



## CHARM-EU Student Services Policy

### 1. Context

CHARM-EU is an alliance of European Universities (University of Barcelona, Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest and University of Montpellier). CHARM-EU provides services to its students based on the best practices of its members. Some of these services are provided locally based on the agreement of CHARM-EU members, some of them are provided centrally (online), supervised by the CHARM - EU Joint Virtual Administrative Office.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to lay the principles for providing high quality services throughout the student journey to all CHARM-EU students in compliance with the expectations of the European Standards Guidelines; and that fulfills the [mission](#), [vision](#), [core values](#) and [education principles](#) of CHARM-EU. It supports a high degree of cooperation between the educational and administrative units of the CHARM-EU members.

### 3. Benefits

- 3.1 CHARM-EU services provide an additional, tailored framework of support which aligns with the distinct character and structure of the CHARM-EU education and student journey, promoting the best possible CHARM-EU student experience.
- 3.2 CHARM-EU services ensure that students receive appropriate and consistent administrative and pastoral support and professional guidance in all matters related to their activities within CHARM-EU.



## **4. Scope**

- 4.1. This policy covers the services provided by CHARM-EU to all its registered CHARM EU students throughout the student journey.
- 4.2. This policy does not cover:
  - a. services that are available generally to students at individual member universities;
  - b. services that are provided by 3rd parties on behalf of CHARM EU members e.g. housing.
- 4.3. In cases where a certain service is not provided by CHARM-EU, students will receive up-to-date information on where they can seek assistance at the CHARM-EU university they are attending.

## **5. Principles**

- 5.1 CHARM-EU services imbue the CHARM-EU core values of Student-focused, Inclusive, Transparent, Intercultural, Sustainable, Socially responsible and Innovative.
- 5.2 CHARM-EU is committed to removing barriers to success and supporting student and staff access and participation needs.
- 5.3 CHARM-EU fosters an open, welcoming, safe atmosphere, where all forms of diversity are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength and benefit to the CHARM-EU community and beyond, in which discrimination on any ground is strictly prohibited.
- 5.4 CHARM-EU is committed to a consistent and improving quality of service and support for students across CHARM-EU online spaces and at individual member universities.



## 6. Definitions

- 6.1 **CHARM-EU member university:** a HEI that is an official member of the CHARM European University Alliance and its campuses and/or any virtual spheres operated by it serve as the location of CHARM-EU students' studies during any part of any programme operated by CHARM-EU.
- 6.2 **Student journey:** includes all the steps that a student in CHARM-EU programme takes during their studies from registration to obtaining a diploma/degree.
- 6.3 **Counselling:** means the professional, therapeutic assistance and guidance provided to CHARM-EU students during their studies in resolving personal or psychological problems.
- 6.4 **CHARM-EU identity:** represents all the values and parts of a Challenge-Driven, Accessible, Research-based and Mobile model for the co-creation of a European University aligned with the European Values and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). CHARM-EU identity takes into consideration the long-standing knowledge of the 5 university members of the consortium (University of Barcelona, Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest and University of Montpellier) by setting out their shared objectives, values, mission and ambitions.
- 6.5 **Inclusion:** refers to the practice of acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual and at the same time making them feel welcomed and an intrinsic part of a team/ organisation / group. It requires a systematic change in structures, approaches, strategies to dismantle visible and invisible barriers existing in the environment. It may also require a shift in an organisational culture where different groups or individuals with diverse backgrounds, various circumstances, own lived experiences feel the sense of belonging, feel respected and valued, socially accepted, welcomed, and treated without discrimination.



6.6. **Diversity** refers to the enrichment of the organisation and its members through the empowerment of its people by respecting, valuing and celebrating what makes them different. Diversity is normal and encouraged

## 7. Policy of services

### 7.1. ADMISSIONS

7.1.1. CHARM-EU operates a centralised admissions structure with initial decisions on applications made by the Admissions Board.

7.1.2. CHARM-EU's [Admission Regulations](#) set out the aims when recruiting and admitting students, defines: who is responsible for admitting students, the selection and admission criteria and how applications are assessed.

