global MER Community

General objectives

- To achieve postgraduate education of academic excellence in the marine environment field, with solid conceptual foundations and innovative practical components on the basis of a translational science approach. For this purpose, students follow diverse disciplines with contents ranging from cellular and molecular biology to large-scale processes, or management; these are targeted to respond to societal demands identified in the UN DOSSD 2021-2030 and to support environmental protection policies.
- To enhance EHEA internationalisation through (a) promoting its attractiveness for the best students worldwide, (b) providing EU students with opportunities to follow a part of the programme abroad, and (c) putting into practice joint procedures for monitoring progress in student mobility.
- To improve the level of competences and skills of postgraduate students to study independently and manage a comprehensive project, by means of the research component of the programme; thus fostering leadership in marine environment research, consultancy and management.
- To promote professionalism, entrepreneurship and employability of postgraduates, as well as the social projections of their careers in the field of the marine environment.
- To promote intercultural understanding, critical thinking, tolerant attitudes, gender equality and civic values, in order to strengthen EU and global citizenship and lay the foundations for inclusive societies.

Main features

- A high quality postgraduate education in marine environment on the basis of practical, analytical and numerical approaches.
- A postgraduate degree with a strong research element, at internationally recognised training centres in marine science.
- Advanced training in marine observation and exploration techniques, laboratory analyses and mathematical modelling.
- Opportunities to develop key skills in marine data processing and analysis, with research experience gained through an individual advanced research project.
- Direct experience of work on a sustained research project at the forefront of marine environment knowledge.
- Opportunities to train alongside world class scientists in a research-led environment.
- Vocational training for a professional career in industries related to the marine environment protection and management.
- A sound and suitable qualification that would enable you to proceed to a more specialist higher degree at the PhD level.
- Opportunities to develop critical and analytical problem-solving powers and the ability to communicate results to non-specialists.
- Opportunities to develop a range of generic skills including: critical and reflective thinking, articulate communication and the skills of literacy and numeracy.
- A high quality and intellectually stimulating experience of learning in supportive environments.



Added value

Uniqueness

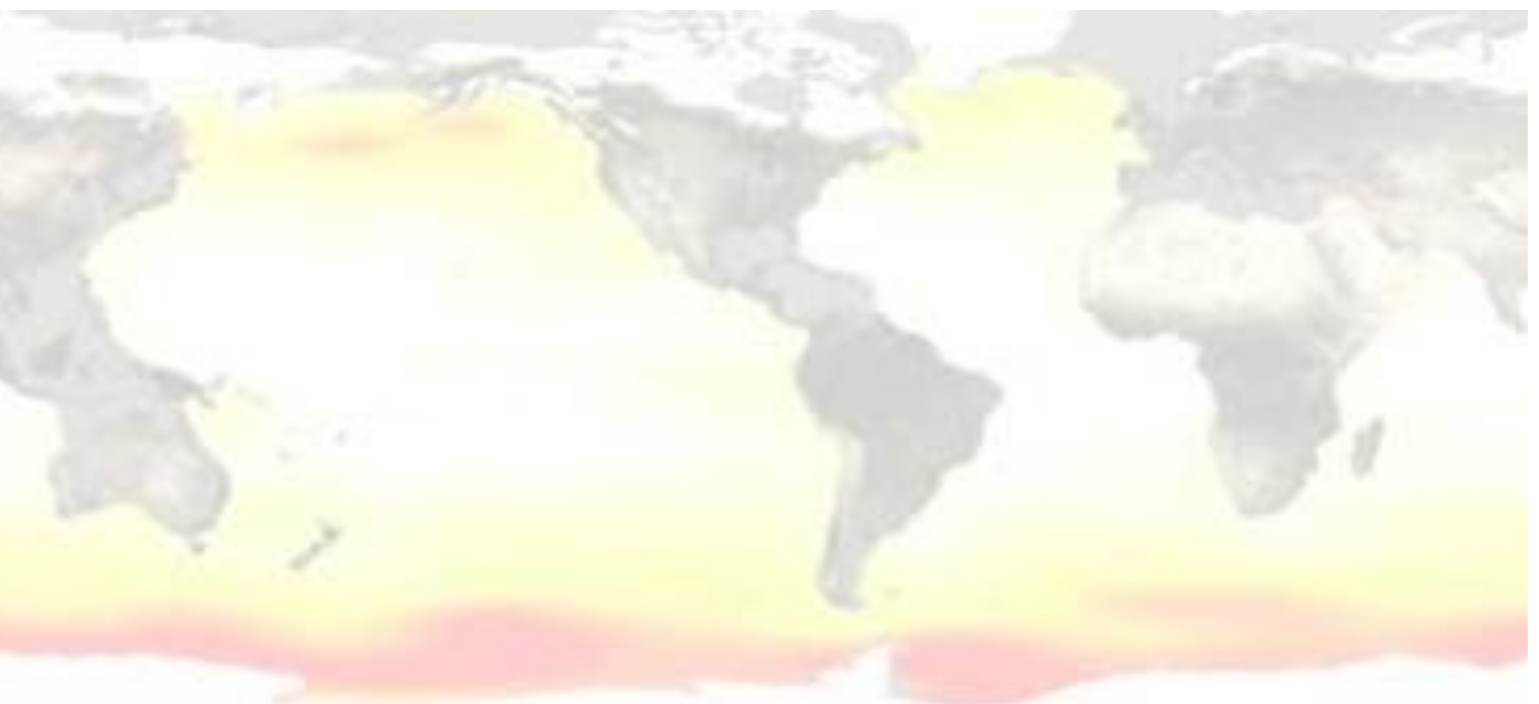
The proposed MER2030 EMJMD is unique because, unlike other MSc programmes, its conceptual framework embraces the global marine environment as the basis for its academic foundations. Departing from expertise acquired through approaches to the marine environment at regional and European scales, the long-lasting experience of the MER Consortium Partners and Associates in the field of the marine environment relies on research, management and teaching activities carried out at global scale, including the majority of the diverse marine environments found in our oceans. To our knowledge European masters programmes provided elsewhere lack such a global marine environment framework and partnership.

Innovative conceptual framework

The MER2030 programme is designed to confer on students a translational science approach, not available elsewhere in Europe. Accordingly, all the students receive advanced multidisciplinary courses (oceanography, biology, chemistry, geology, management) and a translational science viewpoint (from cellular and molecular biology, to large-scale processes or management). The module structure of the taught programme and its flexibility provides the student with the opportunity to develop his/her own curriculum; this can range between the marine physical or biological environments, to any combination between them. As such, the MER2030 EMJMD enhances graduates' competitiveness and becomes very attractive for new marine environmentalists within a worldwide context.

Innovative teaching and learning

Together with conventional lectures, seminars, and lab and field practices, novel educational practices have been adopted, including active learning modes such as problem-based learning exercises (i.e. Stareso and Okeanos Field Courses), journal clubs and team-based learning, in order to improve student learning and knowledge retention. In addition, we use to-date facilities and ICT e.g. to stream lectures (e.g. during specific sessions of the RiMER Course) and vivas. In the latter, the presentations and debates are open to the general public as they can be followed on the air by video streaming using the UPV/EHU service, which is duly announced (e.g. to external supervisors, associates, former students, community of the partner university, ...) together with the vivas programme.



University excellence in the European Higher Education Area

The MER MSc and its successor MER EMMC were pioneering programmes in university excellence and good practices, following guidelines of the Bologna process and accompanying actions. Student-centred learning was pursued, since the very beginning. Each student is offered an individually-tailored formation programme, including coursework, research and mobility-schedule; this is agreed before registration and is recognised in the Student Agreement. The high staff-student ratios (>5:1) and the excellence of the laboratory facilities, instrumentation, and research-active staff (see Teaching Staff and Partnership) are favourable conditions for this purpose (www.eua.be). Excellence has been recognised by Spanish and French authorities. The MER MSc is a recipient of the Quality Award by the Spanish Ministry (2008-2012); it has been recognized as an Excellent French-Spanish MSc, by both French and Spanish Ministries (2008-2010). In 2012, we have obtained the Mediterranean Office for Youth (MOY) label. Further, it was top MSc (1/~70) in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country every year whilst this ranking was in force in the period 2006-2014.

Since the academic year 2012-2013 the MER EMMC has been running under the Erasmus Mundus (later on Erasmus+) brand, which allowed us to successfully face our then major challenge to make our master

programme more accessible to students all over the world. Since then >250 students from >50 non-EU countries have followed the programme (35% from outside Europe), 170 of them have already graduated by September 2016 and in the academic year 30 of them enrolled as self-funded students (Fig. Section 4.1). These numbers are reflected in two stories of success. Last June 2016 we celebrated the 10 yr MER event; and 60% of our graduates, both from Programme and Partner countries and representing the 10 MER cohorts.

MER2030 EMJMD is a new programme benefiting from the experience gained in delivering the MER EMMC and MER+ EMJMD programmes, specifically designed to take a multidisciplinary approach in marine environmental research and management. The new programme will enhance internationalization, and improve learning and employment outcomes through the support mechanisms already in place at the participating institutions.

Competitiveness in marine environment research and management

The MER2030 EMJMD contributes to European visibility and cooperation with non-European institutions. A large part of the MER2030 EMJMD taught programme is centred upon the Bay of Biscay. This geographical area is an invaluable asset, since crucial scientific issues (integrated coastal zone management, assessment of marine ecosystem health, protection and recovery of marine and estuary environments, operational oceanography systems) can be investigated (as a field research model system).

