

Erasmus Graduate School
of Social Sciences
and the Humanities

Annual report 2025

Erasmus Graduate School
of Social Sciences
and the Humanities

Erasmus University Rotterdam
Make it happen.

Erasmus



The Graduate School in 2025

Dear community,

We present you the 2025 annual report of the Erasmus Graduate School of Social Sciences and the Humanities (EGSH).

The year 2025 marked another meaningful chapter in the development of the EGSH. Guided by our commitment to offer state-of-the-art, high quality, 'Triple-I' doctoral education for the PhD candidates, EGSH continued to support a vibrant and diverse community of PhD candidates.

Over the course of the year, EGSH offered a rich and varied programme of 58 courses, reflecting both the breadth of the social sciences and humanities and the evolving needs of doctoral researchers. These courses not only strengthened methodological and theoretical expertise, but also fostered intellectual exchange across disciplines. Our collaboration with UNIC, ERMeCHS, the Convergence and CERES further enriched our curriculum and reinforced EGSH's strong position within wider academic networks.

The year also brought significant developments in our educational infrastructure. The results of dr. Fadi Hirzalla's educational project, conducted as part of his Senior Teaching Qualification (SKO), were successfully implemented across all EGSH course descriptions. This resulted in more concise, transparent, and user-friendly course pages, improving clarity for both current and prospective participants. In addition, the EUR-wide project "Life Long Learning" introduced a renewed look and feel to the course pages on our website, aligning EGSH's online presence with broader institutional developments.

This annual report reflects a year of collective effort and adaptability. We are deeply grateful to our staff, instructors, partners, and the wider EGSH community for their commitment and engagement. Together, they have contributed to strengthening EGSH's role as a supportive, innovative, and forward-looking graduate school.

Best regards,

The EGSH team

The EGSH team in 2025



Dr. Esther Rozendaal
Dean



Dr. Fadi Hirzalla
Head of studies



Ada Noorlander
Secretary



Ivana Juric
Course coordinator



Roos Kemna
Communications officer

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*Our school is built on **four pillars**:*

- 1. Recognising excellence and fostering community*
- 2. Solid Services in PhD training*
- 3. Sound governance*
- 4. Collaboration*

The 2025 results for these four areas are presented in the following pages.

Recognising excellence and fostering community

Recognising excellence and fostering community remained central to our mission. In April 2026, we hosted our annual award ceremony, a valued occasion to celebrate the achievements and dedication of our PhD candidates and supervisors, and to highlight the quality and impact of the research conducted within our school.

Group photo of the nominees and winners at our award ceremony for the 2025 EGSN Awards on April, 2026.



The following awards were granted:

Award for Best Poster 2025

Winner: Rick van Logchem

Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (ESSB)

For his poster "PARADOx-Project: Can Parenting Advice Strengthen Family Functioning and Adolescent Well-Being? A Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)

Location: Belgium, Leuven.

Occasion: 2025 conference for the Society for Ambulatory Assessment (SAA)

Award for Best Article 2025

Winner: Ilaha Abasli & Ahmed El Assal (ISS)

International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)

For their article "Why are you not doing research in your home country? dissecting expectations of southern researchers"

Journal: Development in Practice Volume 35, 2025 - Issue 8: Shifting the Power

Publication date: 4 January 2025

Award for Best PhD Thesis 2025

Winner: Maura Leusder

Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management (ESHPM)

For her thesis "Accounting for the start of life: shifting practices, costs and value in an IVF clinic"

Award for PhD Colleague of the Year 2025

Winner: Cindy T.T. Nguyen

Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management (ESHPM)

Award for PhD Supervisor of the Year 2025

Winner: Delia Dumitrica & Matthias Wieser

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC) & Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (ESSB)

Award for Best Societal Impact 2025

Winner: Roman Giling

Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management (ESHPM)

Solid services in PhD training

In 2025, 58 courses and workshops were offered (of which 42 unique courses, some had multiple editions).

