GO DIJIP | Integrating Digital Collaborative Environments into Joint Programmes

HANDBOOK and POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

PART 2

Integrating digital elements into Joint Programmes

A guide for practitioners

Glossary

Blended learning: A model combining face-to-face classroom teaching and the innovative use of ICT technologies. Experts often associate blended learning with the redesign of the educational environment and the learning experience, thus contributing to the creation of a "community of inquiry"[1].

Blended Mobility: combination of physical mobility with a virtual component, aimed at facilitating collaborative online learning and teamwork. The virtual component can be used to prepare students for physical mobility, or it can be used after physical mobility, to deepen cultural learning, or it can even take place during the physical mobility to directly enhance some aspects of it[2].

iOOCs: Interactive Open Online Courses, combining content presented in a similar format to MOOCs, with an interactive component which includes weekly synchronous discussion sessions in small groups with the support of a dialogue facilitator, to encourage intercultural communication[3].

Joint programme: the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes defines a 'joint programme' as 'an integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions (HEIs) from EHEA countries, and leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree'. This is the most official definition of a joint programme, although clearly a joint programme can be offered by institutions from different countries, whether or not (some of) these institutions are located within or outside of the EHEA[4].

Joint degree: the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes defines a 'joint degree' as 'a single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme'.[5]

Double / multiple degrees: the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes defines 'double or multiple degrees' as 'separate degrees awarded by HEIs offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme (if two degrees are awarded by two institutions, this is a 'double degree')'.[6]

MOOC: MOOC stands for massive open online course. Massive, as there is generally no participation limit, thousands can enrol for the same course. Open, as it is accessible to a large audience of learners: the hosting institution usually does not require any formal entry requirement and the course is free of charge. The whole course is delivered online, including assessment and additional services (even though personal contact with other participants or tutors is a possibility).

Online degree programmes: A degree programme, which the student attends fully or predominantly online.

Virtual mobility: Educational practices that allow students from one educational institution to follow courses organised at a different institution (usually based in a different country) without having to leave home. The focus of Virtual Mobility is to provide subject knowledge by taking advantage

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[1] Source: https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/digihe%20new%20version.pdf
[2] Source: https://frames-project.eu/outputs/toolkit/
[3] Source: https://frames-project.eu/outputs/toolkit/
[4] Source: https://impea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Joint-Programmes-from-A-to-Z-Report-2020.pdf
[5] Source: https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/definitions/
[6] Source: https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/definitions/

ofcomplementary expertise, and does not require the student to interact with peers from the host institution[7].

Virtual exchange: Virtual Exchange (VE) is a practice that consists of sustained, technology-enabled, people-to-people online exchange sessions in which constructive communication and interaction take place with the support of educators or facilitators

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[7] Source: https://frames-project.eu/outputs/toolkit/

Develop & innovate your programme

This section presents possible ways of **integrating digitally enhanced teaching and learning into JP development**. It will explore different levels of integration, from promoting the use of digital tools and innovative pedagogies in 'traditional JPs' up to developing fully blended JPs.

Blended Learning is a model combining face-to-face classroom teaching and the innovative use of ICT technologies. As often remarked, blended learning may include a broad range of different approaches that may differ considerably between institutions and disciplines. Levels of sophistication may also differ, regarding learning design and its underlying pedagogical approaches, ranging from recorded lectures providing flexibility for students, and teachers, to a thoroughly designed curriculum, balancing not only physical and virtual presence, but also synchronous and asynchronous work, with aligned assessments. As technologies improve and become more accessible, and institutional experience and capacity is growing and more widespread, this is likely to generate new and more differentiated formats and concepts.

Integrating blended learning in traditional JPs

Below are some examples of possible integrations of blended learning into 'traditional JPs' (i.e. JPs with physical mobility involved). In these cases, academics would <u>not</u> need to design a fully new JP but they can innovate an existing JP with some smaller changes and integrations.

Digital tools for teaching & learning

Many tools are available to make teaching more fluid and efficient when a blended learning approach is desired. They help learners achieve the learning objectives set by teachers and stimulate the interaction within students and between students and teachers. In order for digital tools to be effective, it is essential that they:
- are integrated in a reasoned and appropriate way into the course plan
- are sufficiently mastered by both academics and students
- represent an added value to the course and allow for a student-centred learning environment, facilitating interaction and collaboration.

Moreover, remember that for online learning to be successful and enjoyable, participants need to be supported through a structured developmental process. Several models and methodologies, such as Gilly Salmon's 5 stage model, can be found in the GO-DIJIP training resources and can support you in using digital tools in your JP.

You can find a list of available digital tools for teaching&learning that can be used in JPs, along with a set of recommendations and 'golden rules' for their usage, in the JPROV Toolbox. They have also been mapped and analysed by other Erasmus+ projects & initiatives, including the DigiFoodEdu project, in which APT is a partner.

