

## DELIVERABLE No. 5.4

# Evaluation results of beta version staff mobility/mentoring programme and decision on adoption by SC

Version as of 06/12/2024

<b>Acronym</b>	EDUC
<b>Full Name</b>	European Digital UniverCity – The bridging alliance
<b>Grant Agreement No.</b>	101089535
<b>Programme</b>	ERASMUS-EDU-2022-EUR-UNIV-1
<b>Instrument</b>	European Universities Initiative
<b>Start date</b>	01/01/2023
<b>Duration</b>	48 months
<b>Deliverable No.</b>	5.4
<b>Document name</b>	D5.4 Evaluation results of beta version staff mobility/mentoring programme and decision on adoption by SC
<b>Work Package</b>	WP 5 EDUC Staff Development Agenda
<b>Task</b>	Task 5.2 Widen staff training including cross-partner mentoring and staff secondment
<b>Dissemination Level</b>	public
<b>Contractual Submission Date</b>	M24
<b>Actual Submission Date</b>	M24
<b>Name responsible Institution (task lead)</b>	USN
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:info@educ-alliance.eu">info@educ-alliance.eu</a>
<b>Abstract</b>	The Staff development report focuses on evaluation of the BETA version of Staff mentoring programme, which was rolled out in the Spring of 2024 and has been completed throughout the autumn 2024. It touches upon the 5.2 in general and gives a brief update on the staff language and staff mobility program additionally.
<b>Keywords</b>	Staff development, competence

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
1.1. Introduction .....	4
1.2. Programme guidelines .....	5
1.3. Evaluation methods.....	6
2. Evaluation of the Staff development programme .....	6
2.1. Staff mobility programme – 5.2.1. ....	6
2.2. Staff mentoring programme – 5.2.2.....	7
2.3 Staff language programme – 5.2.3 .....	11
3. Conclusion and further recommendations .....	14

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction

The EDUC Staff development programme is a 3-track-programme which offers a diverse set of formats to support staff mobility, cross-institutional mentoring as well as intercultural communication and language training. The programme is aimed at administrative staff and is ensuring networking and sharing of best practice among partners, as well as strengthening the internationalized and open workforce of EDUC as a truly European University.

The report describes briefly the guidelines for the three tracks before it evaluates the implementation of the pilot of the Mentoring program. Additionally, an update on the status of the Staff language program as per December 2024 and the Staff mobility program is also given, before the report gives a look ahead on the promising upcoming two years.

#### General findings:

There is a significant number of **Staff training weeks** being hosted throughout the year in the 8 institutions, recruiting staff members from EDUC, but the potential of participation is higher.

The **EDUC Staff Secondments** are being implemented according to the timeline; with 7 staff members from 6 EDUC institutions participating in staff secondments for spring 2025, and a second call for 2026.

The **EDUC Staff Mentoring programme** pilot has been tested and evaluated, with findings telling a story of success so far. A new call will be launched early 2025, with a roll-out of 64 expected participants.

The **EDUC Staff Language programme** has been successfully changed and updated since the pilot version in EDUC 1, and was rolled out in June 2024 with a huge interest from participants. There are still improvements to be made in the online intercultural communication course.

A brief look at the three tracks, with timeline  
The **EDUC Staff Mobility and Secondment Programme** aims at fostering exchange of staff members between EDUC partner universities to network, learn and better understand the professional context.

The **EDUC Staff Mentoring Programme** is based on a professional mentoring programme, designed to enhance organizational knowledge, professional skills and/or establish networking opportunities across the partner universities.

The **EDUC Staff Language Programme** aims to emphasize the intercultural dimension to foster understanding through language practicing among the eight different universities, via online training.

The program offers diverse mobility options like job shadowing under Erasmus Staff Mobility for Training and the participation to staff weeks as well as longer periods of staff secondment.

