

European Innovative Teaching Award – selection guidelines

1. Description and scope of the European Innovative Teaching Award

As part of the Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025, the European Innovative Teaching Award (EITA) has been established to showcase outstanding innovative teaching and learning practices, implemented in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme, and recognise the work of teachers and their schools who make an exceptional contribution to the profession. The award contributes to highlighting the value of European cooperation in the field of school education and to the establishment of the European Education Area.

The specific objectives of the European Innovative Teaching Award are to:

- celebrate the achievements of teachers and schools and give more visibility to their work;
- identify and promote outstanding teaching and learning practices;
- foster mutual learning between teachers and school staff;
- highlight the value of the Erasmus+ programme to European teacher collaboration.

During the programme period 2021-2027, the award is given on an annual basis. Successfully finalised Erasmus+ projects are selected by the Erasmus+ National Agencies covering the fields of school education and/or vocational education and training.

As Erasmus+ projects are already grant-based, the award has a symbolic valorisation value and will not provide additional monetary benefits to the awardees. Nevertheless, projects awarded with EITA will be promoted at European and national level as good practice examples of innovation in education. They will also be flagged in the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform.

The National Agencies should fund the activities related to the implementation of the European Innovative Teaching Award (such as organising the selection process and the communication activities) as part of their operating budget supported by the Erasmus+ contribution to NA management costs. Additionally, the National Agencies can use funds under the Erasmus+ Training and Cooperation Activities envelope to organise national EITA events with clear European added value.

The National Agencies should also establish synergies with complementary European initiatives (in particular eTwinning and European Language Label) should be sought, for example through organising joint national award ceremonies, publishing compendia on good practice examples, etc.

The National Agency should specify to the awardees the objectives and modalities of the EITA event at national level and at the EU level respectively, in particular regarding the delivery of trophies and certificates.

To ensure transparency, high quality and consistent implementation of the EITA, the National Agencies involved must follow the guidelines set out hereafter, which have been thoroughly discussed with them prior to a common consensus.

2. Geographical scope and award categories

Up to four awards per Erasmus+ Programme Country¹ will be given, one for each of the following categories:

- early childhood education and care;
- primary education;
- secondary education;
- and vocational education and training (VET) schools².

In cases where separate Erasmus+ National Agencies manage projects in the fields of school education and vocational education and training, a cooperation between the two agencies must be established. The National Agency responsible for the field of school education should be leading the process.

In case there are no suitable projects in a given category that meet the eligibility, selection, and award criteria, the respective National Agency may decide not to award any project in this category. The Agency must inform the Commission of this decision in a timely manner.

Notwithstanding the above, the National Agencies are strongly encouraged to select at least one project from their pool of finalised projects.

3. Selection process and transparency

The National Agencies should organise the EITA selection in a transparent way, according to their internal procedures set up in advance and in line with these guidelines.

Direct selection of awardees. Under this option, the responsible National Agency draws the definitive list of projects to be given the European Innovative Teaching Award in the respective categories through one round: the selection is done on the basis of the eligibility, selection and award criteria mentioned below, taking solely into account previously existing information – compatibility with the annual EITA theme, final project report and its evaluation, available outputs and promotional materials, etc. Once the selection process is completed, the National Agency should contact the coordinators of the selected projects to ask their agreement for awarding them with EITA.

4. Eligibility, selection and award criteria

Selection processes set up by each National Agency will identify the projects to be given the European Innovative Teaching Award on the basis of the following criteria:

¹ In Belgium, the EITA selection process is organised separately for the Flemish, French and German-speaking communities.

² In the context of the EITA, vocational education and training (VET) schools are secondary schools delivering initial vocational education and training curricula.

4.1 Eligibility criteria

The National Agencies in each Programme Country should select projects to be awarded the European Innovative Teaching Award among finalised Erasmus+ projects both under Key Action 1 (learning mobility projects) and Key Action 2 (partnership projects).

As a general rule, finalised projects that started between the years 2019 and 2023 should be considered for EITA. The National Agency should select the awardees only among its own co-funded projects. A project that has received EITA in previous years cannot be considered again.

NB: This means that only parent projects under KA219/KA229 can be taken into consideration. In exceptional cases, where the respective National Agency does not have at its disposal a large enough pool of finalised projects from the aforementioned period, it may look into projects that were funded during previous years of the Erasmus+ programme.

A project whose final report has been duly submitted, evaluated and closed in administrative terms is to be considered as a finalised one.