7.1.3. CHARM-EU provides accurate and accessible information and advice to prospective students concerning its academic programmes, which will help them to make an informed choice regarding the programme that most suit their interests and skills.

7.1.4. All information about the programmes offered are published on the CHARM-EU accessible website. Applications are examined and decisions about acceptance are made by the Admission Board in accordance with the described criteria.

### 7.2. REGISTRATION AND CHARM IDENTITY

7.2.1. General student services offered for CHARM-EU students include the following essential services:

- a) helpdesk – administrative support in person, via email, phone (or chat) in working hours;
- b) student handbook / online orientation package (cf. 7. 3 Orientation);
- c) facilitating the administrative tasks of students through direct contact with external, non-university organizations (authorities, government offices, agencies);



- d) providing proof of registration (such as a letter and/or student identity card) and any other documentation necessary for students' administrative responsibilities including visa applications and banking.

7.2.2. The registration takes place following the steps of the student's journey:

- A. Notification.
- B. Registration Step 1 (online) and payment.
- C. Housing administration: Student registers interest for dormitory place (with central coordination) provide further information on accessible housing) and/or housing support (depending on location).  
(Depending on the rules of each country, the accommodation provider is able to provide the necessary documents for the visa application, and if needed reporting the address to the local authorities after arrival, and other administrative proceedings the student must arrange.)
- D. Registration Step 2. – Local but still using common platforms:
  - a) Orientation Day(s) (cf. separate documentation).
  - b) Student physically visits local office, shows ID, documents, registration is finalised.
  - c) Student Card or similar identification tool is activated.
  - d) Student is provided entry to facilities and access to services, most importantly: dormitory, research facilities, library systems, sports facilities etc.

### **7.3. PRE-ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION**

7.3.1. Orientation Week for new CHARM EU students is conducted at the beginning of the academic year.

7.3.2. Pre-arrival online events are provided to strengthen the CHARM-EU identity.

7.3.3. During these events CHARM-EU facilitates students' access to:

- a) an online Student Handbook;
- b) Orientation Days that introduce students to:



- a) services provided by CHARM-EU (centralised and locally by the CHARM-EU members);
- b) content of the programme they are participating in;
- c) teaching methodologies, virtual learning environment (VLE) and learner supports;
- d) relevant academic and support staff;
- e) fellow students including classmates and CHARM-EU buddies;
- f) the campus and city in which they are studying.

#### **7.4. DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY SERVICE**

7.4.1. CHARM-EU recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to education and safeguards access to and participation to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (United Nations, 2006)<sup>1</sup>, the European Commission's higher education policies (Training 2020 strategy - ET2020<sup>2</sup>) (The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan<sup>3</sup> and the national policies on disability of the CHARM-EU members.

7.4.2. The CHARM-EU Inclusivity Plan provides an overview of how inclusion and diversity is reflected in higher education policies and practices and is an integral part of the CHARM-EU organizational culture. The document defines and monitors strategic steps for inclusion and diversity across the organisational structure including student services.

7.4.3. CHARM-EU Equality & Inclusion Office offer advice, support to relevant organisational units in CHARM-EU, including student services and provides specific service and support provision of certain services, (such as the Disability and Accessibility Service).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-framework\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-framework_en)

<sup>3</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/>



7.4.4. CHARM-EU implements the following policies to ensure access and inclusion for individuals with disabilities:

- a) applying principles of universal design in education curricula and programmes;
- b) offering individualised needs assessment and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities;
- c) reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities cannot be provided if they fundamentally alter the nature of the programme or hinder acquiring desired competencies and basic academic requirements;
- d) accessibility and inclusion services and support provision for individuals with disabilities will be carried out through Disability and Accessibility Service virtually and locally, on a face-to face basis.

These policies apply to every aspect of the CHARM-EU's operations, including but not limited to admissions, academic requirements, housing, or any other school-administered programme or service.

