

ECTS USERS' GUIDE 2014

Draft Version

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Contents

Introduction

Section 1 ECTS and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

Section 2 ECTS Key Features

- 21 Definitions
Credits, Learning Outcomes, Workload
- 22 Use of ECTS credits
Allocating, Awarding, Accumulation, Transfer

Section 3 Implementation of ECTS

- 31 ECTS Programme design, delivery and monitoring
 - 311 Programme design
Referencing and Consulting, Profiling, Defining Learning Outcomes (LO) for programmes, Structuring and allocation of credits, Defining Learning Outcomes for course units,
 - (TLA) 312 Programme delivery – Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Transparency and reliability, Consistency / Accountability, Openness and Flexibility, Effectiveness, Assessment of achievements
 - 313 Programme monitoring
Characteristics, Institutional regulations

Section 4 ECTS for Mobility and Recognition

- 41 The framework of recognition
- 42 Managing Mobility and Recognition
 - 421 Agreed mobility
 - 422 Institutional rules and regulations
Selection of partner institutions, Integration of mobility into programmes, Allocation of academic responsibilities, Interaction with single outgoing students
 - 423 Grade distribution table

Section 5 ECTS and Life-long Learning

Formal, non-formal and informal learning

Section 6 ECTS and Quality Assurance

Section 7 ECTS and Key Documents

61 Course catalogue

62 Learning Agreement

63 Transcript of Records (mobility for studies)

64 Traineeship Certificate (mobility for traineeships)

Acknowledgements

Appendices

Glossary

Recommended reading list

.....

Introduction

This ECTS Users' Guide provides guidelines for implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) - a tool that helps design, describe, and deliver programmes and award higher education qualifications. It also presents the ECTS key documents.

The 2014 Users' Guide elaborates on the previous version of 2009. It has been updated in order to take account of recent developments in the Bologna Process, such as the establishment of the European Higher Education Area, the consolidation in practice of the student-centred approach and lifelong learning, the increasing use of learning outcomes, and the development of new modes of teaching and learning.

This version of the Guide includes a specific focus on programme design, taking account of the experiences of higher education institutions in using Bologna tools and of the increasingly widespread operational use of ECTS principles in academic practice.

The use of ECTS, in conjunction with outcomes-based qualifications frameworks, makes programmes and qualifications more transparent and facilitates the recognition of qualifications. ECTS can be applied to all types of programmes, whatever their mode of delivery (classroom-based, work-based), the learners' status (full-time, part-time) and to all kinds of learning (formal, non-formal and informal).

In the first section of the Guide, ECTS is placed in the context of the European Higher Education Area, created through the Bologna Process. This section also refers to the role of ECTS in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and the European Qualifications Framework.

The second section contains the ECTS key features. These constitute a concise overview of ECTS and its main functions, on which there is a broad consensus.

Section 3 provides a detailed explanation of how ECTS is used to design, deliver, assess and monitor degree programmes and their individual educational components. The role of ECTS in mobility and recognition is discussed in Section 4. Section 5 links ECTS to lifelong-learning. Section 6 deals with ECTS and Quality Assurance. The User's Guide concludes with ECTS and the Key Documents presented in Section 7.

The Guide has been written with the help of the former network of Bologna Experts, advice from stakeholders' associations, and submitted for consultation to stakeholders' associations, Member States' experts and the Bologna Follow-up Group. The European Commission has coordinated the drafting and consultation process.

The Guide is offered to assist learners, academic and administrative staff in higher education institutions as well as other interested parties. It has been developed by practitioners to help the academic community and other stakeholders in higher education to move in the direction of the changes advocated by the Bologna Process. It builds on the body of work that has been done in recent years both within the Bologna Process and in individual countries. The Guide could not have been written without this solid foundation.

1 ECTS and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System was first instituted in 1989, as a tool for the transfer of students' achievements in Erasmus student mobility. In the following years, it became a valuable tool not only for transferring credits, based on workload and learning outcomes, but also for accumulating them in institutions' degree programmes. In 1999 the Bologna Process included adoption of ECTS among the main objectives to be achieved by all participating countries. Through the reforms implemented in the course of the Process, ECTS has now become a key instrument of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Within the EHEA, ECTS has a key role in stimulating change and modernisation in the educational process because its implementation facilitates and encourages the paradigm shift from a teacher-centred to a student-centred approach, which is generally recognized as being the underlying principle of the EHEA.

Nota Bene

Student-Centred Learning (SCL) refers to an on-going process of qualitative transformation in the learner and in the learning environment, aimed at enhancing the learner's autonomy and critical ability.