This region is under the OSPAR agreement, related to MEDPOL-UNEP activities; it provides the students following the MER2030 courses with an integrated, multidisciplinary perspective of marine environmental problems, relevant within the European context. Here we are developing a multidisciplinary research strategy that fits 100% with the thematic scope of the MER2030 EMJMD and involves the UB marine station (Arcachon) and the UPV/EHU marine station (Plentzia) as main partners in the Aquitaine-Euskadi Euro-region, the central one in the Bay of Biscay (Turquoise: University Hub for fostering Blue growth and green innovation in the Bay of Biscay; AEE 2017-2018). An opportunity is available to students to gain knowledge about an extensive and socio-economically relevant marine area, within Europe. Moreover, MER2030 MSc provides the students with the opportunity to compare

with other marine areas both in Europe and overseas, during the research phase of the programme (MSc Thesis). Considerable effort has been undertaken to involve European Partners with experience in the North and Baltic Seas (NIVA, SYKE, CEFAS, IFREMER, HI) and the Mediterranean Sea (CSIC, Stareso, UoAg), as well as in every oceanic region of the world. During their independent research phase, MER2030 MSc students are encouraged to apply, to any other region in the world, the integrated perspective acquired in the Bay of Biscay.

The extended MER Consortium for the MER2030 EMJMD consists of associated partners from all the oceans worldwide. This is extremely interesting for potential collaboration, in teaching and research of the marine environment, between European and non-European institutions.

RiMER

The compulsory RiMER course constitutes an excellent example of the uniqueness, attractiveness, innovation, competitiveness, visibility, cooperation with non-European universities and good practices.

All the students meet in an emblematic venue, the Auditorium of the Donostia-San Sebastian Aquarium (Basque Country), for 1 week at the start of semester 2 and in the Plentzia Marine Station (UPV/EHU) for 1 week at the end of semester 2, with >40 lecturers, students from the previous cohort and those MER Consortium graduates carrying out their PhD, academic and research staff from Partners and Associated Partners, and invited lecturers from Europe and overseas.

Topical lectures are combined with tutorials, round-table type workshops and a "cinéforum" session.

An innovative teaching schedule, based upon 4-5 lectures per day, with a Round-table where the students ask questions and discuss with the day's staff panel for 1-2 hours, was successfully developed during the MER EMMC programme.

Now MER2030 is aimed at including the participation of stakeholders with their participation in round tables and satellite activities such as visits to their premises or small exhibition fairs organised around the celebration of the RiMER course.

Social and cultural integration is also pursued: all the students stay in the same residence, whilst a course dinner and cultural activities for students/staff are organised. Many students have been shown to establish contacts for their future career, during this venue

STARESO and OKEANOS FIELD COURSES

The students following Semester 3 in ULiège must attend a **Field trip to STARESO** as a part of the compulsory taught activities.

The students following Semester 3 in UAc must attend a **Field trip to OKEANOS** as a part of the compulsory taught activities.

These courses are conceived as student centred teaching and problem-based learning, and aims at promoting independence and decision making, and at creating an interdisciplinary and researcher community framework. Students live together for one-week in the remote marine stations (STARESO in Corsica or OKEANOS in Faial), where they follow class-lessons, field sessions and personal and team work.

The courses are built as a transversal interdisciplinary approach of an environmental problem, with practical aspects, technical problems solving, reference search, etc.

The students must solve the problem through teamwork and the teachers are there only for assistance and experienced expert support. Teams are organised to promote intercultural and interdisciplinary exchanges (whenever possible comprised by students of diverse cultural and academic origin, and gender-balanced). At the end of the week, each team makes a public oral presentation that is also attended by all the staff at the marine stations (senior scientists, PhD candidates, technical staff).

Structure and content

Suitable for students with a good biological, geological and chemical background, this programme prepares students both for further research, and for work within government and commercial oceanographic and environmental research/consultancy laboratories.

The programme runs full-time over 24 months (120 ECTS) and consists of advanced courses (90 ECTS) and a Master Thesis, with a dissertation (30 ECTS). Every student follows an individually-tailored study programme, by combining the different disciplines that can be studied at each of the Partner universities

The coursework is arranged in six modules, according to the UN DOSSD 2021-2030 general objectives:

- Module 1 Fundamentals in Ocean Science (mandatory); basic foundations or aspects of general interest for marine environmentalists (Semester 1 in either SOTON or UBx);
- Module 2 Clean Ocean;
- Module 3 Healthy & Resilient Ocean
- Module 4 Predictable & Safe Ocean
- Module 5 Sustainably Harvested Ocean
- Module 6 Ocean Scientist Career (36 mandatory ects)

A full list of courses and their associated learning outcomes, credit point values, assessment methods, and pre-requisites is available at the Catalogue of Courses at this website.

The MSc Thesis research is undertaken during Semester 4 (30 ECTS) and consists of a 5-6 month research under the supervision of a PhD holder.

Upon completion of the MSc Thesis the student should demonstrate sufficiency for research in order to undertake the realisation of the PhD Thesis work, or a professional activity as researcher.



MODULE	COURSE	TYPE	ECTS	UNIV
FUNDAMENTALS IN OCEAN SCIENCE	Introduction to Biological Oceanography	CSS1	3,75	SOTON
	Introduction to Chemical Oceanography			
	Introduction to Marine Geology			
	Introduction to Physical Oceanography			
	Biological Oceanography	CBS1 CAS1	6	UBx UAc
	Chemical Oceanography			
	Dynamic Oceanography			
	Seafloor Geology	CLS3 CAS3	6	ULiège UAc
Marine Ecology				
CLEAN OCEAN	Advanced Instrumental Analysis	OP	4	EHU
	Cellular and Molecular Biomarkers			
	Ecological Quality Assessment in Coastal Ecosystems			
	Environmental (toxico) Genomics			
	Environmental Analytical Chemistry			
	Environmental Chemometrics			
	Environmental Monitoring and Risk Assessment in Aquatic Systems			
	Biology of Marine Mammals	OP	6	ULiège UAc
	Ecotoxicology and Risk Quantification of Marine Pollutants	OP	6	ULiège
HEALTHY AND RESILIENT OCEAN	Degradation and Rehabilitation of Estuarine Ecosystems	OP	4	EHU
	Eutrophication and Harmful Algae			
	Ocean Global Change Biology			
	Marine Microbial Ecology			
	Marine Resource Genomics			
	Socio-economic Aspects of Climate Change			
	Large Scale Ocean Processes	OP	7,5	SOTON
	Marine GeoArchaeology			
	Biogeochemical Cycles in the Earth system			
	Coastal Sediment Dynamics			
	Biogeochemical Cycles in the Ocean	OP	6	ULiège
	Carbon, Nutrient, Greenhouse ... and Geological Oceanography			
Marine Plant Biology and Ecology				
Oceans and Health	OP	6	UAc	
PREDICTABLE AND SAFE OCEAN	Applied and Marine Geophysics	OP	7,5	SOTON
	Computational Data Analysis for Geophysicists and Ocean Scientists			
	Geodynamics and Solid Earth Geophysics			
	Introductory Remote Sensing of the Oceans			

SUSTAINABLY HARVESTED OCEAN	Microfossils, Environment and Time			
	Analysis of Environmental Data and Modelling	CBS1 CAS1	6	UBx UAc
	Instrumentation and Measurements in Operational Oceanography	OP	4	EHU
	Satellite Oceanography and Meteorology			
	Mathematical Analysis and Modelling Methods Applied to the Environment	OP	6	ULiège
	Remote Sensing of the Oceans	OP	6	ULiège UAc
	Geographical Information Systems			
	Maritime and Coastal Spatial Planning and Law	OP	6	UAc
	Comparative Endocrinology and Endocrine Disruption...			
	Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management			
	Environment and Fisheries/Aquaculture Interactions	OP	4	EHU
	Histology and Histopathology of Aquatic Animals			
	Marine Resources Genomics			
	Physiological Energetics of Marine Organisms			
	Deep Sea Ecology			
	Marine Conservation and Policy	OP	7,5	SOTON
	Zooplankton Ecology and Processes			
	Biochemistry and Physiology of Marine Animals	OP	6	ULiège
	Functional and Molecular Marine Microbiology			
	Aquaculture and Blue Biotechnology	OP	6	UAc
Fisheries and Fish Biology				
OCEAN SCIENTIST CAREER	Contemporary Topics in Ocean and Earth Sciences	CSS1	7,5	SOTON
	Research in Marine Environment and Resources	C	6	EHU
	Multicultural Integration in EU	OP	4	
	Marine Entrepreneurship			
	Professional Practice in Marine /Environmental Sectors	OP	6	ULiège
	Master Thesis	C	30	EHU

Mobility

As a part of the construction of the EHEA, a pivotal goal of the MER+ EMJMD Programme is to promote international and European cultural exchange and interactions between students. Student mobility is designed with this objective.

Throughout the coursework, students can make a selection between (7) alternative mobility pathways:

- A1 (UBx-UPV/EHU-Soton)
- A2 (UBx-UPV/EHU-ULiège)
- A3 (UBx-UPV/EHU- UAc)

- B2 (Soton-UPV/EHU-ULiège)
- B3 (Soton-UPV/EHU-UAc)

- C1 (UAc-UPV/EHU-Soton)
- C2 (UAc-UPV/EHU-ULiège)

Through any of these pathways, the students have the opportunity to travel, from molecular biology to remote sensing issues and from short-term phenomena (e.g. tides and intertidal variability) to their long-term consequences (e.g. ocean acidification); thus achieving a translational science background.

