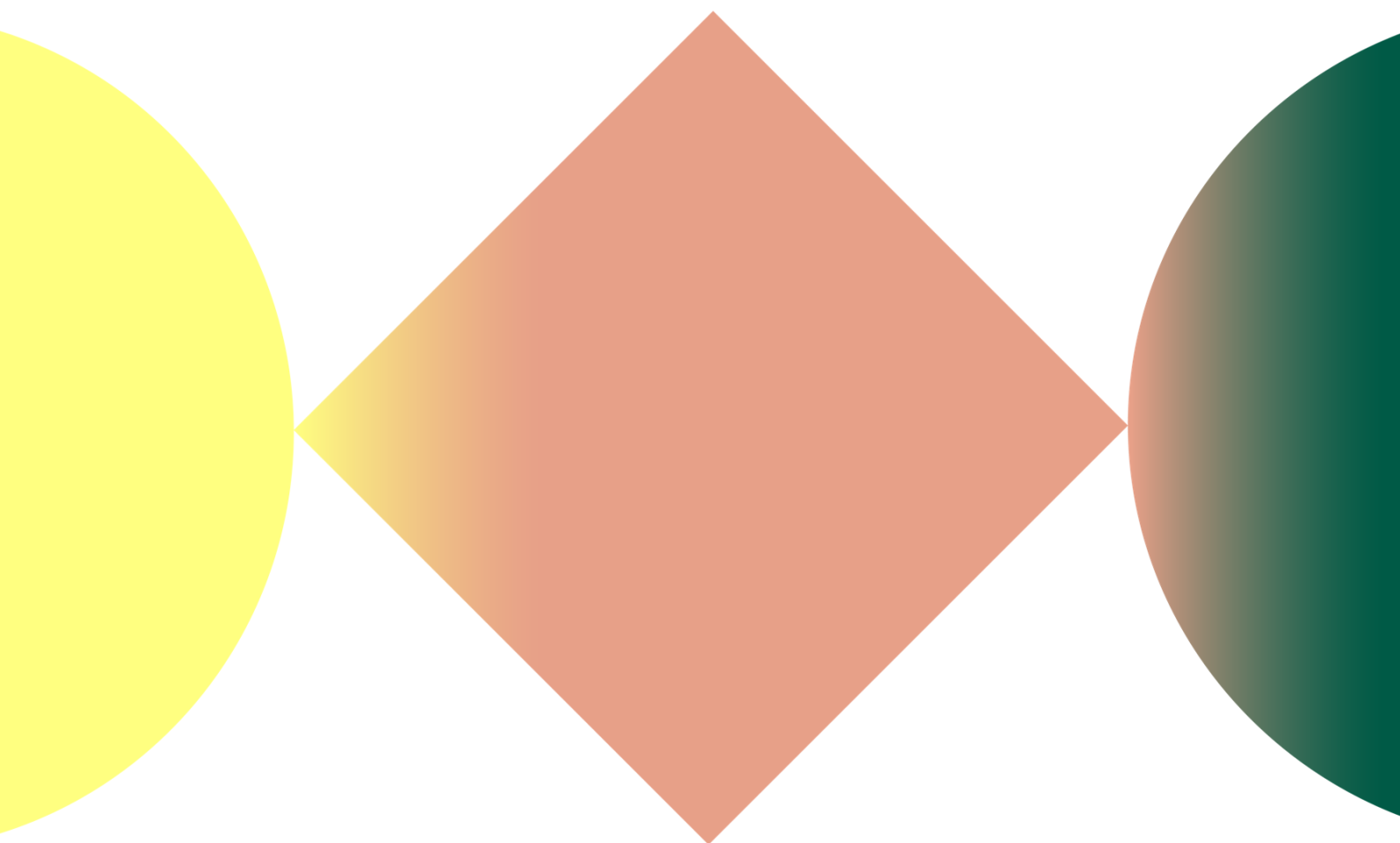


# Joint Doctoral Spaces



Una Europa Joint Innovative Format for Education

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# What?

Una Europa joint doctoral spaces are **joint teaching and research ecosystems** jointly designed by researchers from the Una Europa alliance for doctoral candidates. They are centred around **key global and societal challenges**, closely related to the [Una Europa interdisciplinary focus areas](#). Una Europa joint doctoral spaces offer doctoral candidates **joint interdisciplinary doctoral programmes**, access to **transnational research teams**, **joint PhD workshops** and numerous other joint courses and micro-credentials.

Una Europa joint doctoral spaces are student-centered and they contribute to the development of **European common values**, as well as transversal, social and civic skills of their students. They prepare doctoral candidates to become **high-level researchers or professionals**, able to create new research results and develop innovative solutions for tackling global challenges, in an international and interdisciplinary environment.