Another interesting practice explored by some GO-DIJIP partners is the use of digital tools for **training and lab activities** using digital platforms able to create an **immersive environment** through 360° media and a VR headset (ex: UpTale a platform to design, distribute, monitor and manage training modules in 360° and virtual reality). Immersive modules allow to design fully virtual training course or can be used only in a very first phase of the training i.e. for safety onboarding. Immersing students/trainees in a virtual immersive environment allows them to be exposed to the lab environment/workstation and can be used as a preparatory module (e.g. for the explanation of

safety protocols) but also to simulate dangerous situations/errors and demonstrate how to deal with and solve them in a safe environment.

Pros: easy to integrate, provided that academic staff is adequately trained to integrate the innovative use of ICT technologies in their courses.

Cons: multiplying platforms and tools may lead to students cognitive overload so it is very important to design a digital strategy that envisages the use of a set of digital tools designed to meet the different teaching needs while avoiding each teacher using different tools for the same purposes.

Case studies: GO-DIJIP Video Testimonials

MOOCs and iOOCs

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are courses delivered online. The focus of these is primarily on content delivery – they are mostly based on recorded video lectures and learning materials. Interactive Open Online Courses (iOOCs) combine content presented in a similar format to MOOCs, with an interactive component which includes weekly synchronous discussion sessions in small groups with the support of a dialogue facilitator.

Pros: MOOC is easy to integrate if it's already available; if the MOOC is open to external participants, it could also serve as a good marketing tool for the entire JP. iOOCs stimulates interaction and intercultural communication. If iOOCs are open to students from other institutions, they encourage the exchange between students from different fields, countries, etc.

Cons: although many MOOCs have a forum component and encourage students to interact, the interaction is not sustained and is optional. iOOCs might be more difficult to develop and/or take more time, unless the JP would like to opt for ready-made iOOCs offered by external organisations.

Virtual Mobility

Virtual Mobility refers to students and academics who study or teach for a short period at another institution outside their own country, without physically leaving their home. JPs can integrate virtual mobility of both students and academics in their curricula, by e.g. (1) including one course, intensive programme, summer/winter school, or one full semester entirely taught online by one of the partner institutions (students would thus stay in their home institution or in another consortium institution of their choice while attending online courses). (2) involving visiting professors from other institutions (part or not part of the consortium) through online participation.

Pros: it limits physical travel, thereby being potentially more inclusive and environmentally friendly. It offers students the possibility to experience learning / teaching approaches from different institutions (even if not physically moving to that institution). In JPs it is often used for joint intensive programmes. Finally, it does not necessarily require a pre-existing agreement between institutions (e.g. students from a JP could attend online courses offered by another institution outside the consortium – without pre-existing agreements – if this is considered to add value to the programme).

Cons: student-to-student interaction is limited; intercultural communication and experience is not directly stimulated, unless interactive activities, online dialogue, etc are facilitated (using e.g. the Virtual Exchange methodology mentioned below).

Case studies: On-line pre master foundation programme at the University of L'Aquila; FIPDes on-line pre-Master courses in intercultural communication and local language

Virtual Exchange projects[14]

Virtual Exchange (VE) is a practice that consists of sustained, technology-enabled, people-to-people online exchange sessions in which constructive communication and interaction take place with the support of educators or facilitators. VE projects are educational programmes that include:

- an element of collaboration and exchange between participants
- a focus not only on content learning, but also on the development of transversal skills
- intended learning objectives like intercultural communication and digital literacies

VE may take different forms, more specifically it can be either a **ready-made** or a **teacher-designed programmes**. In ready-made programmes, pedagogical experts from external educational providers have developed Virtual Exchanges which other institutions can join. These programmes are distinguished from other forms of online education by the online synchronous exchanges between students led by trained facilitators. During weekly 'live' sessions, the students meet in small groups to discuss different topics - often around global issues – with peers from a variety of geographical and cultural backgrounds and engage in interactive tasks and collaborative assignments. The advantage of this type of VE is the limited time investment for the institution, as the VE has been carefully planned and designed by professional providers in the field, thus ensuring high quality.

In Teacher-designed projects, educators in HEIs develop a project with one or more partners in a different country/various countries, to integrate a more international and intercultural perspective into their courses, thus maintaining full control over the contents and duration of the programme. The VE can be developed in any discipline and subject area, and can be transdisciplinary. This enables the students and teachers to acquire different perspectives on their subject while learning to collaborate with their international peers through the use of ICT. Synchronous online sessions ensure discussion among peers with the help of qualified facilitators. This kind of VE will of course require higher time investment for the institution, especially in the very initial setup stage.

What is interesting about VE is that it can be used in multiple ways which offer great potential for JPs. Indeed, VE focuses on interaction between participants, inclusive and intercultural collaboration, dialogue and mutual understanding, which are all central aspects for JPs. The VE methodology has proven to work as a synergistic and complementary component of physical exchange programmes, showing that it can prepare, deepen, and extend physical exchanges.