The MSc Thesis research work can be entirely, or jointly, undertaken in Soton, UPV/EHU, UBx, ULiège and UAc, or in an associated institutions in Europe or overseas.

All the MSc Theses are presented at Joint Viva Sessions at the 2nd week of September, in UPV/EHU, with members of all the Partner universities, staff from associates and external (invited) examiners.

Semester 1

Students start at UBx, Soton or UAc for 30 ECTS providing competences for Fundamentals in Ocean Science (Physical, Chemical and Biological Oceanography and Marine Geology) and some additional competences or transferable skills specific for each host partner.

Semester 2

Students stay at UPV/EHU where they follow the compulsory RiMER course and may follow optional courses (Modules 2-7) with a bias towards experimental biology and biotechnological approaches to investigate and manage the marine environment. Likewise, during this semester students meet stakeholders as a part of the Part 2 of the RiMER course in the PiE-UPV/EHU.

Semester 3

Students stay at Soton, ULiège or UAc for 30 ECTS acquiring competences and transferable skills specific for each of these partners (mainly, but not exclusively, the Ocean Physical Environment in Soton, the Ocean Biological Environment in ULiège and the Conservation and Management of Marine Resources in UAc). Likewise, during this semester, students may get academic recognition in ULiège of a Professional Practice (6 credits) previously undertaken within the MER Consortium framework in a non-academic partner.

Semester 4

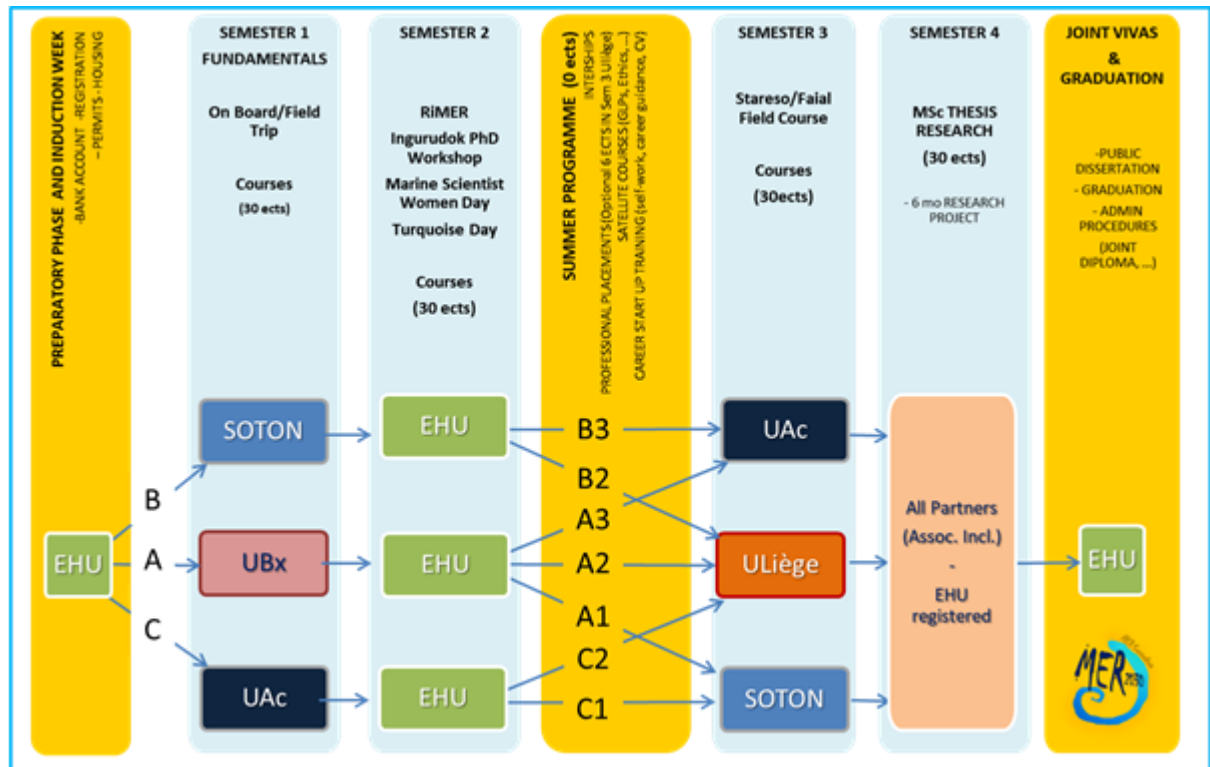
The MSc Thesis research work can be entirely, or jointly, undertaken in Soton, UPV/EHU, UBx, UAc and ULiège or in an associated institution in Europe or overseas. Organization of the thesis work is documented in detail in the Catalogue of Courses. All the MSc Theses are presented at Joint Viva Sessions at the end of September, in UPV/EHU, with members of all the Partner universities, staff from associates and external (invited) examiners; likewise, new MER2030 students starting their induction week at these dates will be facilitated to attend the vivas.

Each student therefore studies at least three universities and up to four universities and visits additional locations such as Stareso, for those following Semester 3 in ULiège, Okeanos for those following Semester 3 in UAc or Associates, during the realisation of the Professional Placement or research internships individually offered in summer after Semester 2.

Student mobility provides the students with the opportunity to interact with staff from different countries and environments; further to identify the area of research to which they are best suited.

The mobility and the integrated RiMER course provide the students with an almost complete overview of the research fields, relevant to marine environment and resources. Students improve also their skills in English and other languages (French, Spanish and Basque).

MER MSc students interact also with students enrolled in local Master courses at each institution, providing them with a supplementary perspective.



Induction weeks

All the students start in UPV/EHU for one Induction Week, in early September of Semester 1.

Then academic and administrative formalities are accomplished and the new students have the opportunity to attend the vivas of the cohort finishing their programme when they start and to prepare logistics for Semester 2 (e.g., accommodation) and potential Professional Placements or Internships to be carried out in the Summer between Semester 2 and Semester 3.

Travel and accommodation costs for this introductory week are included as part of the participation costs.

All this constitutes a great opportunity for inter-cohort interactions and for an exciting induction first week of the MER+ programme.

Besides, welcome introductory weeks are provided successfully in SOTON for Semesters 1 and 3, UBx for Semester 1, ULiège for Semester 3 and UPV/EHU for Semester 2.

The aim of the PBL process is not to give a defined solution but to develop other desirable skills and attributes (i.e. knowledge acquisition, enhanced group collaboration and communication).

MSc Thesis Research and Vivas

The MSc Thesis research work can be entirely, or jointly, undertaken in SOTON, UPV/EHU, UBx and ULiège or in an associated institution in Europe or overseas.

Further on, all the MSc Theses are presented at Joint Viva Sessions in early September, in UPV/EHU, with members of all the Partner universities, staff from associates and external (invited) examiners; likewise, new MER+ students starting their induction week at these dates will attend the vivas.

Professional practice

Practical training in work placements are regarded as key elements in enhancing graduates' employability.

Before starting Semester 3, students may follow a Professional Placement (in marine / environmental sectors) of around 150 hours (4 weeks maximum) within a partner of the MER Consortium. Students work under the guidance of a mentor in this host organisation and an academic supervisor from the partner universities. The Professional Placement should allow the student to understand how knowledge acquired during schooling may be applied to solving problems in real world situations. Likewise, the student should get aware of training needs and career aspirations in the field of ocean science. Through the Professional Placement the student is immersed in the working environment and will get acquainted with real-life job world.

Aims:

- to become familiar with different workplace functions and roles expected for a particular profession.
- to facilitate a period of professional practice to assist students in making an informed decision concerning their career path.

Professional Placements are offered by MER Consortium partners along Year 1 of the programme; especially, but not only, as summer internships.

They consist of internships carried out in compliance of the ECTS recognition requirements approved by the JPB for the Professional Placement module; say, it should be an internship in a MER Consortium partner carried out under the supervision of a professional mentor and an academic supervisor, and must be recognised as eligible for Professional Placement in the individual student agreement.

Documentation including the assessment and its approval by the MER+ must be submitted before Semester 3 to the ULiège UAB to be recognised as an optional 6 ECTS module in place of one of the optional courses. A Professional Placement agreement will arrange the rights and duties of both the student and Professional Placement provider..



