



unite!

University Network for Innovation,
Technology and Engineering

Unite! Mission Statement 2035



“Now is the time to find new ways to work together for the common good. Our challenges are interconnected, across borders and all other divides. These challenges can only be addressed by an equally interconnected response.”

From: *Our Common Agenda* by António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations and alumnus of the Instituto Superior Técnico at the Universidade de Lisboa, 2021.

Our Mission

We, Unite!, a European Universities alliance of leading universities in science, technology and engineering, are highly motivated by this plea for action on the 75th anniversary of the United Nations made by António Guterres – an alumnus of a Unite! member university. In the context of accelerating geopolitical shifts, increasing global competition and growing technological dependencies, this statement remains highly relevant and timely. We are deeply committed to working together to help solve societal challenges through the twin digital and green transition.

The fundamental mission of Unite! is to:

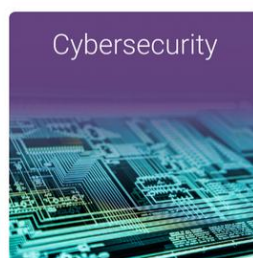
- **Educate future-oriented European and global citizens**, experts and leaders of the future with the skills, values and responsibility required to drive a sustainable and digital Europe
- **Advance excellence in education, research and innovation** by leveraging complementary strengths in science, technology and engineering
- **Strengthen Europe’s competitiveness**, preparedness and resilience by accelerating knowledge creation, transfer and valorisation
- **Provide an internationally attractive inter-university campus** for learning and research, with easily accessible joint offerings, shared and pooled resources, and efficient services, to actively attract and retain young talent in STEAM
- **Act as a model European University of innovation, technology and engineering** that contributes structurally to the European Education Area, the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area

Our Vision and Identity

Unite! is a strategic alliance of universities with a clear and distinctive profile. We are firmly anchored in the European core values, with a common vision and mutual trust, agile and dynamic, committed to sustained long-term and deep collaboration. We want to pave the way for excellence in research, innovation and education that is essential to meet the challenges of our age.

Unite! stands out:

- as a strong driving force for **technology and innovation** advancing the competitiveness of a green and digital Europe
- for **state-of-the-art learning opportunities** with challenge-based and student-centred learning, multidisciplinary STEAM approaches, and the use of smart digital technologies
- as a bustling and inclusive **science-tech community** that engages students as equal partners, encourages academics and staff to collaborate in education and research, and integrates industry, start-ups and innovators.
- through its **transformative, transdisciplinary STEAM approach**, combining engineering and science with the full breadth of expertise across its member universities.
- for its **distinctive focus areas**, namely Sustainable Energy, Artificial Intelligence, Industry 4.0, Cybersecurity, Space, Sustainable Cities & Water, Engineering Biology (incl. Biotechnology), and Entrepreneurship



Unite! Key Objectives 2035

Unite! aims to transform the collaboration between its member universities into an institutionalised, interoperable and sustainable alliance. By 2035 Unite! will have achieved the following key objectives:

1. Strategic alliance (*collaboration*)

Unite! stands out as a strategic alliance committed to **deep transnational collaboration, systemically embedded within its member universities** and delivering tangible impact on society, innovation, and competitiveness:

- a) Unite! further strengthens its governance and decision-making processes to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency, ensuring committed leadership, broad academic participation, strong student representation, and the highest quality of results.
- b) Unite! makes agile and programmatic allocations of shared resources to continuously support the formation of bottom-up communities of students, staff and academics, broad participation, and equal access to its offerings.
- c) Unite! is fully embedded into the institutional strategies of all member universities.
- d) Unite!'s impact is continuously disseminated at all Unite! universities and beyond and the Unite! brand is highly visible and attractive for students as well as academics.
- e) Unite provides an interoperable digital campus that supports compliant service processes, efficient management, innovative pedagogies and opportunities to access research infrastructure.
- f) Unite! has a clear and measurable impact on the European Education, Research and Higher Education Areas, with particular focus on the European Degrees, academic values, free circulation of knowledge, quality management, doctoral education and open science.

2. Innovative teaching and learning (*education*)

Unite! educates **highly qualified future European and global experts**, as well as responsible citizens, by equipping them with key skills for the digital and green transitions through **innovative learning and teaching opportunities** across all academic levels.