Looking at potential VE scenarios available for HEIs[15], possible ways of integrating VEs in JPs include:

- **Virtual Exchange as a preparatory or follow-up activity to physical mobility.** VE can offer high quality preparation for physical mobility, ensuring that students make the most of their stay abroad and reflect on their international experience. It could be offered before the start of the JP, focusing on language & intercultural communication. Alternatively, it could be offered as an Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (thereby also potentially benefiting from dedicated funding).
- **Virtual Exchange as an intertwined component of physical mobility**. In this case, the VE activities are intrinsically linked with the physical mobility experience in a single educational experience, as a part of a specific initiative (for example a winter or summer school, a final conference, or also - but not necessarily - while students are abroad). In JPs it could help diversify the student body participating in a physical mobility exchange, by including students who are unable to travel for longer periods of time.

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[14] The following paragraph is adapted from the *FRAMES Toolkit for Integrating Virtual Exchange in Higher Education*, p. 9-19. https://frames-project.eu/outputs/toolkit/

[15] For further reference, see the Scenarios for the integration of Virtual Exchange in Higher Education. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5573614

- **Virtual Exchange as a component of a course**. This type of VE is used to support the course learning objectives and to give an international dimension to the course. By doing so, it could help ensure joint elements for the JP (joint teaching and learning) and interaction between students studying at different partner universities of the JP (if the cohort is not moving all together).

For detailed information on how to integrate VE in your curriculum, please refer to the FRAMES Toolkit.

Pros: VE can offer a more inclusive approach to internationalisation by allowing students who would not take part in a (long-term) physical mobility programme the opportunity to have an international experience as part of their university studies, and acquire essential transversal skills, such as the ability to work in culturally diverse settings. It can therefore be considered a complementary component of a physical mobility exchange. Moreover, VE fits very well in the context of wider projects/networks which can design an educational component specifically suited to their needs in the long term.

Cons: VE has proven to be successful in innovating the educational experience of students in various settings. However, its success is strictly linked to careful planning since the very beginning, so as to overcome major challenges such as accreditation or sustainability. Sustainability of VE, especially when the VE is combined with a physical mobility as a preparation or intertwined component of the mobility, heavily depends on the willingness and ability of the participating institutions to invest in the project with staff hours and – in some cases – the hosting of the physical mobility. Lack of resources and funding to implement the physical mobility component can therefore hinder the implementation of a VE activity.

Case study: Preparing students for a physical mobility through Virtual Exchange e-Tandem at the University of Padua

Developing new blended JPs

As described above, blended learning can be integrated in multiple ways in existing and/or 'traditional' JPs. However, it can also be a core component of new JPs, leading to the development of fully blended study programmes.

HEIs' experience in this regard is still very limited, with only a few examples of such innovative programmes being developed within European University Alliances or new Erasmus Mundus Masters. There is, however, potential for growth of blended JPs, considering important social and economic factors such as inclusion, environmental sustainability, finances and costs, etc. Below you can find some possible examples & scenarios of blended joint programmes proposed both by the GO-DIJIP and JPROV projects.

Staff mobility instead of student mobility

Such a model favours staff mobility for 1 or 2 semesters, instead of student mobility. Students thus stay at their 'home institutions' but can benefit from classes offered by academics from different institutions from the consortium.
Pros: it doesn't require physical travel for students, thereby it's more inclusive and environmentally friendly. It offers students the possibility to experience teaching approaches from different institutions even if not physically moving to that institution, thus also contributing to 'internationalisation at home'.
Cons: students-teacher interaction may be limited if not adequately stimulated.

Embedded Virtual Mobility: see Virtual Mobility paragraph.

Embedded Virtual Exchange throughout the duration of the programme

Students attend lectures (face-to-face) in one of the consortium universities and connect to the other campuses online throughout the degree programme duration. Group work and interaction between students is a key element for the entire duration of the programme.
Pros: it allows a high level of interaction between students physically located at different HEIs, maintaining team spirit among them.
Cons: it might be difficult to develop as it requires a high level of organisation and integration between partners universities to be successfully implemented. Moreover students only have a limited intercultural experience (with no direct experience of the foreign country/city/language/culture).

Hybrid JP

This model allows students to follow the programme both fully locally (following online classes offered by other institutions part of the consortium) and following a mobility track between two or more different study places.
Pros: It ensures full access to students that cannot be mobile for different reasons, while at the same time guaranteeing the physical mobility experience to those who would like to experience it.

Cons: imply the delivery of all corses in a hybrid mode in order for the courses to be available for both students in presence and on-line.

Case study for the above scenarios: The CHARM-EU joint masters in Global Challenges for sustainability: a description of digital interactions in teaching and learning

Below are two further scenarios analysed by the JPROV project in its [Toolbox](#).