Mobility Pathways

SEMESTER 1 UBx

COURSE	ECTS	TYPE
Analyses of Environmental Data and Modelling	6	CBS1
Biological Oceanography	6	CBS1
Chemical Oceanography	6	CBS1
Dynamic Oceanography	6	CBS1
Seafloor Geology	6	CBS1

CBS1: Compulsory at UBx Semester 1

SEMESTER 1 Soton

COURSE	ECTS	TYPE
Introduction to Biological Oceanography	3.75	CSS1
Introduction to Chemical Oceanography	3.75	CSS1
Introduction to Marine Geology	3.75	CSS1
Introductory Physical Oceanography	3.75	CSS1
Applied and Marine Geophysics	7.5	OPT
Biogeochemical Cycles in the Earth System	7.5	OPT
Coastal Sediment Dynamics	7.5	OPT
Computational Data Analysis for Geophysicists and Ocean Scientists	7.5	OPT
Contemporary Topics in Ocean and Earth Sciences	7.5	OPT
Deep Sea Ecology	7.5	OPT
Geodynamics and Solid Earth Geophysics	7.5	OPT
Introductory Remote Sensing of the Oceans	7.5	OPT
Large-scale Ocean Processes	7.5	OPT
Marine Conservation and Policy	7.5	OPT
Marine GeoArchaeology	7.5	OPT
Microfossils, Environment and Time	7.5	OPT
Zooplankton Ecology and Processes	7.5	OPT

CSS1: Compulsory at Soton Semester 1

OPT: Optional at SOTON in Semester 1

NOTE: Some courses may be not offered every academic year

SEMESTER 1 UAc

COURSE	ECTS	TYPE
Analyses of Environmental Data and Modelling	6	CAS1
Biological Oceanography	6	CAS1
Chemical Oceanography	6	CAS1
Dynamic Oceanography	6	CAS1
Seafloor Geology	6	CAS1

CAS1: Compulsory at UAc Semester 1

SEMESTER 2 UPV/EHU

COURSE	ECTS	TYPE
Research in Marine Environment and Resources	6	C
Advanced Instrumental Analysis	4	OPT
Cellular and Molecular Biomarkers	4	OPT
Comparative Endocrinology and Endocrine Disruption	4	OPT
Degradation and Rehabilitation of Estuarine Ecosystems	4	OPT
Ecological Quality Assessment in Coastal Ecosystems	4	OPT
Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management	4	OPT
Environment and Fisheries/Aquaculture Interactions	4	OPT
Environmental Analytical Chemistry	4	OPT
Environmental Chemometrics - Formerly Environmental Data Analysis	4	OPT
Environmental (Toxico)Genomics	4	OPT
Environmental Monitoring and Risk Assessment in Aquatic Systems	4	OPT
Eutrophication and Harmful Algae	4	OPT
Histology and Histopathology of Aquatic Animals	4	OPT
Instrumentation and Measurements in Operational Oceanography	4	OPT
Marine Entrepreneurship	4	OPT
Marine Microbial Ecology	4	OPT
Marine Resources Genomics	4	OPT
Multicultural integration in EU	4	OPT
Ocean Global Change Biology	4	OPT
Physiological Energetics of Marine Organisms	4	OPT
Satellite Oceanography and Meteorology	4	OPT
Socio-Economic Aspects of Climate Change	4	OPT

C: Compulsory

OPT: Optional at EHU in Semester 2

SEMESTER 3 Soton

COURSE	ECTS	TYPE
Applied and Marine Geophysics	7.5	OPT
Biogeochemical Cycles in the Earth System	7.5	OPT
Coastal Sediment Dynamics	7.5	OPT
Computational Data Analysis for Geophysicists and Ocean Scientists	7.5	OPT
Contemporary Topics in Ocean and Earth Sciences	7.5	OPT
Deep Sea Ecology	7.5	OPT
Geodynamics and Solid Earth Geophysics	7.5	OPT
Introductory Remote Sensing of the Oceans	7.5	OPT
Large-scale Ocean Processes	7.5	OPT
Marine Conservation and Policy	7.5	OPT
Marine GeoArchaeology	7.5	OPT
Microfossils, Environment and Time	7.5	OPT
Zooplankton Ecology and Processes	7.5	OPT

OPT: Optional at SOTON in Semester 3

NOTE: Some courses may be not offered every academic year

SEMESTER 3 ULiège

COURSE	ECTS	TYPE
Marine Ecology	6	CLS3
Biochemistry, Physiology of Marine Animals	6	CSS1
Biogeochemical Cycles in the Ocean	6	CSS1
Biology of Marine Mammals	6	CSS1
Carbon, Nutrient, Greenhouse Gases Dynamics ... and Geological Oceanography	6	OPT
Ecotoxicology of Marine Pollutants	6	OPT
Functional and Molecular Marine Microbiology	6	OPT
Marine Plant Biology and Ecology	6	OPT
Numerical Methods Applied to the Environment	6	OPT
Professional Placement in Marine /Environmental Sectors	6	OPT
Remote Sensing of the Oceans	6	OPT

CLS3: Compulsory at ULiège Semester 3

OPT: Optional at ULiège in Semester 1

SEMESTER 3 UAc

COURSE	ECTS	TYPE
Marine Ecology	6	CAS3
Aquaculture and Blue Biotechnology	6	OPT
Biology of Marine Mammals	6	OPT
Fisheries and Fish Biology	6	OPT
Geographical Information Systems	6	OPT
Maritime and Coastal Spatial Planning and Law	6	OPT
Oceans and Health	6	OPT
Remote Sensing of the Oceans	6	OPT

CAS3: Compulsory at UAc Semester 3

OPT: Optional at UAc in Semester 3

SEMESTER 4 - UBx, SOTON, ULiège, EHU (or Associate)

COURSE	TYPE	ECTS
Master Thesis	30	C

C: Compulsory



Acquired competencies & learning outcomes

The MER2030 EMJMD programme has been designed as a Research Master, with students expected to continue on into a PhD programme.

Aimed at becoming a high quality and intellectually stimulating experience of learning in supportive environments, the MER+ programme design will allow students to develop critical and analytical problem-solving powers and the ability to communicate results to non-specialists, and a range of generic skills including: critical and reflective thinking, articulate communication and the skills of literacy and numeracy.

The MER2030 EMJMD programme provides advanced training in practical field techniques, laboratory analyses and mathematical modelling for the protection, conservation and sustainable valorisation of the marine environment; as well as direct experience of work on a sustained research project at the forefront of marine environment knowledge with opportunities to train alongside world class scientists in a research-led environment.

Students must be able to communicate with marine scientists and technologists of diverse expertise, facilitate communication between co-workers (e.g. between a coastal engineer and a marine biologist) and promote synergies. They must be able to accomplish transverse research (from nm/ μ m scale, to km phenomena/data; from sec/min scale to decades/centuries). The general learning outcomes are summarised below.

The MER2030 EMJMD programme has been designed to foster vocational training for a professional career in industries and agencies related to the marine environment management. Particular attention is paid to providing a sufficiently applied background, such that students can apply directly for employment, having completed the master programme. Graduates are/will be able to integrate into multidisciplinary teams; contributing expertise in a given marine discipline or at the overlap of distinct disciplines within the field.

Competencies

Having completed successfully the MER+ EMJMD programme, the student will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics:

Ocean processes within all four main disciplines of oceanography (e.g. biological, chemical, geological and physical), at an advanced level.

The processes that shape the marine world at different temporal and spatial scales.

The terminology, nomenclature and classification systems used in marine environmental sciences.

Theory, practice, acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data, across a range of marine environmental applications.

The value and need for multi-disciplinary approaches in advancing knowledge.

The application of oceanographic knowledge to contribute to the sustainable management of the environment.

A wide selection of topics presently at the frontiers of research, together with many of the specialised techniques used to investigate them.

Subject specific skills

Understanding scientific processes.

Recognise and use of theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, to design and undertake primary research within the context of the marine environment.

Critically analyse, synthesise, interpret and summarise complex scientific information.

Collect, record, and analyse marine environmental data (field/lab), using state-of-the-art techniques and equipment.

Read, use and reference the marine environmental published work of others, in an appropriate manner.

General and transferable skills

Apply and further develop computing, statistical and mathematical skills.

Appreciate statistical issues of sample selection, accuracy, precision and uncertainty during collection, recording and analysis of data in the field and in the laboratory.

Prepare, process and present data, using appropriate qualitative and quantitative techniques and computer software packages, and solve numerical problems using computer and non-computer-based techniques.

Develop, where appropriate, advanced skills in computer programming.

Collect and integrate several lines of evidence, to formulate and test hypotheses.

Apply knowledge and understanding, to address familiar and unfamiliar problems.

Design, implement and report on scientific research projects, including a major research project at the forefront of marine environmental knowledge.

Undertake field and laboratory investigations in a responsible and safe manner, paying due attention to risk assessment, rights of access, relevant health and safety regulations and sensitivity to the impact of investigations on the environment and stakeholders.

Critically use the Internet as a mean of communication and data dissemination, and as a source of information.

Identify individual and collective goals, take responsibilities and perform in an appropriate manner.

Recognise and respect the views of other team members.

Evaluate performance as an individual and as a team member.

Understand the roles of individuals in teams and how individuals learn in team groups.

Continue to develop the skills necessary for self-managed and life-long learning (such as working independently and within groups, time management and organisation).

Identify and work towards targets for personal, academic and career development.

Develop an adaptable and flexible approach to study and work.

Appreciate ethical issues in science research

Soft skills

Use of English as lingua franca in science but recognise worldwide diversity in the use of English, which will enhance her/his communication skills

Be aware that other languages are used in Europe and recognise the value of cultural diversity; as such will be able to enhance language proficiency in some of them (e.g. French, Spanish and Basque language courses (mainly introductory) are offered in parallel to the MER+ EMJMD programme

Be aware of cultural diversity (both at European level, through mobility amongst Partner Universities, and at worldwide level, through being exposed to a multicultural international atmosphere with classmates and visiting scholars)

Identify themselves as open-minded citizens of the world.



Teaching staff

Partner Universities and associated institutions provide appropriately qualified staff to deliver the MER Consortium Masters Programmes. The JPB will facilitate staff development events and opportunities, as part of the operation of the Postgraduate Education Programmes.

The Partner universities have a long tradition of teaching at the postgraduate level; we all have doctorate schools, where motivated students can enrol in a PhD programme.

SOTON and UBx have offered renowned postgraduate degrees in Oceanography and Marine Sciences for, between them, more than 40 years.

Besides regular postgraduate studies, all Partners have been involved in pioneering educational networks at an European scale, within the field of marine and environmental sciences.

Many MER Consortium staff also give lectures around Europe, within the framework of the Erasmus programme.

Many members of staff have held positions at other internationally-recognised institutions, before joining their present departments. Some are world leaders in their field.