- a) Unite! ensures that every student at its member universities has the opportunity to benefit from alliance's offerings.
- b) Unite! guarantees recognition of its offerings, with mobility windows that facilitate and incentivise student mobility.
- c) Unite! delivers high-quality joint programmes that are deeply and sustainably embedded across its member universities.
- d) Unite! develops flexible learning pathways and joint degrees that actively support the implementation of a European Degree framework.
- e) Unite! offers innovative pedagogies and a broad range of multidisciplinary and challenge-based learning opportunities, including new forms of AI-driven education, the effective use of digital technologies and a STEAM approach.

3. Excellence in Science (*research*)

Unite! shares academic **excellence in its established focus areas** and exploits institutional synergies, by continuously stimulating **alliance-wide research collaborations**.

- a) Unite! shares a culture of excellence across researchers and research managers of its member universities and ecosystems.
- b) Unite! supports established and new bottom-up research collaborations that address societal challenges, strengthen European competitiveness, and advance key technologies across STEAM disciplines.
- c) Unite! promotes a dynamic Unite! Doctoral Education Community across all Unite! universities, firmly integrated in the alliance's research and innovation activities.
- d) Unite! attracts and retains global talent in research and provides a platform for open exchange, and the free circulation of ideas.
- e) Unite! supports the career paths of early career researchers by offering unique opportunities for collaboration and professional development, while ensuring gender equality, inclusiveness, and reformed research assessment.
- f) Unite! widely shares its research infrastructures and ensures access across its member universities.
- g) Unite! promotes open and fair science as a standard throughout the alliance.

4. Knowledge valorisation and upskilling (*innovation*)

Unite! contributes to **Europe's preparedness and competitiveness**, by maximising its knowledge valorisation capacities – combining and intertwining its local **innovation ecosystems**, strong industry partnerships and entrepreneurship in Unite!

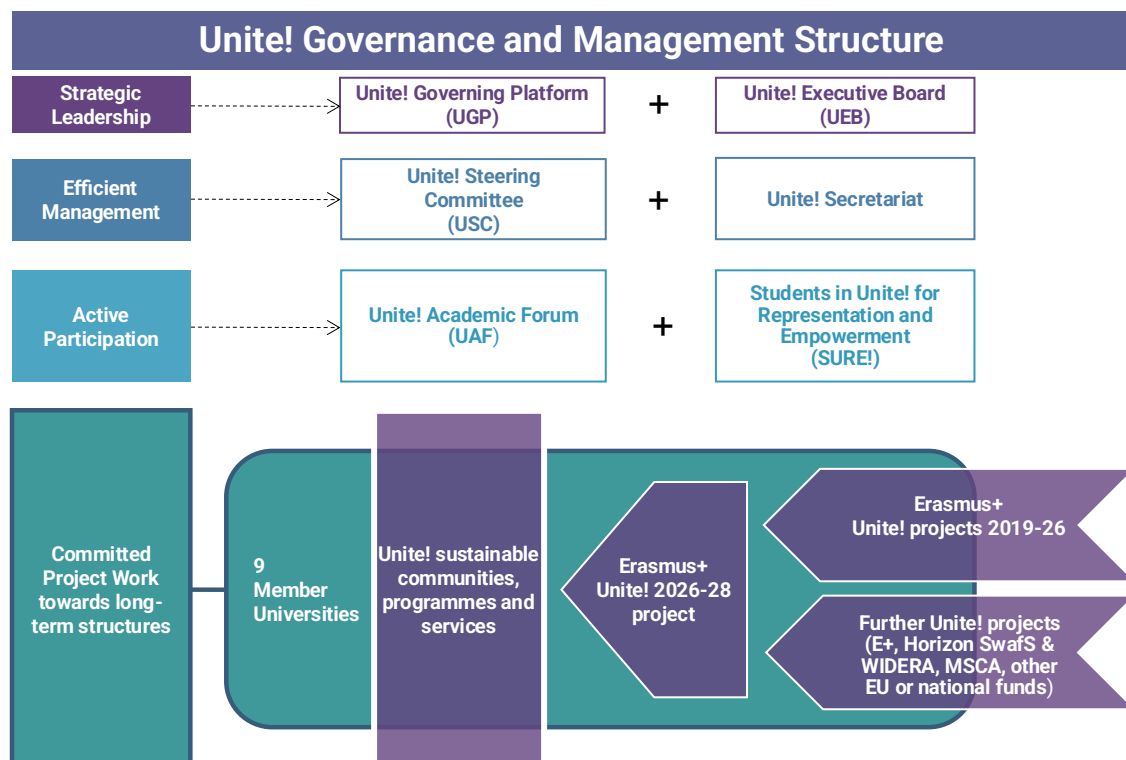
- a) Unite! boosts innovative ideas through strengthened academia-business collaborations and a vibrant, productive open innovation community, culminating in a joint Unite! innovation ecosystem.
- b) Unite! accelerates startup creation and access to the single European market by interconnected technology transfer offices and start-up support units.
- c) Unite! upskills and reskills the workforce with the competencies Europe needs to enhance competitiveness, prosperity and societal well-being, while upholding European values.

