

**Erasmus+ Programme – Collaborative Partnership**

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# SumHEIs



**METROPOLITAN COLLEGE**  
CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



**SAPIENZA**  
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA



## DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES – SUMHEIS WHITE PAPER

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## Introduction: Summer Schools' Role, Context and Challenges

**Summer schools** generally refer to "*a course of lectures held during school and university summer [or winter - authors' note] vacations, taken as part of an academic course or as an independent course of study for professional or personal purposes*"<sup>1</sup>. Those programs can be offered and sponsored by schools or private organisations. Summer or winter schools in the context of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are arranged, on the one hand, for students to remedy credits, to move quickly towards a degree, to gain knowledge on specific subjects in addition to what is studied during the regular courses or to improve a foreign language (this last case usually encompasses social activities). On the other hand, endorsed experts give seminars, presentations, or classes on advanced topics in a research/knowledge field to professors, teachers, students (usually postgraduate) and other professional workers who want to increase their knowledge and improve their skills. In both cases, they are addressed to a national and international audience and may require the payment of a fee.

Those activities usually occur during vacation periods, and, despite the word 'summer' in the terminology, summer school can also take place during winter holidays (and are called winter schools). In this text we use the wording summer school since it is more used in common language, referring to courses offered both in winter and summer.

The reasons for attending a summer school are very broad. The main one is usually the improvement of specific hard skills. However, the development of soft skills, as well as the benefits deriving from the social aspects (e.g. networking, friendships, collaborations, etc.), play a remarkable role when a participant decides whether to attend or not a summer school. Also, more generic aspects like travelling, CV upgrading, collecting new ideas (e.g. teaching skills and methods), don't need to be ignored into the economy of someone deciding to attend.

Summer schools play a crucial role in the HEIs system, although it may tend to be overlooked in the educational discourse. For example, one often ignored aspect concerning how universities or research institutions and organisations can increase students, associates, and members recruitment is through summer schools. In fact, studying internationally, especially for an undergraduate or postgraduate degree, can be a tricky and challenging prospect. Short-term programs, instead, allow prospective applicants to experience a new place and a new method of teaching in a comfortable, fixed-term setting, without the pressure of starting an entire degree. This is an excellent way to get involved and exposed to university culture and to promote university campus, without the strict deadlines and commitment required by a normal University program.

In general, the reasons for an institution to organise a summer school can be manifold. This kind of program can contribute to the prestige of the institution, of the staff organising it, and of the teachers who give classes. There might be also financial considerations. The organizing institution can make some profit, and the teachers might receive a financial reward for their work. Networking can be an important reason also for the organising institution and teachers: summer schools offer the perspective of engaging in talks with other experts and academics, which can end up in the building of new collaborations. Summer schools also provide very suitable context to experiment new teaching and learning methods. This because there are few experienced students, and the whole atmosphere could be suitable also for applying new and non-traditional teaching methods. Furthermore, the discussions and interaction with expert students can serve as an inspiration for teachers as well. Finally, in the context of the European Union, summer schools can be an effective starting point for young people to gain global competencies (as defined by PISA - OECD Education 2030 Framework) and get to know Europe and European culture and identity.

However, despite being of crucial importance into the HEIs "ecosystem", summer schools paradoxically still appear to be "more an art than a science". Often, in fact, Summer schools' organisers are left deal with

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.lexico.com/definition/summer\\_school](https://www.lexico.com/definition/summer_school)



their tasks based on their experience, intuition and ability. There is a general lack of guidelines, coordination, standards and norms. There aren't communication best practices or recognised communication platforms or framework. It's difficult to contact the desired target groups and to get to know what are their specific interests (e.g. what are the specific educational demands? what's the best type of accommodation? Ideal and competitive fee range?). Yet, a common and shared definition of summer school is missing! As well is missing knowledge about what can be successful or what are the meaningful indicators<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, information and feedback don't seem to be shared between different institutions, making it hard for organisers to construct summer schools based on previous experiences. Therefore, a compelling question arises from such state of the art: how can we expect summer schools to fulfil such an important role if organisers aren't provided with adequate support?

## SumHEIs: Supporting to Summer Schools' Development

**SumHeis** project aims to fill this knowledge gap. It recognises that summer schools' organisers cannot rely just on their skills and common sense if they want to be robust, competitive and sustainable in the long-term.