An academic adviser (mentor) will be appointed for every pre-registered student, who will follow the advances and help the student after registration.

Additionally, the student will have a in situ tutor and a research supervisor during the realization of the Master Thesis that can be either the mentor or not.



Associated institutions

Strategic criteria were used to develop the extended MER Consortium: research field; scope; profile; European and global scale coverage; sustainability of the programme; and employability of the MER graduates.

Other European universities (HI, TITHE, UoAg) are incorporated to provide an enhanced marine European perspective to the MER2030 EMJMD programme. Thus, for instance, a Mediterranean axis is promoted from southern Spain to Greece. This axis is complemented by STARESO, a marine station of excellence in teaching and research. Likewise, a Northern axis is promoted including both the North Sea and the Baltic Sea (NIVA, SYKE, HI).

European research institutions involved both in consultancy for national agencies and research (AZTI, IEO, CEFAS, IFREMER, NIVA) create a European pan-marine network of high standard research facilities, with teams with a long history of cooperation. They have been involved in the most outstanding questions in marine environment protection, conservation and management in Europe: launching and compliance of Directives; major oil spill responses; international conventions; etc. They altogether combine different expertise and scope that cover most of the research aspects included in the MER2030 EMJMD programme (multidisciplinarity, transversal research, etc.).

SINTEF and HRW are research centres linked to industry; this give them a particular added value. They provide MER+ EMJMD students with research traineeships, supervision, and teaching in relation to aspects close to the needs of employers, as well as with Professional Practice Placements (Internship). In particular, they will contribute to reinforce transversal competences and skills, whilst their assistance in QA procedures will be also invaluable. Strategically, there are research and consultancy entities; and their activities lie within the framework of large companies and industries, related to the protection and the management of marine environment and resources.

Programme-Country Associates provide also a combination of research expertise, scopes, profiles and experience that are consistent with the MER2030 EMJMD programme objectives and scope. Most have on-going postgraduate programmes, with contents that complement the MER2030 EMJMD programme. They act as antennae to attract students and scholars from different windows of the world and as recipients to host MER2030 EMJMD students during their research work. This will provide the students with the opportunity to undertake their research in any ocean of the globe: UC, UABC, CRIOBE and UCE (Pacific Ocean window); NJU and HKU (Southern and Indian Oceans); UFES (Southern Atlantic); (North Western Atlantic) and UNA, UNCC and UJTL (Western Atlantic and the Caribbean).



Admission, application and selection

Admission

The MER Consortium JPB is responsible for the coordination of admissions between Partner Universities and will follow the policy and procedures provided by the University Academic Board (UAB), for each Partner University. Each UAB is sovereign and will provide policy and procedures according to its own university rules.

The Programme is open to holders of a first cycle higher education degree (Bachelor degree, or equivalent) from Programme and Partner Country universities, in the field of biosciences, chemical sciences, geosciences, physical sciences and engineering. As such, the MER2030 EMJMD acts as a conversion for aspiring marine environment scientists.

The relevance of the BSc degree (or equivalent) of the Applicant will be assessed. In cases of doubt regarding the quality of the issuing institution, external advisors will be consulted, in order to establish the status and quality of the institution concerned. In certain cases, the MER Consortium JPB can verify the student qualifications using Internet search networks, or through the collaboration of Associated Partners.

Proof of proficiency in English is essential. Proficiency in French, Portuguese, Spanish and/or Basque is optional.

Specific individual requirements will be established for each Applicant, according to his/her qualifications/prior learning, selected courses and expected academic and professional prospects. These specific requirements will be defined individually, by a system of mentor assignment to pre-registered Applicants.

Students will be selected based upon the quality of their degree, the level of the marks obtained in previous studies and the relevance of the competences and skill acquired during the BSc studies in relation to the MER2030 EMJMD programme.

The Letter of Statement (where the Applicant explains his/her background, why MER2030 EMJMD has been selected, and his/her prospects for the future) is a relevant criterion.

Relevance of work experience, motivation, and future career objectives, as well as any additional information provided in the mentor's report, will also be taken into consideration in reaching a final decision.

Additionally, applicants will need to:

Accept (it may be conditionally) the Revised Study Plan; this is proposed by the MER Consortium JPB Chair upon revision of the documents, information and Proposed Study Plan provided by the applicant, only to identify the applicant's academic profile.

Accept the Student Agreement Draft (SAD); this is a non-signed on-line full draft version of the future Draft Agreement which upon acceptance by the applicants is considered as a proof that they know the rules, conditions, commitments, rights and duties, as well as

the administrative, academic and economical main questions dealing with the MER2030 EMJMD programme they are willing to enrol if selected. The SAD is not an entailing document. The definitive legally binding Student Agreement will be signed by the selected students and the MER Consortium JPB Chair in two originals at the time of enrolment or later, and can be revised by common agreement.

Indicate on the application whether they are applying for a scholarship, the nationality (including a copy of the passport as a proof, which is relevant in the case of those applicant with double/multiple nationality; only one must be selected), the residence country (including an official certificated proof), and a declaration of being in compliance with call-specific regulations (e.g., the 12-months Rule).

Offers will be made only to those Applicants that satisfy the requirements for entry, as set out above, for whom the supplemental information is deemed satisfactory according to the MER Consortium JPB. All members of the JPB have to agree to the admission of an Applicant, so that there is shared understanding and agreement on the calibre of applicants acceptable onto the Programme. If one member of the MER Consortium JPB does not wish to admit an Applicant, that Applicant will not be admitted to the Programme.

The MER Consortium JPB will decide whether any exceptional circumstances, or special considerations, should allow for deviation from one or more of the admission criteria set out above.

Application

Applicants are required to complete the on-line application procedure, providing their personal data and the following compulsory documents and forms:

- Copy1,2 (pdf) of the official Transcript of Records of all courses taken to achieve the BSc degree
- Copy1,2 (pdf) of the BSc Degree Diploma, or equivalent suitable to be eligible for the MER2030 EMJMD Programme
- Copy1,2 (pdf) of the Secondary School Degree, or equivalent required to access University studies at the applicant's home country
- Curriculum Vitae (pdf) in Europass format or equivalent
- Motivation Letter (pdf), explaining the applicant's personal statement and motivation to participate in the MER2030 EMJMD Programme
- Two Reference Forms or Recommendation Letters submitted by academic/professional staff (on-line application procedure)³
- Complete the Proposed Study Plan Form (on-line), indicating the teaching modules of preference, research topics of interest and additional information⁴
- Copy2 (pdf) of your Passport or national identity card, as proof of applicant's nationality
- Copy2 (pdf) of a Resident Official Document that verifies which the applicant's place of residence at the time of applications
- Signed "Erasmus+ Scholarship Mandatory Declaration" form, where applicants declare they comply with Erasmus+ eligibility requirements (e.g., 12 month rule, etc.)
- Proof of Proficiency in English (see Language Policy)
- Photograph (passport type)
- Signed "Self-Funded Student Declaration" form; only to be uploaded by applicants without Erasmus+ Scholarship before they can be definitively admitted as self-funded students (can be uploaded after the submission deadline; e.g. once the Scholarship Selection Results have been published)
- Supplementary Information can be provided at the applicant's convenience, uploaded altogether as one single pdf or zip file

(1) Sworn translation into English (or any official European Language) is required to be eligible.

(2) A copy is enough to apply for admission. The Transcript may be incomplete at the time of application but must be complete by the time of final enrolment. The BSc degree may be uploaded later after the submission deadline but always before definitive admittance and enrolment. Further on, originals or their certified copies will be required to proceed with final registration at the universities; you must keep these documents with you all along the progression of the MER2030 Programme.

Once the application is ready for submission, please do not forget the last step (submit); a submission confirmation will be sent to you by e-mail.

(3) The applicant must proceed to contact the referees through the on-line application; then the referees will upload the Reference Form/Recommendation Letter, which will be notified to the applicant. In the case a referee is not responsive, it will be the applicant's responsibility to contact a new one; in any case, only the applicant is responsible to obtain the two required Reference Forms (or Recommendation Letters) uploaded onto the system within the deadline.

(4) At time of application this is only tentative to depict applicant's academic profile and will be fully open to changes before definitive admittance).

(5) The place of residence should be verified on the basis of the provision of the documents listed in the PRADO website. For example: (a) a residence certificate issued in accordance with the candidate's municipality normal registration rules; or (b) a certificate from the candidate's place of work, study or training issued by the employer or institution in question. These documents must have been issued within 12 months before the submission deadline.



Please note that the main selection criteria are study and academic merits (degree, transcript, curriculum vitae, experience, relevant data), motivation and well-thought out study programme (motivation letter, intrinsic coherence of the proposed study plan and research topic themselves and with the applicants profile and background – merits, letter, supplementary information), recommendation letters (individualised, informative, concise, targeted on the MER2030 EMJMD programme, supportive), and chances of success in the Programme (e.g., possible pursuit of a PhD programme, or integration in an industry research unit in the home country may also be considered; integrity/elaboration/maturity of the application as a whole).

Selection is highly competitive. Even excellent candidates can be underscored if some of the documents/data are missing or faint or if the application is not properly frameworked. Uploading incomplete or unclear documents (e.g., transcript) will lead to underrating. It is highly recommended to examine carefully the MER MSc webpage, especially the MSc Thesis and Partnership sections, in order to prepare the Motivation Letter as well as to propose realistic and coherent Research topics and a Study Plan in accordance.

Offers will be made only to those Applicants that satisfy the requirements for entry, as set out above, for whom the supplemental information is deemed satisfactory according to the JPB.