7.4.5 For purposes of this policy for individuals with disabilities, eligibility criteria are as follows:

- a) an applicant/student with disability include those who has a learning, physical, communication, psycho-social and/or medical impairment or long-term condition which substantially limits one or more major life activities, and in interacting with various structural barriers in education, may hinder their full and effective participation in CHARM-EU on an equal basis with others;
- b) has a professional record or verification of such impairment, written by a licensed physician, psychologist, audiologist, speech pathologist, rehabilitation counsellor, physical therapist, special needs teacher, occupational therapist, or other professional health care provider according to the student's home regulations. The documentation must be translated to English;



- c) is willing to disclose disability and participate in the on-line assessment procedure;
- d) the student must provide the verification documentation to CHARM-EU Inclusion Officer.

7.4.6. Service and support provision for individuals with disabilities, through the Disability and Accessibility Service include:

- a) consultation via on-line or in-person;
- b) assessments of the access needs;
- c) report of the access needs and reasonable accommodation;
- d) providing assistive technology or any devices, aids/equipment via rent;
- e) learning management counselling;
- f) social-communication skill improvement;
- g) way-finding training on-site of the campuses;
- h) on-site support on personal-hygiene on university campuses;
- i) adaptation of those learning material which are otherwise not fully accessible;
- j) counselling on using accessible Information Communication Technology;
- k) peer support for personal assistance and note taking.

## **7.5. BUDDY SYSTEM**

7.5.1. CHARM-EU Buddy system is an important tool to provide student-led support and guidance to the students participating in the programme and to help them to connect to the existing communities within the CHARM-EU members while retaining a CHARM-EU identity. Although CHARM-EU is a distinct entity, it also consists of certain elements of CHARM-EU members and builds on their local, individual and joint experiences.





- 7.5.2. To provide effective buddy support to CHARM-EU students, CHARM-EU members shall
- a) build on existing local buddy systems and student organisations;
  - b) establish a CHARM-EU buddy system involving all CHARM-EU students;
  - c) appoint a local coordinator at each institution
    - to support and supervise the individual work of local CHARM-EU buddies and
    - to manage locally the process of recruitment and training of buddies and matching CHARM-EU students with their buddies (matchmaking) before Orientation Week.
- 7.5.3 The tasks of the buddies are defined, shared and discussed with student representatives of CHARM-EU and its members.

## **7.6. ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING**

- 7.6.1. CHARM-EU member HEIs and their external partners are committed to providing transparent information on accommodation services of the CHARM-EU members, assisting students to find accessible and inclusive accommodation.
- 7.6.2. Support is available from CHARM-EU accommodation services at the point of admission, via application etc. (e. g. accommodation documents at visa application).
- 7.6.3. The local departments that are responsible for accommodation services, operate individually at each member university, but in cooperation with each other, to ensure the continuity of informing students about accommodation at the time of transition between university campuses.
- 7.6.4. CHARM-EU determines the minimum standards of the accommodations that are included in the information provided to CHARM-EU students so that the technical parameters meet the national and local law and official standards of the country where the accommodation is located.



## **7.7. LIBRARY SERVICES**

- 7.7.1. CHARM-EU members are determined to make their local and online library services open to all registered CHARM-EU students. Their collections are accessible to all students after the registration procedure is completed. CHARM-EU students will have equivalent access to the resources, services and access to libraries as any other student registered in each university.
- 7.7.2. Each member university's library has its own *Library Use Policy* which has been created to protect the rights and safety of library users and staff and to preserve and protect the library's materials, equipment and facilities. These policies also apply to CHARM-EU students as Library users.
- 7.7.3. The Libraries of CHARM-EU members and its staff provide:
- a) online and onsite guide for users that is effective for research and study;
  - b) tools for users to find information quickly and efficiently;
  - c) attentive and respectful service;
  - e) access, within specific guidelines, to the library collections and collections owned by other institutions.
- 7.7.4. Library staff of each CHARM-EU member institutions works closely with the local IT support teams to ensure the students' feasible access to all Library Services.

## **7.8. COUNSELLING SERVICES**

- 7.8.1. The CHARM-EU counselling system is operated by the CHARM-EU ELTE Counselling Centre, and is available remotely or locally to each CHARM-EU student. The Centre is dedicated to support students by providing psychological counselling, and, if necessary, referral to further mental health services.
- 7.8.2. The Centre helps students based on the principle of "*first prevention, then intervention*".



