

EPIC – The Student Guide (version 1) January-July 2018

Preface:

This document describes the course content and practical information for students who want to apply for participation in the project. Further information can be found on the website: epic.agu.edu.tr.

The EPIC project is funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. EPIC is an abbreviation for “Improving Employability through Internationalisation and Collaboration”, and the basic idea is to create a framework for making international student projects in collaboration between students from different European universities and industrial partners.

This is the very first version of the student guide, and it will be updated and improved continuously. If you feel some questions are not answered, or if you are missing some information, please contact Jens Myrup Pedersen (jens@es.aau.dk) with suggestions for improvement. We appreciate it!

Table of Contents

1. EPIC summary	1
2. Project work in EPIC.....	2
3. Preparation: Online modules.....	2
4. Course schedule	3
5. Project requirements – collaboration between students and with supervisors	3
6. Project seminar in Riga: Practical information	4
7. Communications and platforms	5
8. Quality Assurance	5
9. FAQ	5
10. Additional information	5
Student groups	6

1. EPIC summary

EPIC is an innovative teaching project, funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

As mentioned in the preface, the basic idea behind the project is to develop ways, where students can work together on projects across countries and disciplines – based on real-life problems from companies. We know from the previous project COLIBRI (www.erasmus-colibri.eu) that this international dimension was highly valued by the students.

Epic comprises a number of international projects involving students, universities and companies. During the spring semester we experiment with how it is possible to create such international student

projects – and each year we evaluate the experiences from both students, teachers and companies, and use the evaluations to further advance and improve. The EPIC project is running for three years: September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2020.

If you want to know more about the background (and gain more understanding) you might want to visit the Facebook site of COLIBRI: <https://www.facebook.com/ErasmusColibri>.

2. Project work in EPIC

EPIC offers students from the participating universities to partake in joint student projects. The local student projects (contributing to the joint projects) can be very different in terms of duration, work load, and timing during the education: As such it can range from 5-ECTS elective courses to semester projects, bachelor thesis and master thesis projects. So, as such, participation is not limited to specific semesters.

Working on a project in the framework of EPIC comes with the following conditions:

- Each project should involve students from at least two different countries and universities, and involve either a company or a research project.
- Students must submit their own project documentation to their home university, and the examination and grading takes place according to home university guidelines. It is also depending on the study regulations of the home university how many ECTS credits are awarded (this depends on what kind of project is carried out).
- Moreover, for each of the joint projects, the students also create a joint product in terms of a description of their joint results, as well as the reflections and evaluations of the joint group work. Based on this, an EPIC certificate is issued on top of the normal recognition. This is introduced in further detail during the seminar in Riga.
- For each project, there is a main/coordinating supervisor as well as a supervisor from each of the universities with participating students. There will also be a company supervisor or contact.
- All participating students are required to attend the seminar that takes place in Riga on February 12-16 (described in further detail below).

While students are expected to work together mainly virtually, participating in a project within EPIC also offers some possibilities of meeting each other in person. This is taking place during:

- The mandatory seminar, which takes place in Riga on February 12-16. It is a requirement that all students participate throughout the full academic programme. It is therefore highly recommended to travel to Riga on February 11, and return on February 17.
- Moreover, students can apply for funds to visit each other within the projects offered. For example, if students from Kayseri, Riga and Hamburg are working on the same project they can apply for one additional visit in one of these places. For such meetings, it is also a formal requirement that the academic programme has a duration of at least five full working days, and that all participants take part in the full programme.

3. Preparation: Online modules

Before attending the seminar in Riga all students are required to go through the e-learning preparations that are part of the course. In order to access the material, you need to do the following:

For the first time:

- **Create new account** at <https://eduspace.lv/login/index.php?lang=en>

- **Confirm** the account from your e-mail and **enroll** in the course “**EPIC materials for students**”, by pushing **Enroll** button beneath it
- **Fulfill Mandatory tasks in section “Materials for preparation phase”**
When you already have an account and are enrolled in the course, you will see the course after logging into the system at <https://eduspace.lv/login/index.php?lang=en> ; alternatively you can access the course via <https://eduspace.lv/course/index.php?categoryid=1818&lang=en>

The material will be ready by January 20, 2018.

In addition to the mandatory material, we will also update this platform with additional learning resources that can be helpful for your projects.