JOINT PROGRAMMES with no physical mobility

A) **JP with residence at one university only**: two degree-issuing universities could offer a joint programme with residence at only one university plus a virtual mobility only at another university. No interaction between students from different institutions is foreseen.

Figure 1 *JP with residence at one university only*

B) **Entirely online JP**: two degree-issuing universities offer a fully online JP (one year of virtual mobility at one university plus one year of virtual mobility at another university). No interaction between students from different institutions is foreseen.
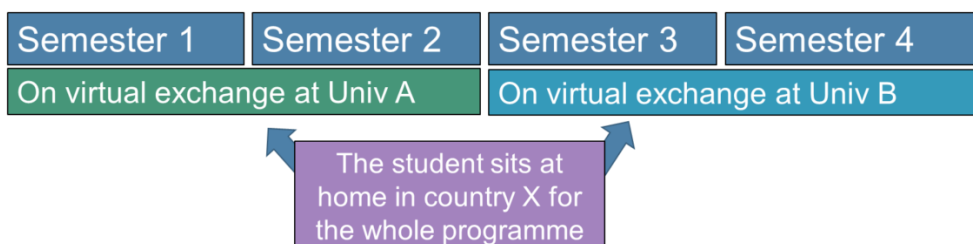
Figure 2 *Entirely online JP*

Lessons learnt and key recommendations

Surveys carried out among teachers, students, and staff reveal an essential element: distance learning needs to be made more explicit in terms of learning outcomes, work instructions, methodological approaches, etc. A formalisation of these elements through written guidelines and /or videos (explaining how to use the available digital tools, and practical and pedagogical recommendations…) is needed to frame and inform teachers and students before the course starts. This is particularly relevant when it comes to JPs, as students are exposed to different teaching environments (being the "nature" of JPs of being delivered by two or more institutions). If students have to use multiple digital tools offered by the various institutions of the consortium the risk is for them to feel overwhelmed and not motivated.

It is therefore very important to provide students and teachers with clear instructions and guidelines and to give room for reflection: group works, peer reviews, tutoring, surveys with room for comments, office hours.

Dos

- give clear instructions
- carefully select the most appropriate digital tool according to the teaching activity
- use immersive tools (e. g. virtual tour of a laboratory, a museum …)
- build short sessions punctuated by reflective breaks (where the work can be done independently)
- alternating phases of group work with one-on-one or solo moments
- find time to check what happens outside the academic field
- keep blended activities while in face to face
- be interactive
- archiving every document between versions as we build the project
- testing equipment and apps before the course

Donts

- too many students in the same group
- too long sessions
- having too much workload
- avoid preserving social links between students
- multiplying platforms and tools (risk of students cognitive overload!)
- organise synchronous sessions without taking into account the time difference

Main stakeholders

When integrating digital elements into JPs and/or when developing new blended JPs, it is essential to get in touch and collaborate with different offices at your institutions in order to both support academics in the process, and guide students through a new academic setting. Key stakeholders to be involved may include:

- Academic Affairs / Teaching Development Office
- Quality assurance office
- Digital Learning / Teaching Support Centre
- International Relations Office
- IT services

Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Offices play a key role when designing a new programme (including a blended JP), making sure that institutional and national requirements are met. International Relations offices are usually responsible for overseeing the negotiations of international partnership agreements, including JP agreements, and can also support you in finding possible sources of funding (internal & external) for your JP. Digital Learning / Teaching Support Centres, on their hand, can ensure that they new programme is innovative and forward-looking: digitalization is about supporting the development of students and academics and guide them according to their roles, needs and ability to move into some challenging areas such as: students' learning autonomy, teachers' pedagogical adaptability, teaching and learning situations based on the nex technologies, etc. An important figure in these transformations is the pedagogical engineer (also referred to as 'instructional designer') who guides teachers in the creation of innovative pedagogical scenarios and devices. Finally, consider involving IT staff: they will be invaluable in defining equipment requirements, anticipating the difficulties associated with the security systems of the institutions, making users aware of the rules for using data and helping them to find a technical solution even at the most difficult times.

As it is clear from the previous paragraphs, the development of JPs is a complex and collective process, requiring collaboration and input by different stakeholders. Failure to do so could result in not respecting institutional/national requirements, lack of accreditation, poor quality of the programme, poor student satisfaction, etc. Remember that your students are the first ambassadors of your programme and the quality of JPs is key!