Figure 1 indicates how many courses were offered from 2014 to 2025, and figure 2 shows how many students participated in our courses and events from 2014 to 2025.

Figure 1. **Number of courses 2014 - 2025**

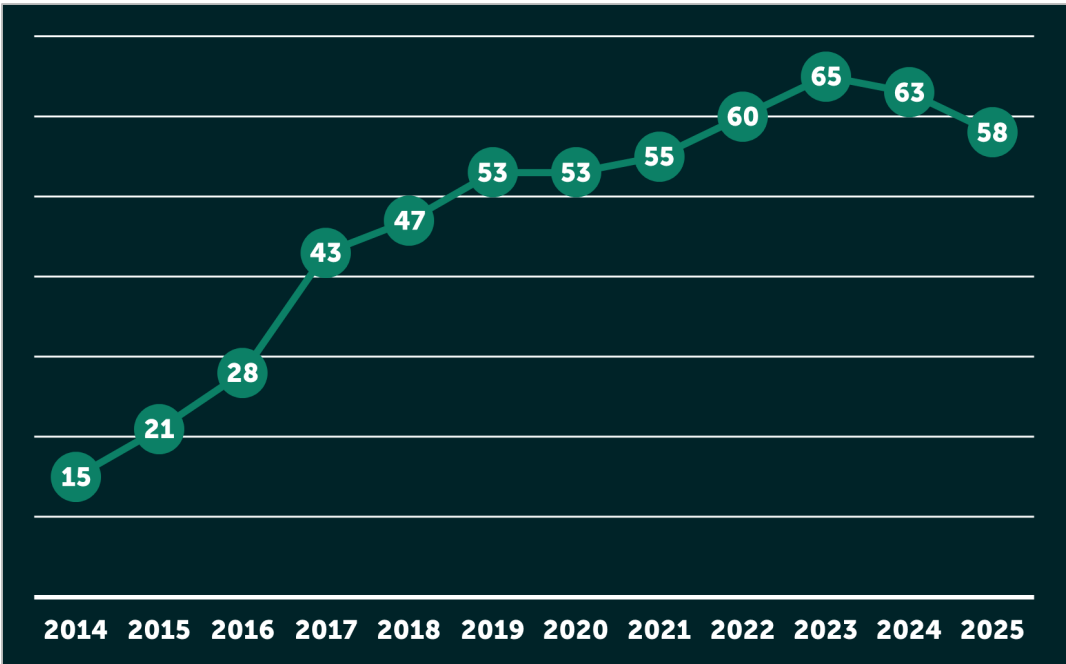


Figure 1. **Number of course participants 2014 - 2025**

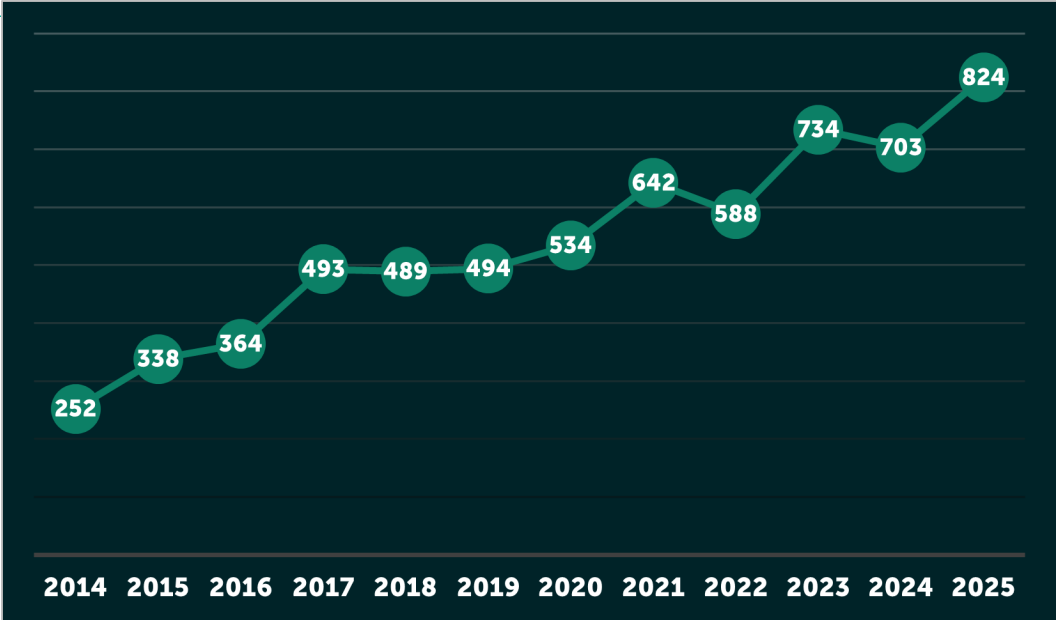


Table 1. **Course and event participation** per faculty/institute and department 2025

	TOTAL	%	Unique participants
Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (ESSB)	267	32,4%	129
Erasmus School of Health Policy and Management (ESHPM)	280	34%	105
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC)	105	12,7%	46
Erasmus School of Philosophy (ESPhil)	25	3%	10
International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)	77	9,3%	39
Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS)	15	1,8%	8
DRIFT	5	0,6%	3
Other (none-members of the joint venture partners)	50	6%	46
Grand total	824		386

Courses on mandatory topics

A key focus in 2025 was the topic of Open Science and Research Transparency.

Due to its mandatory status for PhD candidates under the EUR PhD policy, EGSH faced notable discrepancies between course demand and available capacity.