The SCL concept can be summarised into the following elements:

- Reliance on active rather than passive learning;
- Emphasis on deep learning and understanding;
- Increased responsibility and accountability on behalf of the student;
- Increased sense of autonomy of the learner;
- Reflexive approach to the teaching and learning process on the part of both the teacher and the learner.

ECTS is adopted as the national credit system in most countries of the EHEA. In other regions, it is increasingly used by institutions or interacts successfully with local credit systems based on comparable criteria, thus playing a role in the growing global dimension of education.

This ECTS User's Guide will help the implementation of student-centred learning, with a focus on student involvement in educational processes, thus enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

By using learning outcomes and an estimation of the learner's workload in curriculum design and delivery, ECTS helps to place the learner at the centre of the educational process. Allocation of ECTS credits to educational components facilitates the creation of flexible learning pathways. In particular, ECTS, in conjunction with qualifications frameworks:

- helps institutions shift the emphasis in programme design and delivery from traditional teacher-centred approaches to approaches that take learners' needs and expectations into account and regard learners as partners in programme design and delivery;
- establishes a closer link between educational programmes and societal requirements through the use of learning outcomes, enhancing interaction with the stakeholders;
- encourages wider access to and participation in lifelong learning, by making programmes more flexible and facilitating the recognition of prior learning achievements;
- facilitates mobility within a given institution or country, from institution to institution, from country to country, and between different educational sectors and contexts of learning (i.e. formal, non-formal and informal learning).

Moreover, ECTS helps institutions implement the objective of quality assurance: in some EHEA countries, its use is a requirement for accreditation of higher education programmes or qualifications.

2 ECTS key features

21 Definitions

ECTS is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer based on the transparency of learning outcomes and of teaching, learning and assessment processes. Its objective is to improve the quality of studies and of student mobility by facilitating planning, delivery and evaluation of teaching and learning as well as recognition of qualifications and units of learning from different contexts.

ECTS credits are based on the estimated workload necessary for the student to achieve the defined learning outcomes. 60 ECTS credits are allocated to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning (academic year) and the associated learning outcomes. ECTS credits are expressed in whole numbers.

Learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning. Level descriptors in national and European qualifications frameworks use learning outcomes to describe the progression of learning from level to level. Achievement of learning outcomes has to be proven through assessment procedures based on clear criteria, agreed by the team of teachers.

Workload is an estimation of the time students typically need to complete all learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, individual study) required to achieve the defined learning outcomes. The correspondence of the full-time workload of an academic year to 60 credits is often formalised by national legal provisions. In most cases, student workload ranges from 1,500 to 1,800 hours for an academic year, whereby one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work.

22 Use of ECTS credits

Allocation of credits is the process of assigning a number of credits to qualifications, degree programmes or single educational components. Credits are allocated to entire qualifications or programmes according to national legislation or practice and with reference to national and/or European qualifications frameworks. They are allocated to educational components, such as course units, dissertation work and traineeships, on the basis of 60 credits per full-time academic year, according to the estimated workload required to achieve the defined learning outcomes for each component.

Awarding of credits is the act of formally granting learners the number of credits that are assigned to the qualification and/or its components. This means that the awarding of credits recognises that learners' learning outcomes have been assessed and that the learner satisfies the requirements for the educational component or the qualification. Credits are awarded to individual students after completion of the required learning activities and the achievement of the defined learning outcomes, as proven by appropriate assessment. If students have achieved learning outcomes in other formal, non-formal, or informal learning contexts or timeframes, credits may be awarded through assessment and recognition of these learning outcomes.

Accumulation of credits is the process of collecting credits awarded for achieving the learning outcomes of educational components or other learning activities. A student can accumulate credits in order to:

- obtain qualifications, as required by the degree-awarding institution;
- document personal achievements for lifelong purposes.

Transfer of credits is the process of having the credits awarded in one formal context (programme, institution) recognised in another formal context for the purpose of obtaining a qualification. Credits awarded to a student in one programme may be transferred by an institution to be accumulated in another programme, offered by the same or another institution. Recognition by the degree-awarding institution of the learning outcomes and associated credits ensures the transfer takes place. Credit

transfer is the key to successful student mobility. Agreements among institutions, departments, and programmes facilitate automatic recognition and transfer of credits.

The use of ECTS credits is facilitated by the key documents (Course Catalogue, Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, and Traineeship Certificate). ECTS also contributes to transparency in other documents like the Diploma Supplement.

DRAFT

3 ECTS Implementation in Higher Education Institutions

31 Credits in programme design, delivery and monitoring

311 Programme design

Designing a programme means planning its curriculum and its components, with credits, learning outcomes, learning activities, teaching and learning strategies and assessment procedures/criteria. The following inter-related steps have been identified as helpful in performing this task.