SumHEIS stands for "Summer School Development Programme for European HEIs", and it is a project funded under the Erasmus+ framework (project ID: 2019-1-IT02-KA203-062984). It explicitly focuses on bettering the quality of support and services to the staff that delivers Summer Schools and to the audiences that are involved. This translates in increasing the number and the quality of Summer Schools offered by European HEIs, in training staff on how to design, develop, operate and manage summer school programmes, in providing material and guidance mechanism for HEIs that aim at establishing such programmes for the first time and form synergies and common summer school programmes among HEIs. The project's main challenge is to design a "Model" Summer School Office as an innovative and prototype tool for the development of a successful summer school to be used by HEIs. The project is expected to last 36 months from 01-09-2019 to 31-08-2022 and involves seven European partners from four different countries (more details on consortium partners are provided in the following section – SumHEIs Project Consortium).

The consortium line of action starts with the definition of three core priorities that the group found essential to address. Those priorities then helped to develop five goals which in turn lead to the identification of nine practical results SumHEIs expects to deliver.

The three **priorities** just mentioned are the following: (i) **open educational and innovative practices in a digital area**; (ii) **internationalisation promotion**; and (iii) **tackling skills gap and mismatches**.

The first refers to the fact that summer schools are, by design, an innovative approach to education, as they are credited as short-course programmes with a strong international perspective hosted by HEIs and other institutions or organisations providing intense training. There is then the need to ensure that more institutions will have the capacity to implement such programmes in the future and to do so they must be provided with the base for developing skills and competencies for effectively running summer schools as innovative educational and pedagogical procedures. In this sense, SumHEIs aims to construct simple and scalable services, guidelines, and methods to be offered online (to make increase accessibility and usability). The material will be open source and collected into a single online platform to allow any HEIs to use it for their summer schools initiatives.

The second, the internationalisation promotion, refers to the importance of the international aspect in the

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<sup>2</sup> What is a successful summer school? The one in which participants at the end are happy for the experience? The one in which participants are exhausted at the end given the hard work they did which will reward them in the future? Or a summer school in which all the seats are booked? It is unclear what precisely is a successful summer school because it is difficult to state what makes it successful



summer school field from many perspectives. The summer schools are an excellent ways to attract international participants and students. Indeed, they have the chance to witness the experience, culture and environment of hosting HEIs. These contexts can be an excellent opportunity for the HEIs to try to attract participants and students to their institutions. It can be one of the most effective first-hand promotional activities. The international aspect is also relevant to the participants' point of view. The opportunity of travelling, meeting people who usually they wouldn't meet, intercultural dialogue is highly evaluated along with the educational event. Given those premises, SumHEIs aims to build upon the joint effort and the variety of experiences of the international consortium to create methodologies, guidelines, handbooks, best practices report, code of conduct and an Online Platform. Actions in this area not only will provide support for HEIs planning to arrange a summer school but also define standards and facilitate targeting potential audiences.

The third and last priority, tackling skills gap and mismatches, is engaged from two different perspectives: summer schools' organisers and participants. First, SumHeis focuses on academic and institutional staff skills and capacity acquisition. The project aims to do so through events and meetings with recognised experts in the relevant fields (e.g. logistics, communication, etc.). Moreover, the platform and services delivered will be a key element of upgrading their skills and increasing their capacity on the matter. For what concerns participants, summer schools' are de facto activities aiming to fill a skill gap. Consequently, well-run summer schools can fulfil this purpose better: they provide better services, and thus the learning experience can benefit from that. Moreover, this also translates in an improved capacity of targeting the right audience and therefore have a better match of "demand and supply". In the overall picture, this can contribute to having a more efficient system of skills development within European society.

Given such priority areas of actions, SumHEIs aims to the following five **goals**:

1. Increase the number of Summer Schools offered by European HEIs
2. Increase the quality of Summer Schools offered by European HEIs
3. Train staff on how to design, develop, operate and manage Summer School programs
4. Form material and guidance mechanisms for HEIs that aim at establishing such programs for the first time
5. Form synergies and common Summer School programs among HEIs

Which in turn are expected to be delivered through the following nine main **results** (achieved during and at the completion of the project):

1. Better delivery of services in existing Summer Schools
2. Development of new Summer Schools
3. Joint initiatives among HEIs and organisations in delivering Summer Schools
4. Academic and administrative staff are better equipped in designing, delivering, operating, managing and promoting Summer Schools in their HEIs
5. Deliverance of scalable solution for training staff in HEIs that do not run Summer Schools but aim to develop new initiatives on the field
6. Stronger internationalisation of HEIs through Summer School Programmes
7. New training opportunities for students, academics and administrative personnel
8. A comprehensive and detailed analysis of what benefits and impact Summer Schools bring to their institutions
9. Sharing of Good Practices in the area of Summer Schools

The detailed explanation of how those goals are going to unfold in practice is reported in Table 1 below.