### 1.2. Programme guidelines

The programme guidelines were approved in the first quarter of 2024. The implementation of the pilots has had a tight schedule to adhere to:

<b>Staff training weeks</b>	Staff training weeks <u>2-5 days onsite training</u> , arranged individually by all EDUC institutions.	Continuously 2023-2026
<b>Staff secondments</b>	Secondments 2-6 months <u>physical mobility</u> across EDUC institutions	1 <sup>st</sup> call in 2024 - <u>PILOT</u> 1 <sup>st</sup> round of secondments - PILOT – Spring 2025 - <u>PILOT</u> 2 <sup>nd</sup> call in 2025 2 <sup>nd</sup> round of secondments Spring 2026
<b>Staff mentoring</b>	Mentoring programme 6 months, digital <u>activity</u> across EDUC institutions	1st call in 2024 – PILOT 1 <sup>st</sup> round of mentoring April-November 2024 – PILOT 2 <sup>nd</sup> call + 2 <sup>nd</sup> round in 2025 3 <sup>rd</sup> call + 3 <sup>rd</sup> round in 2026
<b>Staff language</b>	Online intercultural communication course; 4 weeks + 3 months of E-Tandem	1st call in 2024 – 1 <sup>st</sup> round of language progr May – October 2024 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> call + 2 <sup>nd</sup> round in 2025 (Jan-June) 3 <sup>rd</sup> call + 3 <sup>rd</sup> round in 2026 (Jan-June)

As 2024 is coming to an end, the current status is the following:

Staff training mobility	21 staff weeks 2023-24	7 institutions	40 participants with Erasmus+ staff mobility funding
Staff secondments	Call for positions and participants completed in 2024.	6 institutions will send staff members spring 2025	7 staff members will go
Staff mentoring	Call for participants completed in spring 2024. Pilot started in May.	11 mentors, 11 mentees from all institutions participated	
Staff language	Call completed in June 2024	70 participants completed the E-tandem. Noone completed the	

		intercultural comm course. 10 tutors from 7 universities were actively involved in the programme, providing support to the participants in their exchanges.	
--	--	---	--

### 1.3. Evaluation methods

For both the Staff Language Programme and the Staff Mentoring Programme, we evaluated the programmes through a survey. This survey was prepared by the task leader and shared with the task team to receive input.

The task lead distributed the survey to the participants via email, providing them with a response window of two to three weeks. The results were subsequently shared with all participants and the task team during a closing session. This session also provided an opportunity for all participants to comment on the programme and share their feedback. A meeting will be held in 2025 to share our experiences organizing the first edition of Staff Secondments. As we are currently in the phase of establishing the agreements for the secondment between the host and sending universities, we have decided to conduct a meeting to share our initial impressions and ideas for improvement once the agreements are finalized and the secondments begin to take place.

## 2. Evaluation of the Staff development programme

The evaluation of the staff development programme primarily focuses on the pilot phase of the mentoring programme, as this is a completely new initiative as of 2024. Staff secondments are still in their early stages and will be fully rolled out in spring 2025. The staff language programme was launched during the pilot phase of EDUC and, in EDUC II, has been adjusted based on the evaluation from the first round before entering a new implementation phase. This will be briefly addressed in the following chapters.

### 2.1. Staff mobility programme – 5.2.1.

The Staff mobility programme aims to enhance competence training and networking through the use of Erasmus+ staff mobility funding – and is not a part of EDUC II as a project, as such. Nevertheless; hosting and participating in staff weeks are widely promoted across the alliance, as staff mobility weeks are low-hanging fruits to enhance knowledge-sharing, cooperation and networking. There has been a wide variety of staff weeks hosted; with thematic focuses on international relations, research administration, international teaching, languages et.al. A total of 40 participants have taken part in a

staff exchange mobility in 2023-2024. EDUC should promote and set clear expectations to management and staff to participate, as we believe there is a huge potential for a growth in participation.

The secondment programme recruits administrative staff for longer mobility stays of 2–6 months at EDUC partner institutions. The programme is set to be implemented for the first time in the spring semester of 2025, and a total of 25 "positions" were announced in this round. In total, 21 candidates applied for the available positions.

The programme was originally expected to be one of the most difficult to implement due to juridical constraints and challenges of recruitment. So far, the number of applicants and selection of candidates shows an interest beyond expectations as 7 candidates now are ready for secondment within their area during spring 2025.

## 2.2. Staff mentoring programme – 5.2.2.

The programme brings together two employees (one mentor and one mentee) of different partner universities to foster professional development and career growth while building an inclusive European culture and multiplying networks beyond one's own institution. The duration of the mentoring partnership will be arranged flexibly within a period of six months with (online) activities and meetings taking place during the working time.

This report evaluates the effectiveness and outcomes of the mentoring programme pilot, which was conducted from May 2024 to November 2024. The programme was designed to support participants in professional development, personal growth, networking and skill-building. This evaluation assesses the programme's structure, implementation, outcomes, and areas for improvement, drawing on feedback from mentors and mentees.