Annex A: Existing Key Structural Elements to Realise the Unite! Mission Statement 2035

The following five already well-established structural elements enable the alliance to scale up and mainstream its activities, deliver sustainable impact and turn the long-term vision for 2035 into reality:

1. **Governance and management** that interconnects strategic leadership with the active participation of students, staff and academics, while ensuring institutional alignment of strategic goals through efficient management, transparent decision-making and committed project work.
2. A **quality and impact management** framework that ensures the alignment of objectives and activities, supports evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement, building on robust data and systematic impact assessment.
3. **Seed funding** to empower students' initiatives, support the creation of joint educational offers and initiate long-term research collaborations within the Unite! focus areas.
4. A **European inter-university campus** supported by inter-university teams, easy access to opportunities for students, faculty and staff, aligned digital infrastructures, and robust cross-national regulatory frameworks, enabling lean and efficient sharing of education and research resources.
5. An effectively managed **communication, dissemination, and outreach** strategy, built around a strong and visible brand, targeted internal and external communication, and active collaboration with regional innovation ecosystems and the European Higher Education and Research Area.

1. Governance and Management



Since 2019, Unite! has established bodies and procedures which ensure responsibility, representation and effectiveness in its governance and management:

- The **Unite! Governing Platform**, comprised of the rectors and presidents of all member universities, together with the elected **Unite! Executive Board** – including the Unite! President and two Unite! Vice-Presidents – provides accountable leadership of the alliance and ensures the institutional alignment of strategic goals.
- The **Unite! Steering Committee** – comprised of the Key Liaisons Officers from the member universities and chaired by the Unite! Secretary General – and the **Unite! Secretariat** are responsible for the efficient operational management of the alliance activities.
- The **Unite! Academic Forum** brings together academic, student and staff representatives from all member universities to ensure active participation and to provide input for further development of the alliance. The Forum includes two dedicated committees that support the initiation of Unite! collaborations in education and research, respectively. Students are further represented through the **Unite! Student Forum SURE!**, giving the student perspective a central role in the alliance governance.
- The numerous **Unite! working groups and project teams**, particularly those involved in the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe projects, are key drivers of the alliance’s development in education, research and innovation, thereby building long-term operational structures in Unite!

In general, Unite! actively engages students as equal partners in the co-creation and implementation of alliance activities. Student involvement is realised through representation in Unite! governing bodies, active participation in Unite! working groups, and targeted support for student-driven initiatives, notably via the Unite! Seed Funding line for “Student Activities.” All these efforts are coordinated and supported by **Unite! Student Liaison Officers** at each member university, who serve as well-established and dedicated point of contact for student involvement and activities.

2. Quality Management and Impact Assessment

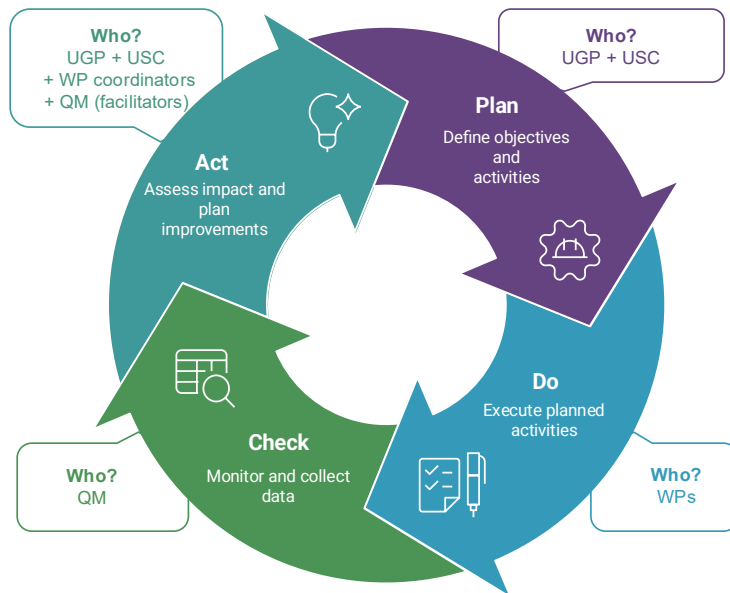
Unite! has designed its quality management to:

- Systematically **link strategic long-term goals, key objectives, and individual activities** across Unite!
- **Support decision-making and continuous improvement** by adjusting activities and strategies based on evidence and lessons learned
- **Focus on impact** by enabling the structured assessment of outcomes and added value, beyond mere output and activity reporting
- **Measure, communicate, and maximise the impact** of the alliance by tracking outcomes, benefits, and added value for learners, staff, institutions, and the European Higher Education and Research Areas
- Contribute to the evolving quality management practices of European Universities

The principles of Unite! quality management:

- Link Unite! strategy and activities through the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) approach, with a strong focus on monitoring results and assessing impact

- Build on and integrate the existing quality management instruments of the member universities



3. Seed Funding

Unite! advances its dedicated Seed Funding in three areas, each with specific objectives:

<p>Student Activities</p>	<p>Teaching & Learning</p>	<p>Research & PhD</p>
<p>Unite! Seed Fund for Students</p> <p>Partner up with another student, shape your idea, and fund a joint initiative.</p>	<p>Unite! Seed Fund for Teachers</p> <p>We support a variety of creative and impactful teaching projects.</p>	<p>Unite! Seed Fund for Researchers</p> <p>Explore, develop and secure extra funding within the Unite! alliance.</p>

1) Student Activities¹

- Empower students to implement original ideas for transnational collaboration and exchange
- Build durable links between student communities across the member universities, thereby structurally embedding sustainable student mobility

2) Teaching & Learning²

- Create new collaborative educational offers with a long-term perspective, significantly enhancing students' skills and employability
- Strengthen institutional integration and academic curricula alignment across member universities, particularly in the Unite! focus areas
- Enhance sustainable student mobility and high-quality innovative learning experiences

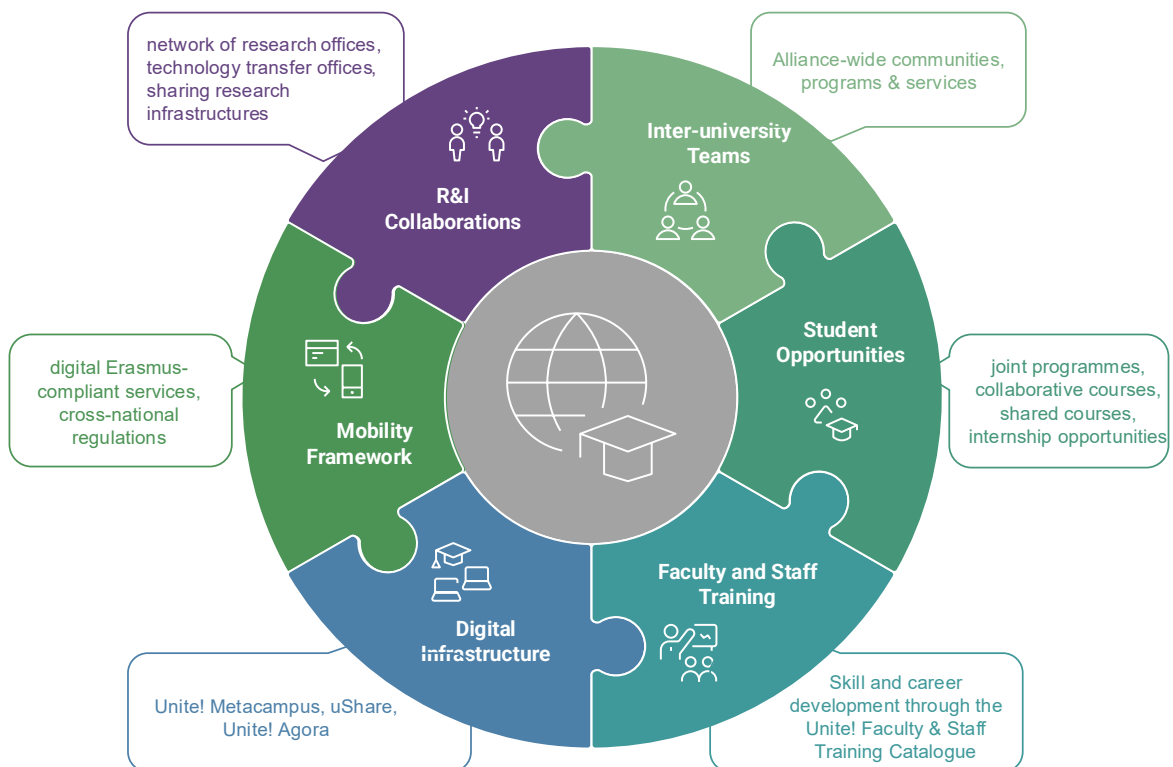
¹ Funding line planned to be co-financed by Erasmus+ grant and members' own contribution.