By submitting you recognise that the MER Consortium is allowed to use your image (e.g. photographs taken within the framework of the MER MSc academic activities) for public information about and promotion of the Master as well as for related academic outreaches (leaflets, posters, guidelines, reports, webpage, etc.)

Application deadline is March 15th each year for Erasmus+ Scholarship candidates. Important for self-funded Partner Country applicants who require conditional pre-acceptance letters supporting their applications for other scholarships (e.g., National) and for visas: please note that these letters can be only secured for those who applied before this deadline. A firm offer will be made only on completion of the general application procedure.

The deadline is extended to June 4th for self-funded applicants (without Erasmus+ Scholarship). Applications after this deadline might be considered by the MER JPB but the Secretariat and the International offices of the Partner Universities cannot ensure any support regarding travel, accommodation and other services.

On-line Application

THE ON-LINE APPLICATION SYSTEM IS OPEN FOR ERASMUS MUNDUS APPLICANTS UNTIL MARCH 15th, EVERY YEAR. NO APPLICATION FOR ERASMUS+ SCHOLARSHIPS WILL BE CONSIDERED AFTER THIS DATE.

APPLICANTS MAY BE CONTACTED BEFORE THE DEADLINE AND REQUIRED TO UPLOAD NEW OR ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS OR DATA. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE.

PLEASE CHECK THE GUIDELINESS (PDF) AND FAQs DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ON THE MER WEBSITE.

THE ON-LINE APPLICATION SYSTEM WILL BE BLOCKED FOR NEW APPLICANTS AFTER MARCH 15th AND OPEN AGAIN AFTER APRIL 15th FOR APPLICANTS NON-ELIGIBLE OR NOT APPLYING FOR ERASMUS+ STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS.

Earlier applications are highly recommended. For instance, only applications before early June may be eligible for EHU Mobility grants. Moreover, for students starting Semester 1 in UBx, accommodation can be only guaranteed for applications received before May 30th. Later applicants will be responsible for getting accommodation themselves in UBx or shall start Semester 1 in SOTON in late September.

Selection

The MER Consortium JPB will review all applications to the MER2030 EMJMD Programme and will recommend to the student the most suitable subjects and pathways.

Selected students will be ranked according to the main selection criteria and scholarships will be awarded according to this rank and the Erasmus+ regulations in force published by EACEA.

The MER Consortium JPB will notify the final decision to the Applicant.

The main selection criteria are:

- study and academic merits
- motivation (well-thought out study programme)
- recommendations; and
- chances of success in the Programme (e.g., possible pursuit of a PhD programme, or integration in an industry research unit in the home country may also be considered).

The selection process will take place early enough to allow for notification of final decision in good time, before the commencement of the Programme.

Applicants will be admitted only when they have obtained the necessary visas, permits and insurance policies. The MER Consortium Secretariat will assist with these procedures. Host partner institutions will provide assistance through their International Offices.

Scholarships and grants relating to funds controlled by the MER Consortium will be awarded on the basis of merit and demonstrated need as decided by the JPB.

Transparency of application, admission and selection procedures is guaranteed by the publication of relevant information relating to the procedures.

Balanced gender participation

MER Consortium Partners aim at achieving gender balance participation as regards actual participation of women. For this purpose, we attempt to use a gender-friendly style in the official documents and dissemination materials as well as to encourage the participation of women as JPB and UAB members; likewise, as chairs in the thematic Round-tables of the mandatory RiMER course and MSc Thesis Examination Boards.

Equal opportunities

In accordance with the each Partner University's Equal Opportunities Policy, the MER+ EMJMD Programme is open to anyone regardless of age, class, creed, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, sexual orientation or caring responsibilities.

All individuals are selected and treated on their relative merits and abilities, in line with the each Partner University's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Students with disabilities

Disabled Applicants will be treated according to the same procedures as any other applicant with the added involvement of each Partner University's Disability Offices to assess their needs.

The Programme may require adaptation for students with disabilities (e.g. hearing impairment, visual impairment, mobility difficulties, dyslexia), particularly the practical laboratory sessions; an attempt will be made to accommodate students, wherever possible.

If a student has a disability and has particular needs, these will be discussed with him/her at selection and included as a relevant part of the Student's Agreement. Appropriate action will be taken at this stage.

All Partner Universities have comprehensive support for and experience with students with a wide range of disabilities.

Student Agreement

The individual Student Agreement (PDF) will be signed by the student and the JPB Chair. The agreement stipulates the rights and duties of the parties, concerning the nature of the relationship between the student and the MER Consortium, academic matters, other MER Consortium activities (compulsory participation in joint activities, evaluation), and financial issues (scholarships, tuition fees, etc.).

The Agreement is completed by a learning agreement modelled on the Erasmus learning agreement and by a Code of Ethics. A summary of the rights, obligations and responsibilities for the student and the Consortium is also annexed to the Student Agreement. The general complaint procedure is clearly explained in the Student Agreement.

Enrolment & Registration

The Joint Programme is recognised by the 5 partner universities; however, the students will be officially registered as regular students only in all the MER Consortium partner universities (at least 3) through which his/her individually tailored programme is followed (depending on the selected pathway); these latter ones will be degree the awarding HEIs for this individual student.

IMPORTANT: Applicants will be enrolled only when they:

- have obtained the necessary visas, permits and insurance policies (MER Consortium Secretariat will assist with these procedures and partner institutions will provide assistance through their International Offices);
- have presented the originals (or officialised copies) of the required documents; and
- have paid the participation costs to the MER Consortium according to the Student Agreement stipulations, as detailed in the Student Agreement Draft (SAD) accepted by the applicant when the on-line application is submitted.

Then, the MER Consortium Secretariat will be responsible for directly paying tuition fees, insurance and all the other participation costs to the corresponding partner universities.

However, in order to comply with local regulations, students may be asked to follow administrative procedures and to present again the originals (or officialised copies) of the required documents in all the university partners in which he/she will be registered. This should not suppose additional payments because participation costs are already paid to the MER Consortium Secretariat.



Fees

Students

Two student populations are distinguished (see below).

- Programme Country students are from the 27 EU Member States, North Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Serbia, Turkey, United Kingdom (Advice: check regularly updates at the Erasmus+ website)
- Partner Country students are from any other country, provided they are not currently residents of these eligible countries (above), nor have carried out their main activity (studies, work, etc.) for more than a total of 12 months over the last five years in one of these countries.

Participation costs

Participation costs have been calculated based on the known costs of postgraduate studies that the Universities in the consortium have monitored in the past years. They are estimated based on the dependence of the number of students hosted every year.

The differences between Programme and Partner Country students' costs are due to the costs of maintaining an international office, assistance with visas, assistance with accommodation, insurance services and other related administrative costs needed for Partner Country applicants.

All MER2030 EMJMD students pay an annual fee (i.e. Partner Country students 9000 € and Programme Country students 4500 €) to the MER Consortium Secretariat.

For each individual student participation cost to the MER2030 are divided into costs related to registration at each university, costs related to the organisation of joint programme elements and services provided by the MER Consortium.

Each student will be registered at the university where they are residing on a semester basis.

Participation costs at each university will also cover costs for obligatory programme related extras such as excursions, practical courses and field work. Registration fees cover tuition fees and insurance coverage – and include free access to libraries, labs, or internet inside the Consortium Universities (UPV/EHU, SOTON, UBx, UAc or ULiège) or Associates through which the study programme is completed. Additional costs due to special activities (i.e., boarding in oceanographic vessels, accommodation during the RiMER course in the SS Aquarium) are also covered. Participation costs to the yearly Vivas will be also partially covered.