- 7.8.3. Staff at the Centre provide a professional and high-quality counselling service, and are widely experienced in helping people from many different backgrounds and cultures and with a wide range of issues.
- 7.8.4. Counselling staff and trainees are professionally trained, accredited and supervised in line with the requirements of their professional or qualifying bodies.
- 7.8.5. Counselling sessions and related case-management and are conducted subject to established best practice in terms of confidentiality, record-management, data protection and risk assessment.
- 7.8.6. Participation in the CHARM-EU counselling system shall not be disclosed outside the service without the student's informed consent unless done pursuant to professional requirements in the management of risk and/or the protection of vulnerable persons.

## **7.9. MOBILITY SERVICES**

- 7.9.1. To ensure their students the best learning experience and mobility opportunities in the European Education Area in accordance with the institutions' Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, CHARM-EU member HEIs are determined to have a Multilateral Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA) to facilitate and assure the quality of its further cooperation. CHARM-EU Mobility Services are offered to students based on the framework of this agreement.
- 7.9.2. In addition, CHARM-EU Member institutions' Mobility Services closely follow the principles and procedures of the CHARM EU Mobility Matrix concept and its guiding documents, which form one of the alliance's key deliverables. The member HEIs have developed a tailor-made mobility system that is embedded in curricula to support seamless movement between institutions.
- 7.9.3. The CHARM-EU member HEIs provide the following types of mobilities to their students:



- a) semester exchange mobility;
- b) blended mobility with short-term physical mobility component;
- c) virtual exchange activities (not falling under the scope of the Multilateral IIA);
- d) furthermore, traineeships will be offered to students in cooperation with extra-academic actors.

7.9.4. In all the 5 member HEIs, CHARM-EU students are given all the assistance that is needed to successfully complete their chosen mobilities independently on its type.

7.9.5. The main mobility procedures, practices and responsible units of CHARM-EU Mobility services are set in the CHARM-EU Interactive Mobility Handbook for coordinators.

## **7.10. LANGUAGES, SPORTS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL SERVICES**

7.10.1 CHARM-EU students are provided the same access and rights to use language learning, sport and socio-cultural services of each CHARM-EU member institutions as international students at each location.

## **7.11. CAREER SUPPORT SERVICES**

7.11.1. CHARM-EU members provides comprehensive local career support to help students successfully enter the labour market. The career support system of CHARM-EU members

- a) helps students to find their career path through individual counselling, career training, and various soft skill trainings; internship opportunities; networking opportunities with experts and people who managed to build a successful career;
- b) supports students to gain work experience by organising job fairs and offering job opportunities in connection with the students' study programme;
- c) only uses career platform(s) that are aligned with standards of remote accessibility.



## **7. 12. ALUMNI SERVICES**

7.12.1. CHARM-EU fosters a life-long connection to CHARM-EU and member universities, supporting Alumni life, and an accessible alumni system for graduates.

7.12.2. CHARM-EU Alumni services

- a) are graduate-centred, provide active support of online Alumni events (i.e. farewell parties, reunions, faculty specific events, etc);
- b) is provided through online solutions that meet CHARM-EU standards for distance accessibility;
- c) offer access and effective participation in fully inclusive, intercultural environment;
- d) offer flexibility for self-organizing alumni events anywhere in the world for every member, by means of online solutions.

7.12.3. As a main advantage of an Alumni membership, after obtaining their diploma/degree, graduates may:

- a) stay in touch with the universities;
- b) participate in their diverse intellectual programs;
- c) meet former fellow students with similar interests; and
- d) be part of the CHARM-EU graduate community.

## **8. Responsibility**

8.1 The Rectors Assembly is responsible for oversight of this Policy.

## **9. Related Documents**

9.1 CHARM-EU Inclusivity Plan

9.2 CHARM-EU Marketing Recruitment Strategy

9.3 Multilateral Inter-Institutional Agreement on Mobility between CHARM-EU member institutions



9.4. CHARM-EU Interactive Mobility Handbook for coordinators.

9.5. Tasklist of the CHARM-EU Buddies

## **10. Document Control**

10.1 Date of initial approval: Academic Board 12/09/2021

10.2 Date policy effective from: September 2021

10.3 Date of next review: Academic Year 2023/2024