*Example: Una Europa has launched its first joint doctoral programme in Cultural Heritage in 2021, [Una-Her-Doc](#). It currently welcomes the second promotion of doctoral candidates. It additionally offers joint PhD workshops and numerous joint courses.*

# Why?

Una Europa joint doctoral spaces have an undeniable added-value for the Una Europa alliance, for its researchers, and for the doctoral candidates participating in the joint doctoral space. For the Una Europa alliance, these spaces **promote high-quality and long-term research collaborations** between institutions, by bringing together specialists from different disciplines. They reinforce the interinstitutional research framework and create a **real trans-sectoral ecosystem** through collaborations with professionals, and thus contribute to the **competitiveness and the quality of European higher education**.

For researchers, joint doctoral spaces allow to join efforts and pool resources to train together the future leading researchers in the field. They create **new research synergies across the alliance**, and establish **permanent dialogues on interdisciplinary research topics and methodologies** among doctoral candidates, researchers and supervisors. They thus contribute to advancing knowledge across borders in key interdisciplinary research areas.

For doctoral candidates, Una Europa joint doctoral spaces represent the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of leading researchers across Europe, and acquire not only **cutting-edge interdisciplinary knowledge and skills**, but also develop a wide range of transversal skills and the ability to work in a multicultural and multinational environment. They offer doctoral students the best conditions to start a career in academia, in the private sector, or in public institutions in Europe and beyond.

# How?

Joint doctoral spaces are structured around the creation of a **joint doctoral programme**. Several courses, workshops and micro-credentials, jointly developed within the joint programme, are also open to the other doctoral students within Una Europa. This facilitates the creation of a wider platform for exchange between doctoral candidates, researchers and supervisors in the field; and to the multilingual, international and intercultural research training of a large group of Una Europa doctoral candidates.

## 1. Creating a joint doctoral programme

Joint doctoral programmes, with joint supervision of the thesis of the candidates, are at the core of the Una Europa joint doctoral spaces. Doctoral education is probably the least harmonized level of education in the Bologna process, and many challenges exist for organizing joint doctoral degrees in Europe. The success of such initiatives is based on strong motivations of researchers, significant support from the university management and joint efforts between academics and the administration to overcome legal, financial and institutional obstacles.

### a) Joint governance structure

- One **lead university** takes primary responsibility for the coordination of the programme.
- A **Joint Academic Committee** is formed to coordinate the implementation of the programme; approve its structure and content; and to follow-up on quality assurance (see further). Each participating university delegates one academic coordinator per party.
- An **Administrative Committee** oversees all administrative and technical issues. It consists of one administrative coordinator per party.
- Doctoral candidates are selected via a **joint selection process** involving all degree-awarding partners.

### b) Structure of a joint doctoral programme

- The study programme consists in the production of an original, interdisciplinary scientific work by the doctoral candidates and joint (inter-)disciplinary and transversal skills courses and activities.
- The doctoral theses are **co-supervised** by two researchers from two different universities, and monitored by an **Expert Committee** composed of the two co-supervisors and two additional experts from two different Una Europa member universities. The doctoral candidates thus benefit from the wide expertise of the Una Europa alliance and learn from the state-of-the-art research. Research can also be conducted in close collaboration (or co-supervision) with non-academic partners.
- The doctoral candidates spend at least 12 months at the two universities from their co-supervisors. They can additionally conduct research at a third university from the alliance.
- The programme includes jointly created ECTS-credited courses, which give the opportunity to students to learn with and from their peers and from a wide range of experts across the alliance. The programme gives the possibility for the students to take additional courses, according to their personal and scientific needs and interests. The programme also offers the opportunity to do an internship, thus increasing the career prospects of the candidates.

*Example: The Una-Her-Doc joint doctoral programme includes the co-supervision of the doctoral candidate by two researchers in two different Una Europa universities, min. 12 months of (cumulative) mobility, the possibility of additional optional mobility within the alliance, and the possibility of teaching experience. Each doctoral candidate's programme is defined ad-hoc in collaboration with the co-supervisors. It is composed of 16 ECTS of mandatory contents (including founding theories seminar, methodology seminars, language courses, etc.) and 14 ECTS of elective contents.*

### c) Transnational research teams and research environment

- Apart from their co-supervisors and the Expert Committee with whom they meet at least once a year, the doctoral candidates are supported by transnational research teams.
- The transnational research teams are the result of a thorough mapping of research and teaching in Una Europa universities in the focus area, and in accordance with European priorities. They are composed of researchers, professors and doctoral candidates across the alliance, who jointly conduct research and organize different activities (seminars, workshops, mini-projects, blogs) on specific dimensions related to the Una Europa focus area.
- Doctoral candidates join the team the most related to their research topic. The teams provide doctoral candidates with important guidance regarding scientific integrity, research ethics, open science, copyright and scientific publication. The doctoral candidates actively contribute to the activities of their research team, which gives them the opportunity to acquire significant professional experience.