Table 1. SumHeis Results

Goal	Description
Better deliverance of services in existing Summer Schools	We are going to examine what are the key weaknesses of existing Summer School Programmes, deliver concrete, easy-to-use, and scalable solutions to be used by HEIs in training their staff on delivering improved services. Personnel will use the newly acquired skills for updating and modernising their programmes in an efficient and accurate way.
Development of new Summer Schools	HEIs and organisations that currently do not run such programmes face numerous barriers and challenges on entering this market. Our project offers them a simple, well-thought and structured pathway and guidance on beginning new initiatives, with a scalable and accessible solution.
Joint initiatives among HEIs and organisations in delivering Summer Schools	This result can occur both within the partnership and with the use of the e-Platform forum, multiplier events and communication campaign that will bridge institutions and organisations with similar ambitions and goals
Academic and administrative staff are better equipped in designing, delivering, operating, managing and promoting Summer Schools in their HEIs	This is guaranteed through the TNA using DACUM, development of training material and Model Summer School Office together with the Intense training programme that will last for 5 days and make the staff involved, experts on the field of Summer Schools. At the same time, personnel from all across Europe will have free access to the deliverables and platform produced, to train themselves.
Deliverance of scalable solution for training staff in HEIs that do not run Summer Schools but aim to develop new initiatives on the field	We have dedicated a whole Intellectual Output focused on design, development and piloting of an online platform where we are going to upload all research-related documents, details regarding our methodologies and practices and training material for academic and administrative staff of Universities and organisations interesting in running Summer Schools.
Stronger internationalisation of HEIs through Summer School Programmes	Summer Schools attract international students and audiences, together with guest speakers and trainers from abroad. The establishment of new programmes will <b>increase international mobility and participation</b> . Such events are an excellent opportunity for HEIs to



	attract international students in their full programmes and diversify their pool of undergraduate and postgraduate students.
New training opportunities for students, academics and administrative personnel	The increased supply of Summer School programmes will provide new learning opportunities for a diverse audience interested in a very diverse pool of topics and fields of study. However, apart from students that will be in position of selecting from a larger variety of options, staff and academics will also be able to get involved in a greater number of such programmes and benefit from their implementation
A comprehensive and detailed analysis of what benefits and impact Summer Schools bring to their institutions	There are numerous researches and publications that describe the benefits of specific Summer Schools, but the innovation of our project is that it delivers an all-European approach on Summer Schools analysing their impact on different education environments, institutions and thematic, offering the most detailed analysis of the field in terms of European HEIs participation.
Sharing of Good Practices in the area of Summer Schools	The project will be a database of good practices for Summer School issues. This will include methodologies and solutions identified and presented during the development of courses and educational material together with new efforts and initiatives by successful participants and members of the SumHEIs community





Finally, SumHEIs project workflow has been structured accordingly to those goals and expected results. It is structured around four main **Intellectual Outputs** (IOs), and it will include the implementation of one Training Activity in Italy and four Multiplier Events in each of the participants partners' countries.

#### SWOT Analysis on Summer School Programmes in HEIs

- Desk Research on Summer Schools
- Best practices research
- Handbook on Summer School Development

#### Development of Capacity-building Programme for Academic & Administrative Staff on Summer School Programmes

- Training Needs Analysis
- Open Educational Resources
- Design and Delivery of Code of Conduct

#### Design and Development of Summer School Office

- Services for Procedural and Functional Improvement of Summer School Programmes
- Design of a "Model Summer School Office"
- Development of a Summer School Communication Strategy for HEIs

#### Design and Development of the Summer School Development Open Educational Platform

- Design of the Summer School Open Educational Platform
- Development of the Summer School Open Educational Platform
- Pilot-testing and fine tuning of the Open Educational Platform

**Figure 1.** SumHEIs Intellectual Outputs

In the first stage, SumHEIs aims to construct a best practices guide alongside an analysis of the market potential and best marketing actions. In respect of these lasts, SumHEIs aims to study in depth what are and which are the most used and effective communication strategies and campaigns that a summer school organiser can adopt. Generally, the project intends to address the lack of guidance in the set-up of a summer school by establishing for the first time commonly shared principles and tools for the acquisition of skills and competencies relevant to this task.