4. Course schedule

The course schedule is flexible because students from the different universities are working along different schedules. This means that even for students working on the same project, some students might start earlier – and some might finish later – than others. This is also illustrated below:

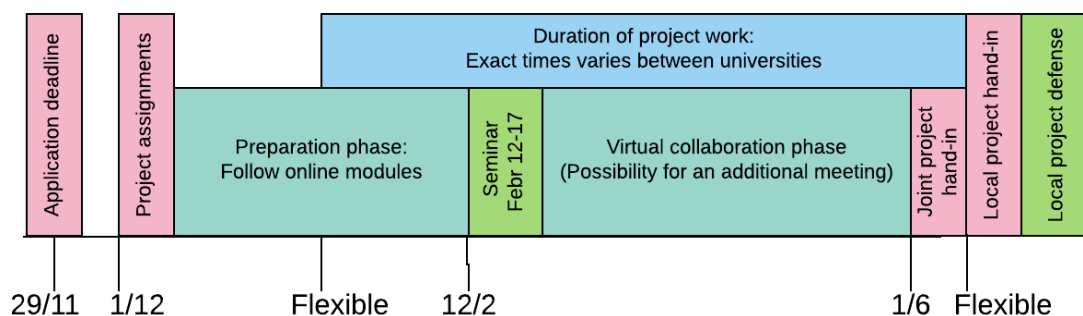


Figure 1. Course timeline. Note: Local defenses only takes place in universities with this tradition.

It is important to note that the virtual collaboration between the groups will usually start during the seminar in February (but it is really fine to be in touch earlier when it makes sense), and last at least until the hand-in of the joint project materials on June 1. The local project hand-ins can be either before or after this date.

It is also important to observe that the project is a test/experiment, so things might change along the way if we learn that something has to be different.

Please note that the online modules should be finished before attending the seminar in February.

5. Project requirements – collaboration between students and with supervisors

The projects are all different, so the nature of the collaboration will also be different.

- We expect that all groups are establishing a plan on their collaboration and interaction during the seminar in Riga.

- We also expect that the students within each project will meet virtually at least every second week throughout the semester.
- Each group delivers a joint product in terms of a description of their joint results, and how these contribute to solve the initial problem.
- Each group also deliver their reflections and evaluations of the joint group work.
- All groups are expected to communicate through the provided collaboration platform (see section 7 – details will follow in January).

6. Project seminar in Riga: Practical information

The seminar in Riga takes place on February 12-16. Since there is a full program all days, it is highly recommended to arrive on February 11 and leave on February 17 (if you need to leave on February 16 in the evening, this might be possible if agreed upon beforehand).

The participants are supervisors and students from all the involved universities – we expect a total of around 25-30 students and 10-15 teachers/supervisors.

In order to create a good international experience, we are organizing all activities jointly, so you will spend the week together as a group. This also includes:

- Accommodation (everyone will stay in Hotel Islande, Ķīpsalas iela 2) which is very close to campus.
- Academic activities each day 9-17.
- Joint lunches and dinners.
- Social activities in the evenings.

Participation is free of charge, and through the grant from Erasmus+ we cover the following expenses for the seminars:

- Flights/long distance trains (we will take care of booking this and contact each of you in this regard)
- Accommodation in Riga (we will book this from Feb 11 – Feb 17)
- Meals during the course (Monday to Friday)
- Expenses related to visa for students from Turkey
- Jointly organized social activities are also covered by the project.

You might need to pay minor expenses yourself such as local bus tickets, transport to/from airports, meals before/after the course, and additional spare-time activities.

Important: You are also required to take out proper insurance for the trip. This is important, as the conditions differ from country to country. If you have any doubts, your local coordinator is happy to assist you in this regard. However, you will need to cover these expenses yourself.

The academic programme for the seminar is still in preparation, but includes among other things the following aspects:

- Learning about group work and teamwork, with particular focus on working together across cultures and backgrounds.

- Project management, time planning and coordination – with a special focus on projects carried out via virtual collaboration channels.
- Technical sessions, with expert guidance and discussions.
- Time to work in the groups, so you can get started with the project work and make a plan for the virtual collaboration phase.

After the seminar, you should have the tools, knowledge and plans to be prepared to make a good project together afterwards.

A detailed program for the seminar will be available approximately two weeks before the seminar.

7. Communications and platforms

In addition to the learning platform, we are establishing a platform for communication within the project. There will both be a “public” channel for general communication, and private channels for each of the projects. To access the platform, please follow these steps:

We expect this to be up running by early January, and will inform you about how to sign up accordingly.

8. Quality Assurance

A quality committee will be formed with student representatives from each university and each project. More information will follow. If you observe any issues, please report this to the course coordinator or to one of the local coordinators.

9. FAQ

This section will be updated with questions and answers.

10. Additional information

Course coordinator:

Jens M. Pedersen, AAU.

Local coordinators:

Rīgas Tehniskā universitāte (RTU): Mārīte Kirikova (marite.kirikova@cs.rtu.lv)

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