*Example: Una Europa has constituted four transnational research teams in Cultural Heritage. All the teams currently gather 30-50 Una Europa professors, researchers and doctoral candidates who meet regularly, propose and co-create different kind of activities. In the Una-Her-Doc joint doctoral programme, the doctoral theses are embedded in one of these research teams – making sure that the research is interdisciplinary and relevant. The teams act as counsellors for the doctoral students, who thus benefit from the broader expertise of the Una Europa network.*

#### d) Graduation

- To finish their studies, the doctoral candidates submit and defend their thesis in front of a thesis jury, after the thesis has been reviewed and approved by reviewers. In the preparation for the defense, a pre-defense is organized in front of the members of the Expert Committee.
- The defense is organized at the university of the main supervisor of the doctoral candidate.

#### e) Joint quality assurance

- The quality of the programme is monitored closely by the partners via a joint academic steering committee, and following the overarching principles of joint internal quality assurance for all Una Europa programmes: the principle of verified trust, the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of core practices (read more [in this article](#)).
- Feedback from the doctoral candidates, teachers and administrative staff is considered. The quality of the individual joint courses created within the joint programme is also monitored.

#### f) Resources, financial agreements and sustainability

- The doctoral candidates pay the tuition fees only at one institution from the alliance. Some scholarships are also available to doctoral candidates, according to national, regional or institutional regulations.
- Further funding can be sought through the Horizon Europe Doctoral Network call provided within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA).

## 2. Joint opportunities within Una Europa joint doctoral spaces

Doctoral candidates enrolled in a Una Europa university benefit as well from the Una Europa joint education offered in the Una Europa joint doctoral spaces. Several joint courses and workshops offered within the framework of the joint programme are also open to doctoral candidates working on a particular focus area, thus giving them the unique opportunity to obtain a multilingual, intercultural and interdisciplinary training enhancing their employability and career prospects at European level.

#### a) Joint PhD workshops

- Joint PhD workshops bring together doctoral candidates from the alliance, leading researchers in the field and non-academic partners and foster research interaction and innovative thinking. They are conceptualized and delivered by researchers from across the alliance on a challenge related to a focus area.
- The PhD workshops are based on a **transdisciplinary approach** and involve participants with a diverse range of expertise, backgrounds and scientific interests. The workshops include **various activities such as roundtables, keynotes, 3-minute thesis competitions, virtual and physical visits, meetings, team work, challenge-based approaches and informal networking events**. Over three to five days, they offer a number of opportunities for interaction between Una Europa doctoral candidates and professors, and challenge concepts, approaches, methodologies and schools of thought.
- They are conceived as a **blended collaborative and innovative format** to offer the best experience possible to participants, on site and online. The doctoral students are involved before, during and after the physical part of the workshop which gives them many opportunities to develop their **transversal skills**, such as their interdisciplinary competences, intercultural skills, presentation and communication skills. PhD workshops allow doctoral candidates to build their **international network** in their field of research, thus increasing their employability at European level.
- PhD workshops are **credit-bearing** and form an integral part of the doctoral students' curriculum taking part in the workshops.

*Example: Una Europa implemented 4 PhD workshops in Cultural Heritage: [Heritage Hybridisation: Concepts, Scales, & Spaces](#), [Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases](#), [Digital Cultural heritage: Mobilities, Mutuality, and Heritage Futures](#) and [Cultural Heritage and the 21st Century City: Research Horizons](#). These workshops were recognized as part of the mandatory courses of the Una-Her-Doc joint doctoral programme.*

## **b) Joint courses and micro-credentials**

- Within the joint doctoral space, additional online and hybrid joint courses are offered by the alliance to doctoral students working on a research topic related to the focus area. These courses are highly interdisciplinary and give the opportunity to the selected doctoral candidates to acquire advanced knowledge on complex topics, using a problem-based approach. These courses can take the format of summer schools, seminars, or workshops.
- The alliance also seeks to offer joint micro-credential programmes at Level 8 EQF. Open to a broad audience composed of professionals, researchers and doctoral candidates on a certain topic, their aim is to transfer the latest research outputs to a specialized audience in a key interdisciplinary field.

## **c) Joint research and networking environment**

- Doctoral candidates from the alliance interested in interdisciplinary research topics can join and participate in the activities organized by the transnational research teams.
- All doctoral candidates from the Una Europa alliance, regardless of their field of research, can also join the Una Europa PhD network. By joining the online platform, doctoral candidates can easily connect with their peers, exchange on best practices or on their challenges across borders and disciplines, and develop their personal and professional network. The network constitutes an important tool for enhancing doctoral students' career prospects and transversal skills.



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