Resources

Below you can find a compilation of useful tools and resources to support your JP development:

- **GO-DIJIP Amplifier Platform:** developed by the GO-DIJIP project, Amplifier is a blog set up to share practical examples collected among JP coordinators, students, administrators of how digital interaction is introduced in a variety of JPs and courses. https://amplifier.w.uib.no/go-dijip/

- **GO-DIJIP Virtual Staff Training Course:** https://www.unipd.it/en/online-staff-training-course-go-dijip

- **JPROV Digital Toolbox**: collection of useful digital tools for JPs put together by the JPROV project: https://learningtoolbox.aalto.fi/build-your-digital-course/

- **FRAMES Toolkit for Integrating Virtual Exchange in Higher Education**. It provides key information, inspiration, tools and case examples of the approaches that HEIs can take to integrate and accredit VE. https://frames-project.eu/outputs/toolkit/

- **Joint Programmes from A to Z A reference guide for practitioners**. The aim of the guide is to provide an updated and integrated practical reference guide for practitioners on all aspects that need to be taken into account when developing and managing joint programmes with one or more partners in another country. The guide is relevant for all joint programmes, whether or not they are funded by Erasmus Mundus. The main focus is on bachelor and master levels, since joint doctoral programmes are less structured. https://impea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Joint-Programmes-from-A-to-Z-Report-2020.pdf

Market your programme

After having designed and structured a Joint programme, how can you effectively promote it in order to attract valuable applicants?

Generally, promoting a product implies the development of a marketing strategy. JPs need to be promoted in order to be successful and attract excellent students. Most JP are aimed at an international audience and consequently JP consortia face a rising competition in the global education market to attract talented students.

Designing marketing strategies is particularly complex and its implementation requires human and financial resources. JPs might have a budget allocated for marketing activities (as in the case of some Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes): then it is possible to pay a consultant or hire a marketing expert and design a proper marketing strategy using on-line portals, educational consultants, international fairs, etc. Often, however, JPs have limited financial resources and the project manager (if any) or even the academic coordinator is expected to perform marketing activities. In this scenario, it is fundamental to change the perspective, shifting from the concept of marketing strategies – that need many human and financial resources in order to be developed and implemented – to the concept of *marketing by strategy*.

Marketing by strategy

The value proposition

How to stand out in a crowded HE market? **Marketing BY strategy** means marketing strategically and marketing strategically a JP is essential to keep the focus on the **'product'** – the JP itself – before considering the tools to reach out a specific audience.

JPs are, by definition, jointly delivered by two or more international HEIs and this is already an added value compared to "traditional" programmes – not jointly delivered. The jointness is at the foundation of any JP and precisely this jointness is key to design the value proposition of a JP. How this jointness is declined and how the collaboration and partnerships are conceived affect the **value proposition** of the programme.

The partnership is, usually, what is more valuable for a JP. With this respect, it is essential to communicate the **additional value** of that specific partnership in terms of pedagogical outputs, student experience, employability opportunities, etc. Answering the following questions might help in defining the value proposition of a JP:

- Which are the peculiar features of your programme? How is it 'unique'?
- Which is the added value delivered by your partnership? *i.e. complementarity of the educational offers, international perspective, partnership's prestige, partnership's scientific collaboration, professional orientation…*
- How will attending the programme improve the students' knowledge and their career opportunities?

Securing value, a valuable programme and a valuable student experience is key for an effective promotion of JPs. Nevertheless, the beneficiary of this experience and the tools to reach out its beneficiaries are similarly key for a successful promotion.

The audience

The proposition value must also be defined in function of a specific **target audience**. Who are we creating value for? This is an incredibly important question. An excellent JP, outstanding partners and a well conceived proposition value are not useful if there is not anyone who is potentially interested in this JP. With this respect, it is important to understand that a JP's audience is multidimensional. On one side, the programme must be disciplinarily appealing. It can be a niche programme or a mainstream programme, but in the end it must have its own audience in certain countries, with a specific age, background, interests, etc. Useful recommendations for target group definitions can be found in the Guide to Developing International Student Personas by Studyportals.

Any effort to promote a JP must take into consideration the features of its audience. But besides the 'physical' features of the audience, it is important to understand that the process of attracting students requires different actions in different stages of the process. In other words, the audience is changing across time and specific actions are required to make the audience do the next move towards the enrolment in a JP.

Digital Marketing: design your tools in function of your audience

As already mentioned, the audience is changing across time. Consequently, different initiatives to promote a JP can have different purposes in different moments. A JP needs to be visible, positively evaluated, encouraging the submission of an application and the eventual acceptance of an admission offer. The table below presents different digital tools that can be used during the typical journey of an applicant.

Interest ➤ **Search** ➤ **Evaluation** ➤ **Application** ➤ **Acceptance**

NOT DEFINED	Website/webpage	User-oriented application process		
	Thematic Online Portals			
	Social Media Adv	Webinar/Open Day	CRM	Social Media Contents
	Google Adv	Brochures		
	Educational Fairs	Landing Pages		
		Social Media Contents		

Figure 3 *Digital and hybrid tools for Marketing purposes*

A JP must be visible

A JP can be visible to prospective students with different tools.