Then, as abovementioned, SumHEIs is planning to create an exclusive online mechanism that will provide support, solutions and guidance for staff & academics willing to get involved, kick-off, develop, update and restructure Summer School services provided by their institutions. The platform's accessibility (open resource), its availability in English as well as its detailed and intense dissemination campaign, combined with the broad geographic distribution of the partnership, will offer a pathway to increase the outreach within a large demographic pool. To the best of our knowledge, no such scalable and easily accessible service exists for such a specialised activity. Moreover, as it erases all barriers regarding infrastructure and geographic limitations and as it is a cloud-based and digitally-driven service, it is expected to support a larger number of organisations than it would be with traditional means. The guidelines are complementary to the platform and vice-versa.

These particular specifics are expected to increase the engagement of direct beneficiaries with the project, which are institutions and summer schools organisers. However, given such improved system of summer schools, this project envisions to contribute and benefit a wider range of secondary beneficiaries: students missing credits, students with learning difficulties, gifted students, practitioners, experts, academics, curios people, etc. All who desires to spend some time in deepening a specific knowledge or some abilities.

In conclusion, SumHEIs is a results-driven project, which aims to adopt an innovative approach that focuses into bettering the quality of support and services to the staff that delivers Summer Schools and



audiences that take part in them. Ultimately, the project is directed to attempt to reshape a common European approach on how to set up a Summer School.

## SumHEIs Project Consortium

To achieve such a task, each partner of the consortium brings its own experience and expertise on the issue.

**Sapienza Università di Roma** - was founded in 1303 by Pope Boniface VIII, Sapienza University of Rome is one of the largest universities in Europe. The Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, Sapienza University of Rome embraces of five different Scientific-Disciplinary Sectors belonging to Economics and Business Sciences areas. Based on an integrated and multidisciplinary approach, it carries out teaching, scientific research, applied research, postgraduate/managerial training, and Third Mission in the following macro-areas: Business management; Banks and finance; Commodity study. The Department promotes a continuous exchange with national and international realities of the academic community developing strong relationships with the productive world, as well as with the Institutions, to operate in harmony with its own needs, enhancing skills and culture of young talents. In the awareness of the value of intellectual and cultural networking, the research activities carried out by the members of the Department are also carried out in collaboration with professors and researchers from other Italian and foreign universities, and disseminated to stakeholders to share inspiring principles, strategic guidelines and general objectives. In this perspective, the Department promotes the mobility of its professors through visiting programs (in and out) in international universities; the appeal of Department members, PhD students and fellows for international research and higher education networks.

**Metropolitan College (AMC)** is a constitutive member of AKMI Educational Organization, the largest private postsecondary educational group in Greece (more than 14.000 students nationwide). AMC is one of the first private colleges in Greece (since 1982) and the college with the widest range of fields of study, while being the largest UK TNE provider in Greece. All courses are specially designed to meet the demands of modern students and to facilitate their entry into the Greek and international job market. AMC is accredited by the British Accreditation Council [BAC] as an independent institution offering higher education, and all academic degrees are recognised by NARIC. AMC is established as an institution of educational excellence, as it cooperates with distinguished state UK Universities. It also employs highly experienced academic staff, with continuous training by the collaborating universities. All services offered meet the standards of the Quality Assurance Agency of the UK. Student Support Services provided, include Counselling Centre, Academic Learning Centre, Dietetic Office, Learning Difficulties Support Centre, Career Office (links with the industry, annual Career Days). AMC collaborates with the University of East London, Queen Margaret University, University of Portsmouth and Solent University. AMC has a strong Corporate Responsibility Culture.