### Programme Objectives

The mentoring programme aims to foster:

- career advancement (managed in different ways within the universities)
- knowledge and skills development
- networking
- expertise and best practice-sharing

The programme is designed to enhance organizational knowledge, professional skills and/or establish networking opportunities across the partner universities, while gaining knowledge and insights into cultures across partner universities.

### Programme Design

The mentoring programme is a tool for development of competence regarding the position of the mentor and the mentee. The requirements to administrative staff members are furthermore to become more versatile and multi-skilled. The mentoring programme also gives mentors an opportunity to up-skill their mentoring and communication skills.

The programme is based on a well-funded theoretical framework for mentoring, based on a clear and transparent description on the four phases in a mentor relationship (see below). It has already been implemented in the USN School of Business, which also originally developed the programme, and tested by mentors (employers) and mentees (students) in. It has been reviewed by EDUC, developed and adapted to the objectives and format of EDUC with mentors and mentees.

## The four phases in a mentor relationship

INITIATE	ENGAGE	WORK	CLOSURE
Tasks			
Build confidence and trust	Get started	Support and challenge	Summarize
Key themes			
-get to know each other -handle confidentiality -set expectations	-set goals for collaboration -discuss goals, ambitions and visions	-identify challenges in own role, work situation	-sum up learning and experience -conclude, close or redefine the collaboration - the way forward
Skills and competences			
-active listening -demonstrate empathy -give positive attention -set boundaries	-show interest in each other -contribute with personal opinions and values	-provide feedback -support, challenge -handle emotions -encourage, endurance	-accepting -give courage to move on -let go

Source: Ekeland 2014

### Call and selection of candidates

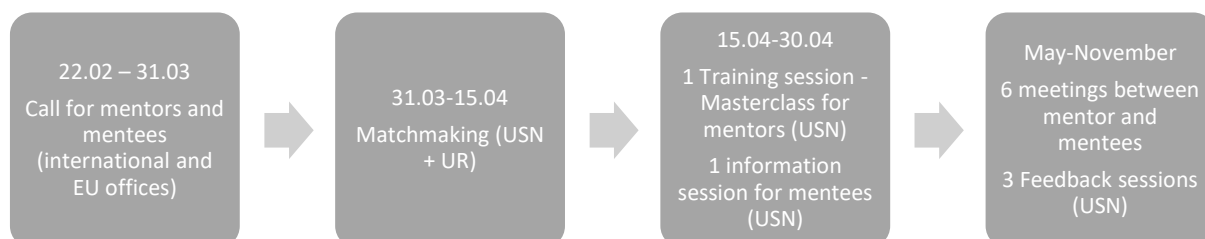
- A call for mentors and mentees was launched in February 2024 (see Appendix 1)
- The selection and matchmaking of candidates was done early April 2024 based on the following principles, as stated in the guidelines (D.5.2.1):
  - Representatives from offices in the priority of Task 1.2 + other administrative areas\*
  - The area of expertise of the Mentor and the Mentee (should be the same field)
  - Their roles in the organisation
  - The level of experience
  - The goals and competence development of the Mentee
  - Clear motivation and interest (must be documented through a motivation letter)
  - English language proficiency B2 (or equivalent) or eventual other common target language B2 (or equivalent)

\*Through discussions in the task team, a decision was made to focus on international office and European project management staff as they are 1 of the 6 prioritised target groups in EDUC II and were expected to be likely to participate.

A pairing of candidates was done by task lead/co-lead and quality assured by task team.



### Timeline:



The programme was started off with a kick-off in May, followed by 1 check-in-meeting and feedback session in September and a closing session in November.

The kick-off content focused on the following aspects: Roles and Behaviour in Mentoring, aims of the programme, clarifying expectations, listen/ask questions/guide/give Advice, offer experience-based guidance as well as practical arrangements for the regular mentoring sessions.

The check-in meeting took place after the summer holidays and aimed to remind and re-motivate the peers to continue working together. It was also an opportunity to check what outcomes they had experienced so far.

The closing session was focusing on the survey and feedback from participants as well as sharing joint knowledge and experiences from the mentoring sessions.