Step 1: Situating the programme in the context

Before designing a programme, its level and contents, reference is made to national legislation (if such exists or where relevant), as well as to qualifications frameworks (national, sectoral, institutional) in line with the European Qualifications Frameworks. In addition, institutional and departmental mission statements, professional specifications (regulations, requirements), and research studies should be considered, and stakeholders should be involved, in order to ascertain the need for the programme and enhance its relevance.

On this basis, a profile for a degree programme should be defined.

Nota Bene

There are two European Qualifications Frameworks, the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)¹ and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL)². Both frameworks use learning outcomes to describe progression of learning, and are compatible as far as Higher Education is concerned (EQF-LLL levels 6, 7 and 8 correspond to QF-EHEA levels 1, 2 and 3). These EQF-LLL and QF-EHEA levels also correspond to ISCED³ levels 6, 7, 8.

- In the **QF-EHEA**, three cycles are identified and described by the so-called Dublin Descriptors, in terms of: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments, communication skills, and learning to learn. The first and second cycles are also characterised by credit ranges:
 - First cycle qualifications typically include 180-240 ECTS credits.
 - Second cycle qualifications typically include 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 ECTS credits at the level of the 2nd cycle.

Short cycle qualifications (EQF-LLL level 5 or 6) include 120 ECTS credits.

In some countries, long integrated professional programmes (300-360 credits) leading to second cycle qualifications also exist.

- The **EQF-LLL** describes a progression of learning by referring to knowledge, skills and competences and without indicating any credit ranges. It is based on eight levels from pre-school to third cycle.

¹ http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/general/eqf/leaflet_en.pdf

³ <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>

Step 2: Defining a degree profile

A degree profile should present the distinctive features of a specific degree programme. Besides indicating the subject area(s) and the level of the programme, it should describe the main focus, the key learning outcomes expected on completion, the learning environment and the main teaching, learning and assessment activities, as well as possible employment opportunities. An effective degree profile will make it clear to stakeholders (including the learners) what competences will be developed during the educational process. Profiles should be formulated with care and in line with the mission statement of the organizing department and/or institution. They should be included in the programme descriptions to be published in the Course Catalogue.

It is strongly recommended to define the profile in consultation with relevant stakeholders (experts in the field, social partners, labour market, and student representatives).

Nota Bene

In Europe, the terms “learning outcomes” and “competences” are used with different shades of meaning and in somewhat different frames of reference. For the purpose of this Guide, “A learning outcome is a written statement of what the successful student/learner is expected to be able to do at the end of the module / course unit, or qualification”⁴.

The description of learning outcomes, both for degree programmes and for individual educational components, is generally characterised by the use of active verbs to express what the student should know or be able to do after completion of, respectively, the degree programme or the individual educational component. The achievement of learning outcomes is verified using appropriate assessment methods and criteria.

Step 3 Defining programme learning outcomes

Programme learning outcomes are verifiable statements of what the student is expected to be able to do after obtaining the qualification in question. The achievement of programme learning outcomes should be verifiable either through assessment in the various educational components of the programme and/or some form of final assessment (e.g. dissertation).

This makes learning outcomes more real in terms of what the student has actually achieved at the end of the programme. The number of learning outcomes for a programme depends on its scope and complexity. Learning outcomes are an essential component of the programme descriptions to be included in the Course Catalogue.

Step 4 Structuring the programme and allocating credits

First, the constituent parts of the programme should be identified, then the defined learning outcomes and related credits should be defined for all educational components.

The constituent parts are educational components of various types, including course units, traineeships, research projects, laboratory work and other relevant activities. They may also include social and community activities (for example tutoring and mentoring conducted by students) provided they fit into the aims of the programme, develop relevant learning outcomes and carry credits. It is recommended to make the course structure flexible enough to allow for student choice, incorporating possibilities to access new modes of teaching and learning (which should also follow the ECTS principles listed below in this chapter).

⁴ Stephen Adam

Nota Bene

In order to facilitate student credit mobility abroad, it can be useful to foresee mobility periods or 'slots' in the structure of the curricula when designing them. Therefore, it is advised to:

- identify the semester or year when a period of study and/or traineeship abroad would best fit into the programme (mobility window)
- identify within the partner institutions, departments or curricula where similar, complementary or other useful and coherent learning outcomes could be achieved
- since mobility can also be virtual, predefine the educational components that are suitable for virtual mobility⁵.