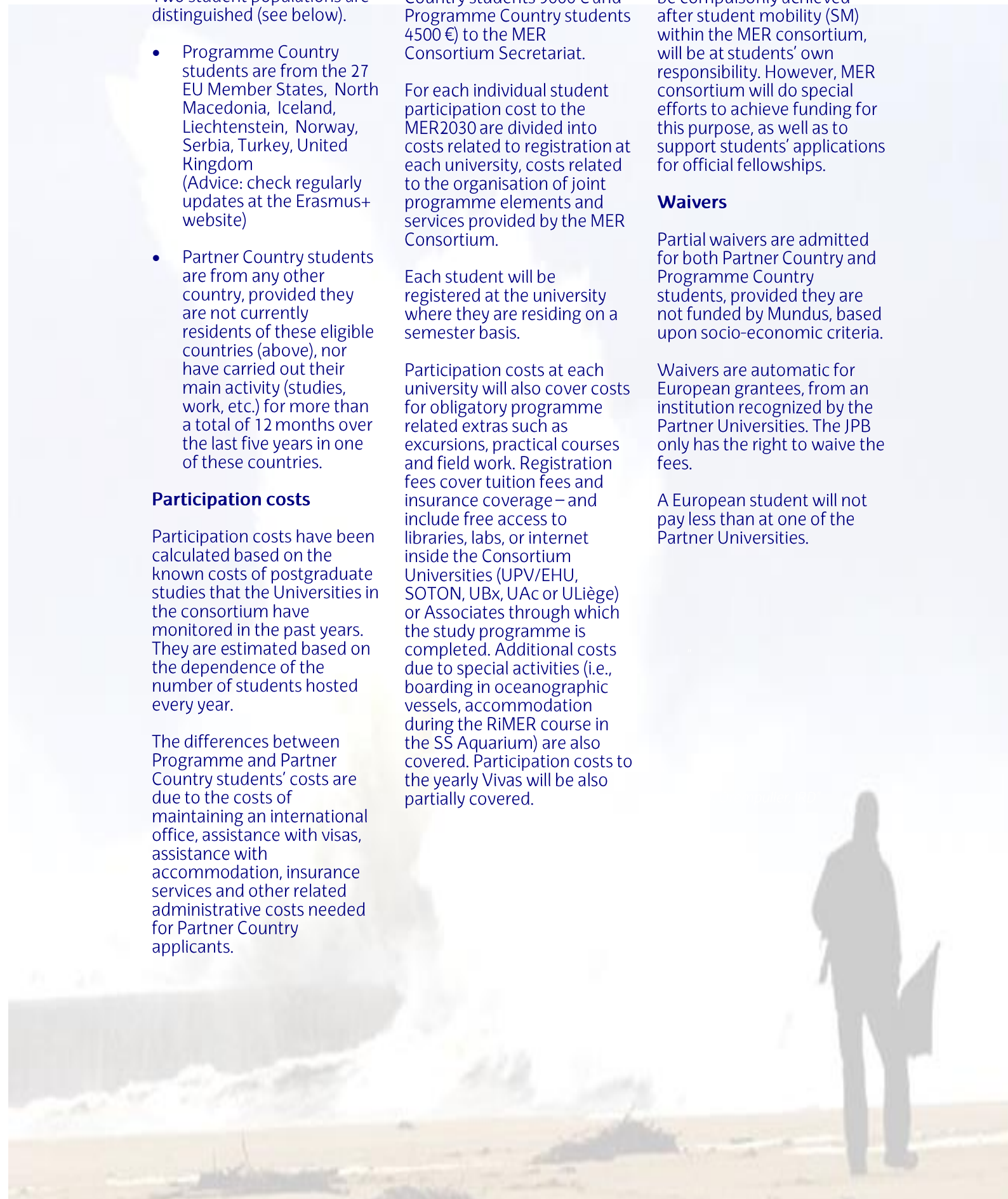
Costs of travelling and accommodation, which must be compulsorily achieved after student mobility (SM) within the MER consortium, will be at students' own responsibility. However, MER consortium will do special efforts to achieve funding for this purpose, as well as to support students' applications for official fellowships.

Waivers

Partial waivers are admitted for both Partner Country and Programme Country students, provided they are not funded by Mundus, based upon socio-economic criteria.

Waivers are automatic for European grantees, from an institution recognized by the Partner Universities. The JPB only has the right to waive the fees.

A European student will not pay less than at one of the Partner Universities.



Funding opportunities

Overall Cost Estimate

A gross estimate of the budget needed to complete the MER2030 EMJMD course (2 years) is provided together with the potential contribution resulting from common funding opportunities. It is only valuable for orientation purposes.

Students without a Erasmus+ Student scholarship are eligible to be awarded a MCG waiver so that the full registration for the two academic years could be cut to around 7000 €, except for pathways A1 and C1.

The MER Consortium Secretariat can assist you in getting funding but it cannot be ensured that you will be successful.

The MER Consortium JPB strongly recommends you to consider the expected costs of the programme (PDF) in a realistic way before you decide to enrol. The MER Consortium cannot assume any responsibility if a student must leave the MER2030 EMJMD programme before its conclusion due to economic reasons.

Erasmus+ Student Scholarships

An Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD), is a prestigious, integrated, international study programme, jointly delivered by an international consortium of higher education institutions.

EMJMDs award EU-funded scholarships to the best student candidates applying under annual selection rounds.

Study must take place in at least two of the Programme countries. Part of the studies can also take place in a Partner countries if there is a partner-country institution involved.

Erasmus+ Student Scholarship covers participation costs (including tuition fees, insurance coverage, programme specific costs, etc.), travel and installation cost contribution, and monthly allowance.

Erasmus Mundus scholarships are intended for full-time studies only.

Students can apply for an EM scholarship even if they have not yet completed the studies required by the MER Consortium for the joint programme. They must however have completed the relevant degree before the enrolment deadline in the joint MER2030 EMJMD programme.

Student benefitting from an Erasmus+ scholarship can benefit from other non-EU funded support while performing his/her Erasmus+ joint programme activities (e.g. student jobs or placement/internship allowances) if the national legislation of the host country permits it.

The basic and only rule in this case is that a Community funding beneficiary can never benefit from other Community financial support for the same activities for which he/she has already received funding.

Applications, selection criteria, procedure and timetable

Before applying to the Erasmus+ Student Scholarship you must follow the ON-LINE APPLICATION procedure and obtain a conditional acceptance (eligibility) status for the MER2030 EMJMD programme.

Then, following the same ON-LINE APPLICATION procedure go to the GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS section and follow the instructions provided in THE ERASMUS+ STUDENTS SCHOLARSHIPS entry.

The MER Consortium Secretariat will check your ELEGIBILITY and will communicate you whether you are eligible or not. ELEGIBILITY CRITERIA include:

- Academic criteria: you have been given conditional acceptance by the MER Consortium JPB because you fulfil the academic requirements
- Procedure criteria: all the required data, forms and documents have been successfully submitted
- Erasmus+ call restrictions: you have applied for an Erasmus Mundus scholarship to a maximum of two (2) joint programmes (EMMC and EMJD together) other than the MER MSc and you have not been holder of a EMMC scholarship previously.
- Nationality criteria: you have selected the correct Category student scholarships according to your proven nationality
- "12 months rule": in case you apply for a Category A student scholarship, you declare that you are not currently resident of EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway, nor have carried out your main activity (studies, work, etc.) for more than a total of 12 months over the last five years in one of these countries
- Proof of Residence Country: you have duly accredited your country of residence.

The main SELECTION CRITERIA are:

- study and academic merits (based on the transcript of records of previous studies and the curriculum vitae) – 40%
- motivation (based on the Personal Statement Letter included in the MER Application form) – 20%
- coherence and prospects (based on the proposed study programme and its correspondence with the applicant's background, motivation and prospects; also the JPB's report can be taken into consideration) – 15%
- support by external advisors (recommendation letters) – 15%
- chances of success in the programme (possible pursuit in a PhD programme or integration in an industry research unit at the home country) – 5%
- other merits – 5%

Each criterion is scored 0-10. Only very high quality candidates, with an average score above 7, are accepted to the course.

Accepted candidates are ranked by order of merit. The top ranked candidates are selected for the main list of candidates.

Geographical balance and gender balance restrictions apply:

- not more than 2 candidates may come from the same country, and
- not less than 40% must be female candidates.

To comply with these restrictions some candidates may be removed from the main list and replaced by the next ranked candidates in the reserve list.

THE EVALUATION RESULTS ARE COMMUNICATED TO THE APPLICANTS IN MARCH AS A PRE-SELECTION OF CANDIDATES.

HOWEVER, THE RESULTS ARE ONLY CONSIDERED DEFINITIVE AFTER CONSULTATION TO THE EACEA, ALWAYS BEFORE APRIL 15TH.

Timetable (on an annual basis; per intake)

- Deadline for applications to Erasmus+ Studentships: March 15th
- Publication of pre-selection results: Late March
- Communication of definitive results to selected candidates: April 15th
- Course opening: Induction Week in early September at PiE-UPV/EHU. Opening Day in UBx and UAc in early-mid September; in Soton and ULiège in mid-late September.

Erasmus+ Master Degree Loans

Erasmus+ Master Degree Loans are EU-guaranteed loans with favourable pay-back terms that can help you finance a Master course in an Erasmus+ Programme country.

The scheme is designed to support postgraduate students and protect them from student hardship with social safeguards including:

- No need for collateral from students or parents, ensuring equality of access
- Favourable, better than market interest rates
- Pay-back terms that allow graduates up to two years to find work before beginning repayment.

Currently the scheme is available through universities and banks in Spain, France, UK and Turkey for outgoing students from these countries pursuing postgraduate study abroad and students from other Programme countries going to Spain or UK for a Master course.

As more institutions from around Europe join the scheme, more destinations for postgraduate study will become available.

It is however not possible to say when exactly any particular country might be covered because the agreements with banks, student loan agencies and universities will be done gradually on a country by country basis.

Erasmus+ Traineeships

Erasmus+ supports traineeships (work placements, internships, etc) abroad for students currently enrolled in higher education institutions in Programme countries at Bachelor and Master level as well as for doctoral candidates. These opportunities are also open to recent graduates.

By doing a traineeship abroad with Erasmus+, you can improve not only your communication, language and inter-cultural skills, but also soft skills highly valued by future employers, as well as become more entrepreneurial. Read more about the benefits of an exchange abroad.

You can also combine your Erasmus+ traineeship with a study period abroad.

Access to Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support will help you learn the language used at your workplace.

MER Consortium Grants

The MER Consortium Grants (MER-CG) are intended to provide with financial support, at least partially, to those excellent MER MSc students not funded by Erasmus Mundus. The MER-CG programme will be run according to the following principles:

Open to all the applicants admitted as MER MSc students that are not funded by Erasmus Mundus nor subjected to any other incompatibility (e.g., being holder of a national scholarship).

The student can apply for this grant only as a part of and during the completion of the on-line MER Application procedure (Section "Grants and Fellowships").

Academic achievement in previous studies must comply with a minimum of excellence according to the MER JPB's criteria.

The awarded student who does not pass successfully the academic year may be asked to refund totally or partially the grant received for this academic year, unless the occurrence of exceptional circumstances is recognised by the JPB.

The provision of grants will depend on the availability of funds; in case of need, preference will be given to applicants from the countries of the Extended MER Consortium (partners and associates).

The MER-CG programme includes five categories of grants, depending of the candidate's merits and needs.