² Funding line planned to be financed by Erasmus+ grant.

3) Research & PhD³

- Initiate and consolidate long-term research collaborations in the Unite! focus areas
- Raise additional funds from Horizon Europe and other EU and national sources for follow-up projects
- Strengthen structured cooperation in PhD education and early career researcher development

4. European Inter-University Campus



Unite! has built up a multilingual, virtual, physical, and blended inter-university campus that enables lean and efficient sharing of educational and research resources, comprising:

- **Inter-university teams** that have been developed into sustainable alliance-wide communities, programmes and services, stemming from the numerous Unite! project teams.
- A wide range of **academic and extracurricular opportunities for students**, including joint programmes, collaborative courses, shared courses, and internship opportunities – visible and easily accessible through the **Unite! Catalogue for Students**.
- An **annual training programme for faculty and staff**, including staff weeks and online courses focused on skills development, language learning, and broader career development topics – visible and easily accessible through the **Unite! Faculty and Staff Training Catalogue**.
- **Digital infrastructures**, including the tailor-made learning management system Unite! Metacampus, the project repository uShare, the centralised hub Unite! Agora as well as platforms providing access to educational resources and research infrastructures.

³ Funding line planned to be financed exclusively by the members' own contribution.

- Efficient, digital **Erasmus-compliant services** and robust **cross-national regulations** that support multilingualism and multiculturalism, enable **seamless mobility** for students, faculty, and staff, and promote greener travel options
- **A well-established framework for excellent R&I collaborations** through a sustained network of research support offices, research infrastructure managers, research data managers, and Technology Transfer Offices – initiated under the Unite! H2020 SwafS project and further advanced through the Unite! Widening project, exploiting strong synergies with the Unite! Seed Fund and the Unite! Doctoral School.

5. Communication, Dissemination and Outreach

Since 2019, Unite! has established an effective strategy and management procedures towards communication, dissemination and outreach. This includes:

- Targeted and comprehensive **internal and external communication**, ensuring broad dissemination of Unite! opportunities, achievements, and identity via the Unite! website, institutional Unite! webpages, and Instagram and LinkedIn channels, coordinated by the **Unite! Strategic Communication Team**.
- A highly visible and **attractive brand** for students and academics with a corporate design
- Strong **contributions to the European Higher Education and Research Area** and to European policy initiatives, often in collaboration with other European University alliances through FOREU4ALL, alongside active support for the EUC-Voices initiative to strengthen the voice of European students toward the European Parliament.
- Targeted **Outreach activities with regional stakeholders**, including the Unite! Associated Partners, with the aim to leverage impact and attract support for our activities.
- Impact on **knowledge valorisation through the Unite! Open Innovation Community**, bringing together technology transfer offices, incubators, start-ups and regional ecosystem partners to co-create innovations supporting the twin digital and green transition.