Thanks to the dedication and flexibility of the EGSH team, Academic Affairs and the lecturers involved, this challenge was addressed by expanding the offer to more than 120 seats in 2025, ensuring that as many PhD candidates as possible could meet policy requirements while receiving high-quality training.

Course evaluation

As of the current academic year, we've stopped using the standardised feedback form through which participants could provide comments and scores on the quality of our courses and the performance of our lecturers. While this approach has helped us monitor the quality of our curriculum over the past few years, it also had several downsides:

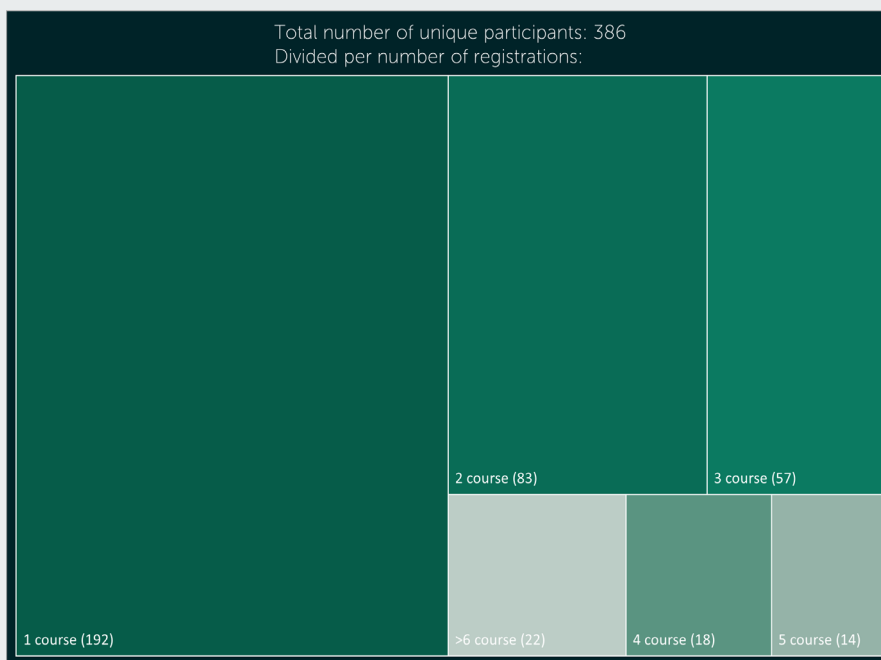
- Since we had to collect all the feedback manually, it took disproportionate time from our small team.
- The comments we received though the feedback form were often unclear or lacked specificity.
- We are unsure to what extent high scores reflected appreciation for the lecturer's time and effort, rather than the quality of the course itself, or discomfort with criticizing a lecturer.