The **Website** is still the main shop window of any JP and it is surfed by both internal and external prospective students, regardless of whether the JP has a dedicated website or only a web page within the partner universities website. A good website must be mobile-responsive and allow interested visitors to move from the home page to the applications' page in maximum three clicks.

In addition, if the JP target audience are international students, you should consider investing some budget to promote it via other channels with an international outreach.

Thematic online portals are online platforms particularly effective in enabling prospective students to search for HE options from institutions around the world. The costs may vary a lot (from a few hundred Euros/year to thousands Euros/year for the most important portals).

Similarly, **social media adv/Google adv** such as paid ads/messages/videos on social media platforms (e.g., FB, Twitter, YouTube) can be helpful to reach out to prospective students.

Finally yet importantly, **educational fairs** - organised by many providers worldwide - are effective to foster the meeting with prospective students. The students participating in these fairs have been usually pre-screened by the organiser based on their interest in your area of study/level of study. Fairs are run by either public or private organisers and attendance fees can vary consistently. Participation in these fairs may, however, be difficult for JP with a low budget.

A JP must be appealing to its audience

Besides being visible, a JP must attract students either by having a simple application process or by presenting itself effectively and convincingly.

A **user-oriented application process** is per se very supportive in attracting students. Prospective students should be able to create an online personal area within the JP application platform. In this personal area the application process should be displayed step-by-step, allowing prospects to pass to the further step only once the previous one has been satisfied. Students-coordinator communication might also be managed within the personal area, as well as the whole evaluation process. Nevertheless, how a JP is presenting itself to its audience is even more important, thus a simple, easy-to-navigate, and user-friendly programme website is key for later success.

Webinar/Open Days can be organised both *in loco* (for internal audience) or online - as webinar - for international prospects. They are usually very appreciated by prospective students as they give the chance to meet JP professors and get a deeper insight on the main academic features of the programme. Alumni and current students may also be involved to share their experiences and act as testimonials. The administrative staff can also answer questions on the application procedure.

More traditional **brochures** can show the information prospective students actively look for, such as entry requirements, scholarships available, rankings, how to apply and relative deadlines. They can be downloaded directly from the JP website. Social media contents showcased via Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok or Linkedin are particularly effective to give students a sense of what the JP is about or of what is taught or of what students will experience.

Social media contents might include informative content, infographics, live video, and events. They play a big part in the decision-making process of many prospects, especially when it comes to enrol in a JP, when prospective students need to be engaged. Being appealing is key when a student is evaluating the programme, when a student is considering applying for a programme and finally when a student is deciding to accept an eventual admission offer. Keep social media alive, updated, and relevant for prospective students may be challenging and very time-consuming if a

communication manager is not in place. For this, current students and alumni can be a great asset, as explained in the chapter Engage your students.

Case study: Social networks management for sustainable territorial development and climate change adaptation

The contents

Digital tools should present contents relevant to the JP's prospective students. The JP can present its or its proposition value, but its biggest asset in showcasing its qualities is represented by its students or alumni.

In most cases, JPs require at least one compulsory mobility abroad, often more. Therefore, the decision of attending a JP normally implies choosing not only an academic specialisation, but also a lifestyle, and it is perceived as a deeply personal decision. Potential students want to feel that they can envision themselves studying – and even living – in the partner institutions for a period. Providing students with clear information on mobility arrangements, administrative procedures, support services offered by partners etc. is certainly important, but is it enough?

Often, faced with the mass of information, prospective students may feel disoriented and even frightened. For this, peer feedback is core. Students trust students and they are looking for proof that the created expectations will be matched.

In this scenario, the **most valuable resources are the stories of the current JP students or alumni**. Successful alumni are the best proof that the degree obtained is paying off as far as the entrance in the job market is concerned. Hence, asking successful alumni to play the testimonial role when presenting the academic offer abroad can be a winning move. They can be easily engaged as Ambassadors and their stories can be spread all over the world thanks to social media, websites, on-line platforms etc…

Go to the next chapter Engage your students for some hints about how to effectively engage your students and alumni and/or make the most from existing students and alumni associations.

Lessons learnt & key recommendations

- The best marketers are those ones selling a good product.
- The EXTERNAL market is BIG; do not waste money to reach people that you cannot reach.
- The INTERNAL market is SMALL; do not create programmes for students who are not there.

Main stakeholders

When promoting a JP, the Coordinator or the Project manager can interact and rely on the following stakeholders:

- Marketing & Communication Offices/Divisions
- IROs
- External service providers
- Academic Staff
- Students/Alumni

Either performing promotional activities or acting as testimonials, they can all provide a valuable contribution to successfully promote a JP.