Annex B: Unite! Facts and Figures

The nine Unite! member universities have combined

- **284,935 students** (2024)
- **78 Double/Dual/Joint Programmes** ongoing among the Unite! members (2025)
- **39.551 graduates** per year (2024, without PhD)
- **2.500 PhD graduates** per year (2024)
- **265 ERC grants** awarded (2019 -2024)
- **577 start-ups** founded within the last five years (2019 -2024)

Unite! key achievements 2019 - 2025

- **Two additional full member universities** included (from autumn 2022) – Wroclaw University of Science and Technology, and Graz University of Technology – ensuring a balanced geographical inclusion of Europe
- Successful **joint applications** for **5 Erasmus+ projects**, **5 Horizon projects** (SwafS, Widening, 2 MSCA, and DUT), **1 Digital Europe project**, and **3 Erasmus Mundus Joint Master programmes**
- **62 Joint Programmes currently running**, with 5 more (under development) to be launched in 2026, including 15 in Unite! focus areas
- **56 virtual language and cultural competences courses offered** to students from all nine universities by the Unite! Multilingual and Multicultural Training Centre as part of its 2025 programme
- **Innovative interdisciplinary challenge-based project courses** for students from all current nine universities (TUDa-Inspired 2020-21, ULisboa-ULISSES running annually since 2021; U!Train running annually since 2024; the same applies to the Unite! Research School that includes challenge-based courses)
- **87 projects funded through the Unite! Seed Fund** in the funding lines of Teaching & Learning, Student Activities and Research & PhD. The Teaching & Funding line led to 21 courses running since 2023/24. 5 consortia initiated by the Seed Fund successfully secured external funding.
- Delivered **135 seminars and training for faculty and staff** (2020–25), including 16 for Early Career Researchers and 45 for teachers.
- **Visiting Guest Professorship** hosted annually at one member university since 2025, expanding to two additional members in 2026. In 2025, four professors visited TUDa; across 2025/2026, the total reached eleven.
- **14 Unite! Dialogues** took place as bi-annual meetings of the Unite! communities and governing bodies since 2019, with an average attendance of more than 250 participants per Dialogue, along with 2 Unite! Branding events, the first at UPC in 2021 with 200 participants, and the second at TUDa with 474 participants.
- **A pilot alliance for quality management** (together with three more alliances) in the EUNIQ project to develop a comprehensive quality assurance of European Universities (2020-2021).
- **Unite! Metacampus** established as an interactive digital teaching and learning platform (Learning Management System) for Unite! joint and shared courses, events, and initiatives, e.g. for the Unite! Research School, Unite! Virtual Education Summit etc.

- **Adapting quickly to the pandemic: Virtual exchange credit programme (VECP)** in Energy and Architectural Engineering: 68 courses offered (2020-2026).
- **Dynamic Unite! Research and PhD Community** established in the Unite! Doctoral School and 2 MSCA projects (MSCA Energy and MSCA CRITERIA) and Unite! Research Schools running annually since 2024 with 190-200 participants each year
- **A Unite! Open Innovation Ecosystem** involving more than 60 partners from local ecosystems.

Institutional agreements among the Unite! members

- From the CLUSTER-network (concluded before 2019):
 - Agreement on Automatic Mutual Recognition of Degrees
 - Dual Master Framework Agreement
 - Dual Doctorate Framework Agreement
- New Unite! agreements since 2019:
 - Unite! Charter (signed 1 Nov 2019 by rectors and presidents of Unite! members)
 - Unite! Charter on Inclusion and Diversity (Unite! Governing Platform approval 8 March 2021)
 - Unite! Criteria for Joint Master Programmes (Governing Platform approval 8 March 2021)
 - Statutes of Unite! e.V. (Unite! Governing Platform approval and signature by rectors and presidents of Unite! members 8 Oct 2025) – founding document of a Unite! legal entity under German law
- Frameworks
 - Framework Agreement for Digital Courses and Virtual Exchange (signed 30 Sept 2021 by all Unite! members)
 - Quality Management Manual (Unite! Governing Platform approval 29 Nov 2021)
 - Framework for Unite! Internships (February 2021)
 - Unite! Framework Agreement for Flexible Education Offerings (signed December 2023)
 - Framework Agreement for a Unite! cotutelle partnership (April 2024)
 - Unite! Researchers Development Framework (URDF) guide is designed to assist researchers in planning and achieving their professional development goals (May 2024)
- Toolkits
 - Joint Educational Offering Online Toolkit – a practical resource designed for academic and administrative staff involved in developing and running joint educational activities
 - Unite! Career Guide for Young Researchers, a practical toolkit with strategies, exercises, and tips to reflect, plan, and shape your career
 - Impact Toolkit – a practical tool to identify, plan, and assess impact activities and results, strengthen an impact-oriented culture focused on medium- and long-term transformative effects, and support effective communication