- Conversely, low scores may have been influenced by secondary or irrelevant factors, such as the lecturer's personality, ethnicity, or gender.
- Lecturers often perceive scores as a judgement of their performance, whereas our focus lies on helping them and developing their courses.
- Some feedback is unnecessarily derogatory in tone (probably due to the anonymous form in which it is delivered).

To gather feedback that is more in-depth and constructive and less ambiguous, we've replaced the feedback form with face-to-face conversations with course participants. These open conversations give participants the opportunity to share what they found helpful and enjoyable, as well as suggestions for improving future course editions.

The conversations are led by Dr. Fadi Hirzalla, our Head of Studies, who also discusses the collected feedback with the lecturers. Each year, we aim to evaluate a different sample of courses using this approach.

Figure 3. **Course participation** by unique participants 2025



Sound governance

To ensure the successful functioning of the EGSH, improving the quality of education, and meet the needs of PhD candidates, the EGSH team meets regularly throughout the year with the various boards and councils.

In 2025, the EGSH team met twice with the Supervisory Board and twice with the Program Board. In addition, the EGSH team met quarterly with the PhD officers from the affiliated faculties/institutes and the EGSH PhD Council.

Collaborations

To enrich our curriculum and reinforce EGSH's strong position within wider academic networks, we collaborated with the following partners:

UNIC

UNIC is a European alliance of eight universities based in post-industrial cities with a mission to boost mobility and inclusion for societal impact. UNIC was formed as a response to the European Commission's call to create bottom-up networks of universities throughout Europe that enable students to obtain degrees by combining studies in several EU countries.

Erasmus University Rotterdam has joined Koc University Istanbul, Ruhr University Bochum, University of Liege, University College Cork, University of Deusto, University of Oulu, and University of Zagreb to form the UNIC alliance. UNIC is an alliance today but strives to be a model for the European Universities of tomorrow by embodying common values and visions of our shared European future.

In 2025, the Erasmus Graduate School of Social Sciences and the Humanities continued to be involved in the collaboration, although there were no joint events or activities.

CERES

As in previous years, also in 2025 all EGSH PhD researchers had access (mostly for free) to the courses offered by the CERES Research School. Ceres is a partnership between Dutch and Flemish institutions with programmes in Development Studies (and associated fields). It offers a variety of short methodological and thematic courses in addition to traditional PhD Training. EGSH promotes their educational programme and offers some directly through the EGSH website.

Convergence: the AI, data and digitalisation theme

In co-operation with the Convergence we organised a designathon for PhD candidates working at the intersection of AI and other disciplines.

The designathon, with the appealing topic of designing a personal experience for a game for cancer research took place at ECDA at the Erasmus campus. The designathon was experienced as very productive and fruitful and the outcomes were used by Changegamers in the design for the first release of the game.

ERMeCHS

On May 19 2025, EGSH and the Erasmus Research Institute for Media, Culture, History & Society (ERMeCHS) jointly organised an event for PhD candidates, supervisors and policy staff on the topic of 'PhD supervision: Challenges and best practices'.

With the event, we wanted to contribute to ongoing efforts in our university, and specifically in ERMeCHS and EGSH, to improve PhD student experiences and support processes of PhD supervision. The challenge of strengthening guidance and support for PhD supervision while allowing diversity and flexibility in research traditions, practices, funding and subject specificities requires the involvement of all parties in an open and transparent dialogue.



Colophon

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