The National Agencies have the flexibility to narrow down the pool of projects to be taken into consideration for selection through defining a stricter or laxer threshold of points received at final report stage. This could happen due to overall large number of granted projects to be evaluated, need to balance underrepresented sectors, lack of specific information in project descriptions, etc.

4.2 Selection criteria: the thematic priority

Every year, the Commission defines a thematic area that projects must address to be considered for selection for the European Innovative Teaching Award. In 2024, the EITA annual theme is **‘Well-being at school’** in connection with implementation of [Pathways to School Success initiative](#).

The annual theme explores building a **systemic, whole-school³ approach to well-being⁴ and mental health in schools**. The following [factsheets](#) provide a broad understanding of the different elements within this approach.

When organising the selection process, relevant projects dealing with the annual theme could be identified based on key words or priorities/topics, available in the Erasmus+ dashboards and the Erasmus+ project results platform (for example, “well-being”, “mental health”, “physical health”, “healthy choices”, “problem solving”, “conflict resolution”, “collaboration”, “resilience”, “self-worth”, “empathy”, “compassion”, “learners’ voices”, “social and emotional learning”, “sense of belonging”, “school climate”, “screen time”, “digital distraction”, “rest and play”, “nutrition”,

³ The **whole-school approach** acknowledges that schools, families, communities, authorities, etc. are distinct but connected systems, each having a set of relationships and mutual influences that impact the learner. The approach implies that when a school adopts some practice or intervention, it is implemented and sustained in every class and all environments of school, based on multi-disciplinarity. To do so, an active involvement and leadership of school administration, as well as common planning, collaboration and ongoing support to teachers are needed. The approach also implies a cross-sectoral approach and stronger cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders (social services, youth services, outreach care workers, psychologists, nurses, speech and language therapists, career guidance specialists, local authorities, NGOs, business, unions, volunteers, etc.) and the community at large, to deal with complex issues that schools do not (and cannot) have the relevant expertise for.

⁴ **WHO (2014)⁴** : “a dynamic state where children and young people realise their own abilities, learn to cope with common stresses of life, to develop a positive sense of identity and the ability to manage thoughts and emotions, to build social relationships, and to acquire an education that fosters active citizenship”. From this perspective, the term “well-being” can be interchangeably used with “positive mental health”. “Ill mental health” on the other hand intervenes when one experiences mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, behavioural problems, self-harm, substance misuse, conduct or eating disorders.

“anxiety”, “depression”, “addiction”, “bullying”, “cyber-bullying”, “violence at school”, “working with parents”, etc.). The topics linked to the innovation characteristics listed in the evaluation grid may also serve as potential ‘key words’.

4.3 Award criteria: the innovation characteristics

The EITA will be awarded based on the following criteria. Each criterion should be assessed on a scale from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent):

Methodologies used	<p>In what ways are the teaching and learning approaches elaborated and implemented in the project innovative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidisciplinary approaches • Key competence development (knowledge, skills and attitudes) and assessment (formative assessment) • Linking formal, non-formal and informal learning • Inclusion, participation, cooperation • Learners’ active role in the learning process • Cooperation with external stakeholders
Innovation environments	<p>In what ways do learning environments involved in the project support innovative teaching and learning approaches?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools as enablers of innovation⁵ • Building a positive school climate⁶ • Sustainable use of available resources • A whole school approach • Cross-sectoral cooperation (in particular with health care, social services, justice, etc)
Teachers’ role	<p>In what ways do teachers/educators involved in the project influence the innovative teaching and learning processes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers’ agency as innovators • Teachers’ well-being • Teachers’ competences • Teachers’ cooperation and peer learning
Impact and outputs	<p>What is the impact of the innovative teaching and learning processes elaborated and implemented in the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct impact on the project target groups • Inclusion of participants with fewer opportunities • Spill-over effect (to other students, teachers, schools, local communities and parents)

⁵ In relation to well-being and mental health, this would imply, for example, placing the focus on integrated school strategies that address well-being as a core objective of education, next to academic achievement, and as part of everyday school practices. Such strategies would also imply a stronger cooperation with the outside community, and a wide range of actors, professionals and parents / caregivers.

⁶ See article as an example: [The school climate has not been affected by global warming | ESEP \(europa.eu\)](https://www.eusep.eu/en/2020/05/20/the-school-climate-has-not-been-affected-by-global-warming/)