### Evaluation Methodology

- **Data Collection Methods:**
  - Kick-off-meeting at the start and feedback sessions at the midpoint and conclusion of the programme.
  - A survey for mentors and mentees at the conclusion of the programme.
  - Review of programme materials.
- **Participants:**
  - 11 mentors and 11 mentees from the 8 EDUC partner universities USN (2), UPN(2), Potsdam(4), UJI (4), Masaryk(2), Pécs (3), Rennes (4) and UNICA (1)

### Findings

The number of participants in the mentoring programme during the pilot phase was 22 in total. This naturally provides a limited number of responses to base the survey on; nevertheless, it offers an indication of how satisfied the participants have been with the programme and highlights some areas for improvement.

- **Strengths:**
  - Structured pairing process based on mentee goals and mentor expertise.

- A well-organized training session, supervised by a mentoring expert from the USN School of business.
- Regularly scheduled check-ins for feedback and questions.
- Access to resources, such as check-in sessions and support tools.

- **Challenges:**

- Limited flexibility in scheduling mentoring sessions.
- Some participants reported a mistake in the matching of mentor and mentee, according to the expectations they had beforehand.

## 2. Outcomes

### Results in numbers:

- Pilot phase 2024 - Staff mentoring program: international offices and EU project offices
- 26 applicants
- Goal: 2 participants from each university: one mentor and one mentee – 16 in total.
- Total of participants approved and completed the mentoring period: 22 – 11 peers (11 pairs of mentors and mentees)

- **Mentee Achievements:**

- Several mentees reported improvement in their specific skills
- Increased confidence in professional settings
- Enhanced networking opportunities.

- **Mentor Insights:**

- Mentors valued the opportunity to contribute to mentee development.
- Personal satisfaction, e.g., improved coaching abilities or personal satisfaction

- **Overall Impact:**

- 86,7 % of participants indicated that the programme met or exceeded their expectations.

## 3. Programme Implementation

- Well-organized kick-off event and check-in/training sessions.
- Technical challenges with the online platform for remote mentoring.
- Mixed feedback on the frequency of mandatory check-ins and support.

### Key Strengths

1. Strong rapport between mentors and mentees.
2. Clear alignment with participants' developmental goals.
3. Engagement levels in mentoring sessions.

### Areas for Improvement

1. **Pairing Process:** Tighter **matching process regarding pairing of candidates.**
2. **Programme Support:** More training and support for mentors and mentees: **Set up more time** for joint discussions and sharing of experiences
3. Goals: Improve and develop a more concrete **goal-setting for the mentoring sessions**

4. **Technology:** Address technical issues with the online platform (Teams) and provide more training on its use.
5. Opening up possibilities for job shadowing **mobility in the mentoring institutions.**

### Recommendations

1. Improve the training session to set clear expectations and goal setting for mentors and mentees, as well as training participants in the use of the online platform.
2. Extending plans and meetings for ongoing support and continuous assessment and training.
3. Expand the programme to include job-shadowing through Erasmus+ staff mobility.

### Testimonials from mentors and mentees:

- *A lot of **very technical advice** related to my work, but also advice in terms of **career development**.*
- *I've learned to **value higher my personal work situation**.*
- *Lots of stuff, it was simply really good to have **an outside perspective** on things and exchange knowledge on how things work at different universities.*
- *I had **to learn not to be proactive** all the time and listen. As a manager, I always looked for a solution; this time (as a mentor), finding one was not my job. Sometimes, you can **see many best practices** if you observe a situation silently.*
- *This experience gave me **more confidence** and **tips** for my everyday work.*
- *I have **learned much** about my (much younger) mentee's way of thinking and priorities during their everyday work and situations.*

### Conclusion

The mentoring programme demonstrated success in meeting its primary objectives, with high levels of satisfaction among participants and measurable growth in mentee capabilities. By addressing the outlined areas for improvement, the programme can further enhance its impact and sustainability.

## 2.3 Staff language programme – 5.2.3

The **EDUC Staff Language Programme** is based on an intercultural communication course pilot already implemented in EDUC I. The programme consists of two digital language training components developed in the pilot phase of EDUC I: an online course of intercultural communication as well as an E-Tandem component. The programme, launched from June to December 2024, pairs individuals with complementary language skills to help them improve their communication and cultural skills through peer-to-peer interaction

The online course focuses on intercultural communication and emphasizes the intercultural dimension to foster understanding between the eight different universities. The course was developed in the EDUC 1 pilot phase and is open to administrative university staff in EDUC.