Resources

Below you can find a compilation of useful tools and resources to support you in marketing JP:

- **GO-DIJIP Amplifier Platform:** https://amplifier.w.uib.no/category/admin-home/

- **88 Ways to recruit international students**. The aim of the guide is to provide a compendium of international student recruitment techniques elaborated by Intead. It makes reference to the US market, but the tactics, services and tools can all be used in any region around the world. https://unicollaborationtraining.org/pluginfile.php/24960/mod_resource/content/5/88%20ways%20to%20recruit%20students.pdf

- **EAIE Blog on marketing & recruitment:** https://www.eaie.org/blog/category/marketing-recruitment.html

- **Digital Marketing Solutions for Education Institutions**. The 2023 edition of the HEM eBook would help HEIs navigating the world of education marketing, providing relevant insights and practical tools to advance current and digital student recruitment strategy.
- https://381672.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/381672/HEM%20LPs/eBooks/HEM_eBook_2023.pdf?__hstc=104785823.b4807e2c7dd45511cb0cd36aa5adfb04.1675158132043.1675158132043.1675158132043.1&__hssc=104785823.3.1675158132043&__hsfp=1257453241&hsCtaTracking=853c4ca8-2d99-4c65-a08f-0469ff43d5aa%7C93a35f95-1eb5-469a-94f8-77166e56ee75

- **Guide to Developing International Student Personas**. The aim of the guide developed by Studyportals is to help revisiting the student persona, which lays the foundation for the majority of the marketing activities: from targeting to messaging to value proposition. https://studyportals.com/student-recruitment/international-student-persona-canvas/

Engage your students

Engaging students and keeping them engaged with their programme will enhance everyone's experience, including the students, faculty as well as other staff involved in the programme. Engagement can be manifold, and often generating a sense of belonging can support the learning and overall experience of students. The following sessions will explore student engagement, its benefits on a global level and give ideas on how to initially engage and keep students engaged throughout and beyond their JP experience, considering the nature of a JP and keeping in mind mobility and other activities.

Rely on students

Engaging with students contributes highly to establish a safe and secure working environment. This allows students to learn and contribute and is specifically important in JPs which are often attended by very international groups of students and imply (in most cases) moving location and university throughout the programme. It should be kept in mind that engagement can happen at many levels, e.g. during the formal teaching activities, but also outside in a structured way, moving on to potentially self-organised student activities. These activities can, depending on the course setup, be physical, virtual or if needed hybrid.

Before addressing potential tools and suggestions, it shall be highlighted that dialogue is key to gauge the need and interest to engage students (pro-) actively. To do so, experience shows that relying on students themselves to identify the need to engage and explore possible engagement opportunities is key. On a higher level, University level surveys can be used to capture student's impressions and needs. More, JP specific internal surveys could be used, an open suggestion channel and/or engaging regularly with all students and/or a (elected) student representative.

Depending on the need and interest of engagement, this can be driven by different involved stakeholders. In many university environments, ongoing activities can be used and passed on to students, and course internal activities can be thought of. The latter can be organised either by the course leadership and/or by JP students themselves. By doing so students are being empowered to contribute to their own (JP) success story. Higher level structures can also be used for engagement, e.g., student and/or alumni associations, amongst others.

Creativity can enhance the engagement experience, which apart from physical can also be reflected online, e.g., via social media channels.

Digital Tools to promote students/alumni engagement

Tools can be manifold and include people as well as activity suggestions. As indicated previously, the JPs students are a great asset to rely and count on. Activities leading to engagement can either involve your students and/or be led by them.

A powerful tool for engagement is **community building**, which can be achieved e.g., on an individual basis, or involving a student group.

An example for a more individual approach can be a **mentoring or buddy programme**. Living the experience of a JP can be challenging. Establishing direct links amongst peers, e.g. 1st and 2nd year students, allows them to easily answer questions and give support where and when it is most needed. Creating a group of mentors composed by current (more senior) students or alumni who

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are available to new students is enriching at all levels. It could even be considered to have students self-organise the mentoring programme. The lead of the group might be motivated by developing leadership skills which are necessary for career development

Supporting and incentivising students to explore and engage in, not per se directly course related topics, can foster strong engagement and importantly also keeps students engaged. The following are projects which have shown to work successfully, leading to student engagement, and hence, a higher commitment to their JP.

- **Local get togethers**, e.g., including board game afternoons or cultural excursions (walks, theatre visits, …)
- Creating fun activities in order to increase the feeling of belonging.
- A **Cookbook** is a nice initiative, students can contribute with a recipe from their country (of origin) or a country they feel attached to. Students will love to see their recipe published in a book (or blogpost if that proves to be easier) that is accessible to many people. They will also feel proud about it and will distribute it among people they know.
- Creating a **Podcast** in which students talk about specific topics (these can be course related or more general/personal) required great teamwork. This activity increases the feeling of belonging since students are able to share testimonies which they might not have been able to share in the course context. Many inspiring stories can be the result of the activity which requires a number of different expertises.
- **Blog posts** or **social media take-overs** do not only empower your students to feel as an integral part of the course. Furthermore, such activities are one of the best ways to promote your course. The student's message is better received by prospective students and best suited to share their experience, including benefits and challenges of a course.
- Organising **informative sessions** from time to time in which your alumni share their experience will attract the attention of your audience in a good way. This is also a great way to show your alumni how you value them. Keeping engaged with them will also show your current students how you care and create a growing community amongst peers, allowing for exchange, and growing personal networks.
- **Joint event organisation**, e.g., a career fair, webinar series allows to engage with the local/JP community but also beyond.
- To engage and open up engagement towards the post-JP time **promotion of success stories** can be leveraged. This can serve to highlight how students have had great success in their career. This can be illustrated by e.g., showcasing their career path, and hence inspiring and motivating others (e.g., current and prospective students).