- Only students admitted in the MER MSc programme can apply for the 3 following categories – waivers (DEADLINE: July 15th Yr 0):

Smooth Fee 3C Grant: 5400 € are awarded as a part of their annual registration fee to selected third-country students (applied and decided on an annual basis); certain pathways may be not available for holders of this category grant.

Waiver Plus Grant: 2000 € are awarded as a part of their annual registration fee to selected EU students (applied and decided on an annual basis); certain pathways may be not available for holders of this category grant.

Waiver Minus Grant: 1000 € are awarded as a part of their annual registration fee to awarded EU students (applied and decided on an annual basis); no pathway restriction accounts for holders of this category grant.

- Earlier applications are recommended but on line applications for the following 2 categories – mobility- are received until de deadlines indicated below:

Mobility Grant: 2800 € for q semester (14 weeks) per year are awarded for compulsory mobility support during both the taught part and the research part of the programme (DEADLINE YEAR 1 STUDENTS: July 15th Year 0; DEADLINE YEAR 2 STUDENTS: July 15th Year 1)

Research Grant: 2500 € – monthly allowance are awarded for the 5 month research activity period of the MSc Thesis. Only available for Year 2 students; applications can be made until December 1st Year 2, in parallel with the definitive assignment of MSc research project and supervisor (DEADLINE YEAR 2 STUDENTS: December 1st Year 2)

Other funding opportunities

There is a set of diverse funding sources that are being used presently, which will be extended and intensified:

- Student Mobility for MSc Studies, Vice-Rectorate for Postgraduate Studies (UPV/EHU); >3000 € /semester, once per year, depending upon the marks.
- Mobility Grans from Fidex of Idex-Bordeaux University Université de Bordeaux (Excellence Campus)
- Grants and Foundations Université de Liège
- Postgraduate Funding For UK/EU Students at University of Southampton
- *Préstamos para realizar estudios de posgrado de máster universitario o de doctorado. Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte – Gobierno de España* educacion.gob.es
- *Becas de carácter general y de movilidad para estudios universitarios Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte – Gobierno de España* educacion.gob.es
- *Becas de matrícula en másteres para titulados en desempleo Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte – Gobierno de España* educacion.gob.es
- Fellowships associated to research projects Partners and Associates may have funds to support MSc students (e.g. in UB, MSc students must be provided with a fellowship by the research group where they carry out the MSc Thesis research)

Services

The members of the Consortium engage themselves in helping students with incoming procedures such as finding housing and ensure that students will have access to language courses, libraries, canteens, study rooms and computer facilities (personal e-mail address). The main contact points outside the departments will be the respective International Offices.

Partner institutions are used to host the Erasmus Mundus students and scholars. They are used to help non EU students with the heavier administrative procedures that they have to go through and the cultural adaptation that some of them need.

Support is provided to students as soon as they are recruited. The Partner Universities commit themselves to help students with their visa procedure.

Contact persons, will be appointed to take care of the various students' problems, and their coordinates will be posted on the web.

Courses take place at dedicated, fully equipped, conveniently located sites, thus improving cohesion among the students.

International offices

International Offices help incoming students with formalities such as permits of stay and social insurance. They also help with housing and local language courses. The Offices also work on cultural activities, which are organised by appropriate structures on campus, thus contributing to the cultural integration of students (see also below).

Housing

Housing is offered on campus or in town, where (sometimes) preferred rentals are reserved for students.

UBx has a convention with a regional organization, which is in charge of housing (CROUS). This ensures that all incoming students will be offered the possibility to have a university flat, at a discounted rate.

Students live in students' flats in Bilbao, or in towns around the Campus. University residence services are available also both for students and scholars.

At the ULiège, students can book a room at the university residence for "short periods" (3 to 6 months), or find easily private accommodation, either in the private student residence (city living) or in individual rooms which are listed in the data base of the Accommodation Office; this helps students to find the more appropriate room, considering the place they want to stay and the price they can put on it.

UAc through the International Relations Office provides services in the areas of accommodation (University dorms, kitchen and laundry).

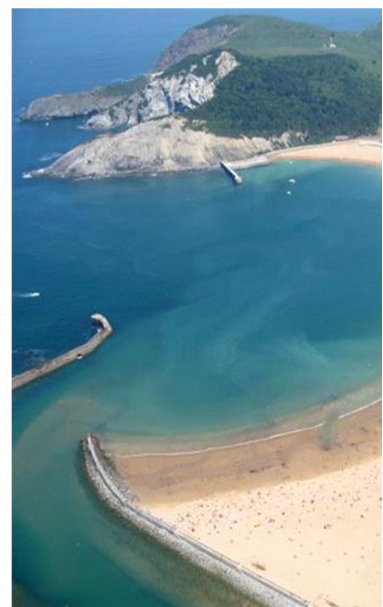
All Partners are able to guarantee that a sufficient number of study places and housing facilities will be reserved for Third-Country students.

Coaching and counselling

The MER JPB appoints an academic adviser (mentor) for every applicant admitted. The mentor will follow the progress and assist the student, after registration. Additionally, the student will have an in-situ tutor and also a research supervisor, during the realisation of the MSc Thesis, which can be either the mentor or not.

Academic advisers (mentors) are teachers students can rely upon for obtaining advice about their work; they form a bridge between students and the JPB and UAB, but communication might well be only by e-mail. However, tutors are in-situ support for daily academic, or other, affairs. Whenever possible, the same teacher will be mentor and tutor for a given student, but not necessarily the supervisor.

The tutor and committed local students (escort), will help foreign students with university administration and to break the language barrier. Escort attention is not individually scheduled (it will be planned according to the number of hosted and home students), but is reciprocal (every enrolled student may be escorted abroad and must act as escort at home). Third Country students might be disengaged from acting as escorts.



Welfare services

The five Partner Universities offer services to students with special needs and attention to their families (travelling, visas) through Euraxess mobility centres.

Concerning family venue, scholars will also find information at the Euraxess local contact points of the Partner Universities.

Insurance

The MER Consortium contracts the APRIL International Care to provide insurance to all the Joint MER MSc Programme students, both EM scholarship holders and for self-funded students, even if they are not enrolled UBx.

Students are covered everywhere in the world, even in overseas and on board as long as this is linked to their Joint MER MSc Programme. The period of coverage is 1 month before the starting of the programme and up to 2 months after the ending of the programme. UBx is responsible for contract renewal every year and costs are covered by the Consortium as a part of the participation costs budget.

Social and cultural integration

A introductory week is at the start of the programme in SOTON, UBx and UPV/EHU. Through it, newly-arrived students meet local ones and learn details about the campus and the life in the campus, transportation, safety, etc, and participate in get-together activities with other foreign and local students and staff.

In UPV/EHU, this week coincides with the RiMER course and "get-together" coffee breaks, lunch, a party and dinner, together with cultural activities are combined with the teaching activity in order to favour a communication atmosphere between students, MER staff and invited staff.

A solution to help with integration is offered to students in UBx, through the *Université du Temps Libre*, which proposes activities to foreign students during their spare time (trips, lessons in French cuisine, etc). This is of great assistance in getting them acquainted with the regional and national culture. Student Associations in UBx also offer a wide range of activities and cultural exchanges.

At ULiège, many activities are planned throughout the year, from welcome days to cULiègetural visits in Belgium, as well as in a neighbouring country; e.g. to Maastricht, where all foreign students are gathered together with Students Associations.

A welcome day is organized by each Partner University, every year, to welcome Erasmus and other foreign students. RegULiège, regularly, students and staff from the other Partner Universities are invited to participate in this activity.

SOTON has developed an active Alumni Association and a related facebook, to which MER students and graduates are invited to join.

Language courses

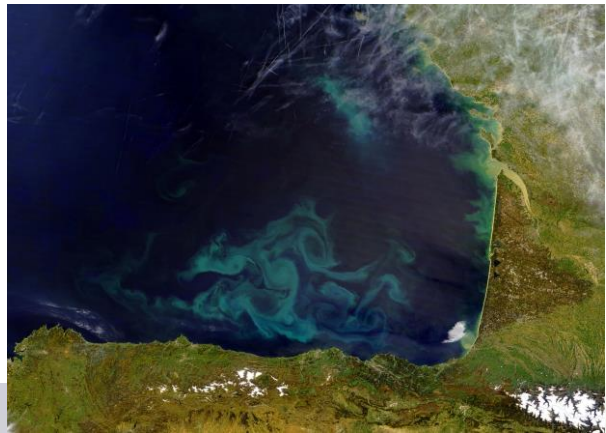
Language diversity in Europe is seen as an added-value of studies in Europe.

Students are provided with the possibility of using the official languages of the three host countries (English, French, Spanish or Basque), the language of instruction (English) and the language of the country where they carry out their thesis project (other than English, French, Spanish or Basque).

The Partner Universities offer language learning support through training courses in several European languages. All universities procure language courses for foreign students, taught by specific departments; they promote the national languages, in order to facilitate social integration.

Partners dispose of the necessary resources to enforce this policy (International Offices, Language Centres, Intensive training sessions offered twice a year); these are sponsored and paid for by the universities.





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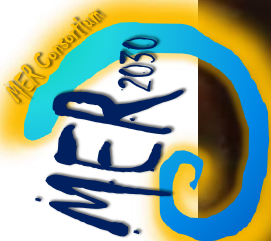
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More updated information can be obtained
from the following web sites

<http://www.soton.ac.uk>

<http://www.ehu.es>

<http://www.u-bordeaux.fr>

<http://www.uliege.b>

<https://international.uac.pt>