Furthermore, a 5 months digital communication training was conducted through the E-Tandem. The online course is offered in English, whereas the E-Tandems might be completed in one of the target languages of the institutions. The EDUC Staff language programme is ideal for those planning to take

part in a staff training week or an extended staff secondment period, or for those who are planning to apply for the mentoring programme.

The evaluation examined the implementation and outcomes of the second round of the Language Tandem Programme, designed to promote language learning and intercultural exchange among participants.

### Evaluation Methodology

- **Data Collection Methods:**
  - A survey was conducted at the end of the programme.
- **Participants:**
  - 70 participants from the 8 partner universities in EDUC, representing diverse languages and cultures: German, French, Italian, Spanish, Czech, Hungarian and Norwegian.
  - Participants were selected by the guidelines set for the programme:
    - the participants' field of expertise
    - Language competence level English; B1 as a minimum, in order to to participate in the online course.
    - Target language; B1
    - Pairing candidates must come from different institutions

### Participants' testimonies:

- *Through the joint project, my tandem partner and our tutor **were able to work on the project better and exchange and implement ideas**. We tried to present the topic in a more interesting way. It was fun to get to know more about our own university and the tandem partner's university.*
- *I was surprised by **the perfect match** with my European colleague*
- ***Building an interesting relationship** with someone else with the same professional environment.*
- *The opportunity to get to know a person from a different country **in a guided and safe environment** and to realise that we are not so different at all.*
- *It was a lot of fun to talk to someone who is in a **completely different part of Europe**.*
- *Getting to know **the difference between our respective countries** and using the language for other topics than I do through Duolingo*
- *The most important aspects for me were:*
  - 1) *Having a **fixed appointment***
  - 2) *Discussing **similar work aspects***
  - 3) *Knowing **new cultures, habits and customs***
- *The possibility to meet a colleague and **share visions and ways to speak about the same things** in a different language*

### Outcome

- All registered participants actively engaged in regular sessions.

- High attendance for initial orientation and cultural workshops.
- Participants reported noticeable improvement in their spoken language and increased confidence in real-life conversational scenarios.
- Participants highlighted the programme's value in gaining insights into different cultures.

The survey furthermore shows a high satisfaction rate:

✓ On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being the highest), how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the EDUC E-Tandem programme?

Number of submissions: 35

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart	↓
1	0	0%	0%	
2	0	0%	0%	
3	5	14.3%	<div style="width: 14.3%;"></div> 14.3%	
4	10	28.6%	<div style="width: 28.6%;"></div> 28.6%	
5	20	57.1%	<div style="width: 57.1%;"></div> 57.1%	

### Programme Implementation

- **Strengths:**
  - Tutor's contributions to the development of candidates.
  - Clear guidelines and support materials for tandem interactions.
  - The matching of participants.
- **Challenges:**
  - Some mismatched pairings due to differing language proficiency levels.
  - Some (but limited) reports on lack of engagement and feedback by tutors.

### Key Strengths

1. Fostered meaningful connections between participants.
2. Affordable and accessible approach to language learning and cultural exchange

### Areas for Improvement


1. **Matching Process:** Refine participant pairing to better align language proficiency and goals.
2. **Support Materials:** Develop more comprehensive resources for tandem activities

### Recommendations

1. Organize regular check-ins and feedback sessions to identify and address issues early.
2. Develop, by changing and shortening the online intercultural communication course to make it feasible for participants to complete.


### ☑ Do you feel that the programme helped improve your language proficiency?

Number of submissions: 35

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart	↓
Yes.	34	97.1%		97.1%
No.	1	2.9%		2.9%

### ☑ Would you recommend the E-Tandem programme to others?

Number of submissions: 35

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart	↓
Yes.	35	100%		100%
No.	0	0%	0%	

## 3. Conclusion and further recommendations

### Staff mentoring programme

The staff mentoring programme is a well-designed and comprehensive initiative, ready to be rolled out for full participation with 64 participants from EDUC universities in 2025. The programme could benefit from focusing on setting clearer objectives for each individual participant to ensure that the outcomes are meaningful and professionally valuable for everyone investing their time in EDUC's mentoring programme.

### Staff language programme

The Staff language programme is successfully achieving its primary goal of fostering language learning and cultural exchange, as reflected in the positive feedback from participants. While challenges such as setting more concrete goals have been noted, targeted improvements can enhance the programme effectiveness for future iterations.

EDUC should furthermore work to develop a new intercultural communication course. The course developed in the pilot phase of EDUC 1 has a far too high workload for participants which only leads to no-completion of the course.