Overall, all the above-mentioned activities also give your students an opportunity for **professional development**, including public speaking, organisation, (project) management, use their energy and interest to together create engagement and keep it up.

Lessons learnt & key recommendations

Tackling and addressing engagement can seem daunting at first. Nevertheless, there is a lot of potential within. Trust your students to keep engaged and help them, if needed to think of engagement opportunities (see Digital Tools to promote students/alumni engagement). Students want to give back and belong – enhancing their learning experience.

It can be guaranteed that the time they invest into activities will be very well returned and also increase their learning experience and results.

Last but not least, we encourage you to **think outside the box**. It must not always be "you" carrying the burden to engage – engage with one and empower them to engage further/keep up momentum. Don't get stuck and trust your uniqueness to be able to engage and keep up the engagement. Incentivise, you will find the right students who are interested in and willing to contribute.

Main stakeholders

When it comes to engagement of students the main stakeholders are students, as well as alumni, potential future students as well as the university staff, including teaching and support staff.

Additionally, University structures, such as the international office, students support, or alumni association can contribute to fostering a sense of belonging. Local structures, amongst others, can be e.g., a student union and/or the University's Alumni Association (if it exists).

On a higher level, and specifically considering mobility and JPs the following might be of interest and can support and serve, both the course itself, as well as the individual students during their JP journey. Under the umbrella of the European Student Alumni Associations umbrella - ESAA the following organisations exist:

- Erasmus Mundus Student and Alumni Association EMA,
- Erasmus Student Network (ESN),
- garagErasmus,
- OCEANS network

Additionally, regional groups, such as:

- Western Balkans Alumni Association (WBAA)
- African Students and Alumni Forum (ASAF)

Resources

- **GO-DIJIP Amplifier Platform:** https://amplifier.w.uib.no/category/admin-home/

- **EAIE Blog on marketing & recruitment:**
https://www.eaie.org/blog/category/marketing-recruitment.html

DO IT YOURSELF!

Access GO-DIJIP training resources

The GO-DIJIP project has developed a comprehensive training course on how to best integrate digital tools in JP. **The course resources can be accessed for free at the following link:** https://www.unipd.it/en/online-staff-training-course-go-dijip

Course description

The course is designed for those who are interested in exploring how to successfully integrate digital environments and innovative pedagogies within JPs at their institutions. Participants develop an understanding of what VE entails, and of how a virtual dimension that focuses on intercultural learning and transversal skills can be successfully integrated into JPs. Participants gain experience in, and are asked to reflect upon, digital literacies through communicating and collaborating online via synchronous and asynchronous means, thereby getting a taste of VE with international colleagues first-hand. Finally, participants are encouraged to bring their own experiences into the training and work on potential opportunities for innovating their JPs at their institutions.

There are 5 Modules in the course, including a final module devoted to an overall discussion and deepening of topics dealt with in the previous modules:

* **BROADEN your digital skills** (led by the University of Bergen): virtual as an opportunity to re-design JPs (week 1)
* **EXPLORE innovative learning & teaching methodologies** (led by UNICollaboration): an introduction to VE (week 2)
* **MARKET JPs using digital tools** (led by the University of Padua and EMA): promoting JPs strategically and digitally (week 3)
* **INNOVATE your JP integrating digital environments** (led by AgroParisTech): good practice examples from EMJMDs (week 4)
* **WHAT will I bring back home?** (led by all partners): a reflection of what participants have learnt in the previous weeks (week 5)

Learning outcomes

By taking this course, participants:

* Understand how to organise online teaching, learning and cooperation according to acknowledged and reputable models.
* Are able to adapt their practices to online contexts by applying core learning design principles
* Understand how virtual collaborative opportunities can fit into JP activities/courses
* Understand how to organise the work so to design and cooperate efficiently with partners
* Understand the value of Intercultural Competences for JP students
* Understand how knowledge and skills can complement each other
* Understand the importance for JP students of being able to work in a virtual multidisciplinary and intercultural setting
* Understand how to strategically promote JPs using digital tools

Find out more about GO-DIJIP and the Virtual Staff Training Course by watching this video