**Latvijas Universitate** - the University of Latvia (UL) - with more than 15 000 students enrolled in the 150 different study programmes, 13 faculties and 20 research institutes is one of the largest and leading universities in the Baltic States that concentrates on four main areas: humanities, natural sciences, social sciences and education sciences. The only higher education institution from Latvia ranked in the QS Top Universities ranking. UL is especially proud that its degree of internationalisation has been recognised as high in several rankings, such as QS Top Universities, Multirank, Interfax ranking. UL pays great attention to the development of international collaboration and supports different schemes of mobility. At present, the UL has signed 200 bilateral agreements with universities around the world, more than 800 Erasmus+ agreements with universities in programme countries and 29 agreements with universities in partner countries. The UL is also active, as a coordinator and a project partner, in initiating and participating in ERASMUS+ projects, Erasmus Mundus and other EU and non-EU funded projects (Horizon2020, Interreg, etc.). The proposed project will be carried out by the Centre for European and Transition Studies (CETS) in close cooperation with other relevant structures – UL International Office and others. CETS is UL structure since 2000 engaged in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, teaching activities and project implementation on different European and external relation issues. The Centre also hosts EC Jean Monnet projects since 2001 including Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence (since 2011), Jean Monnet Ad Personam (since 2013), Mari Currie Centre of Excellence (2006-2009) and European Studies Master Programme (2011-2018).

**National University of Maynooth** is located 20 miles (30 Kilometres) west of Dublin city in the Republic of Ireland is a fast-growing young university with a rich 250 history from the St. Patrick's College catholic Pontifical University set up during Irelands colonial past. The last two decades have seen Maynooth University grow rapidly in scale and stature to 13,000 students and extensive research activities. The university is a wonderful place to learn, the teaching is excellent, and is delivered by leading international researchers who are committed and connect to their students. The Department of Adult and Community Education (DACE) established in 1975, is the only academic department that specialises in adult education in Ireland. DACE is at the forefront of teaching, training, research and development in, for and of learning for adults. DACE believes education is a fundamental human right, and, collaborative critical adult education has the power to transform individuals and change society for the better.

**University of Pavia-** Founded in 1361, the University of Pavia (UNIPV) is one of the world's oldest academic institutions. The University of Pavia features in a number of international rankings: Unipv is particularly competitive in the fields of Linguistics, Engineering, Pharmacy, Life Science and Medicine. As highlighted by the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2019 it ranks among the top 35 in the world in Classics & Ancient History and top 151-200 in Engineering & Technology, Pharmacy and Linguistics. Today over 24,000 students, from both Italy and overseas, study at our university. The University of Pavia is composed of 18 departments offering study programmes in all subject areas and at all levels-from Bachelor's degrees to PhDs. Close attention is paid to each student by our 900 professors and researchers. With a wide variety of both academic and social opportunities, including a strong tradition of international exchanges, Pavia is the ideal place to study.

**University of West Attika (UNIWA)** is the third largest of HEI in Greece. Over 50,000 students attend undergraduate and postgraduate programs provided by 27 Departments and taught by teaching staff committed to maintaining the highest standards in education. UNIWA is a dynamic and constantly evolving institution that strives to fulfill its vision and mission, and to achieve its goals investing in the development of modern teaching methods, adapted to students' needs and responsive to competitive labor market and society requirements, as well as in its modern facilities and infrastructure (i.e. teaching resources, classrooms, laboratories/workshops, scientific equipment). UniWA applies EN ISO 9001:2008 and its academic units have successfully undergone external International evaluation organised by the Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (HQAA). UniWA is currently acting as the coordinating organisation of the "ICT for Learning, Education and Training" committee of the Hellenic Standardisation Organisation (ELOT) and represents Greece to the European standardisation activities of the CEN Technical Committees 353 and 428. It has been the coordinating organisation for the production of the European Learner Mobility (ELM) Achievement Information (15981 EuroLMAI) European Norm, and a key contributor to the 15982 Metadata for Learning Opportunities (MLO) European Norm.

**SYDIC** is the Italian chapter of the System Dynamics society. System Dynamics is a modelling and simulation methodology used to describe and analyse complex systems. Its members are representing knowledge and competencies from Management & Social Sciences to Engineering and Natural Sciences. SYDIC is currently deeply involved in disseminating and promoting the uptake of Systems Thinking & System Dynamics at various levels, from the Primary and Secondary education, to the development of such competencies in youngsters and adults in managing positions. Furthermore, SYDIC strives to stimulate the interchange of learning and research in related areas and to promote and develop educational programs related to the System Dynamics methodology. To achieve the goal, the society employs the experience and expertise of people in Modeling and Simulation with a particular focus on Education and Training.

## Communication

Website: <https://sumheis-project.eu/>

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