After the constituent parts of the programme have been identified, the overall structure should be outlined and credits allocated to each component on the basis of 60 credits per full-time year, 30 credits per semester and 20 credits per trimester. It is the responsibility of programme designers to guarantee coherence of the programme structure through team-based decisions.

At this stage, a choice should be made between a modularized and a non-modularised approach. A modularised structure means standardising the size of educational components around a basic credit value (e.g. 5) and its multiples (e.g. 5, 10, 15), thus predefining the number of credits that can be allocated per component. In this case, the educational components are often called 'modules'. Within this predefined structure, the teaching staff jointly allocate credits to single components according to agreed priorities and estimated workload. This top-down approach allows for better team-based planning of the programme and for more flexible, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary pathways between programmes within the same institution. This is why it is often recommended by programme designers.

In a non-modularized structure, the number of credits to be allocated to components is not pre-determined but is based on the workload required to achieve the learning outcomes defined by single teachers for each component. This bottom-up approach allows for more flexibility in defining the learning outcomes and related learning activities. A strong coordination by programme designers is needed in this case, to ensure team-based decisions and guarantee full coherence of the programme.

It is also recommended that the components should not be too small, to avoid fragmentation of the programme, or too large, to facilitate interdisciplinary studies and student mobility. It is also recommended not to use decimals of credits.

Progression rules, in line with the institutional ones, should be indicated in order to enable learners to progress within the programme and obtain the intended qualification. These stipulate what credits for what learning outcomes, at what level, can be accumulated and how.

Both a course structure diagram with credits and progression rules should be included in the Course Catalogue.

Step 5 Defining learning outcomes for educational components

Whatever structure is chosen, the learning outcomes should be defined for each of the individual educational components included in the programme. The learning outcomes have to be achievable within the specified workload, which includes not only contact hours but also the time the student spends in individual or group work to complete all the required learning activities, and

⁵ Virtual mobility is when students and teachers are learning from or teaching in an institution outside their own country using ICT-enabled learning, without physically leaving their home institution.

the time needed for revision, reflection and assessment. The number of learning outcomes per component largely depends on its scope and complexity, but the time to be invested by the student in the component in the different ways mentioned above for the component should also be taken into consideration.

It is essential that the learning outcomes for a single component be consistent with the learning outcomes of the entire programme and actively contribute to achieving them. For example, many institutions use a matrix principle as a tool to compare the learning outcomes of the degree programme with those of its educational components. This allows the institution to ensure that the overall learning outcomes of the degree programme are sufficiently covered across its various educational components.

Learning outcomes have to be clearly written to be well understood by students and academic staff. They should be neither too detailed nor too broad. It is essential that they are easily assessable and always accompanied by appropriate assessment procedures and criteria. Full consistency is required between learning outcomes, assessment procedures and related teaching and learning activities, as these three elements are closely interconnected. All of them should be present in the descriptions of educational components to be included in the Course Catalogue.

Nota Bene

For traineeships, it is advisable to outline the number of credits, workload, learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a Learning Agreement for traineeships. The learning outcomes achieved through traineeships should be documented in the student's Traineeship Certificate (see the key documents in section 7), and the Diploma Supplement.

These practices should be followed for all types of traineeships, e.g. when the traineeship is part of a degree programme, when it is undertaken during a formal learning process but not obligatory for the degree programme, national traineeships, trans-national mobility, etc..

312 Programme delivery: Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA)

The student-centred approach described in section 1 on "ECTS and the EHEA" is stimulating teachers and students to reconsider traditional teacher-centred approaches to programme delivery and to rethink well-established teaching, learning and assessment methods. Discussing pedagogical developments based on the learner-centred approach does not fall into the scope of this Guide. However, some general principles concerning teaching, learning and assessment should be taken into account when delivering a programme of study, regardless of the mode of teaching and learning.

Transparency and Reliability

Reliable information on degree programmes, as well as single educational components, should be provided in the Course Catalogue. Through this document, the prospective student has access to accurate information about the degree programme of their choice, including all the details (structure, components, learning outcomes, workload). Information on approaches to teaching, learning and assessment procedures is also provided in the Course Catalogue. In order for the information on the programme to be reliable, the institution must be reasonably sure that the learner can actually achieve the learning outcomes with the workload stipulated according to the internal progression rules.

Consistency / Accountability

The academic staff responsible for delivering the programme and its components should ensure consistency among the learning outcomes stated in the programme, the learning and teaching activities implemented and the assessment procedures adopted.

In order for the institution to be fully accountable, the quality and consistency of programme design and delivery should be evaluated by internal and external quality assurance procedures (See section 6 on Quality). It is good practice to publish the outcomes of internal and external evaluations. However, turning evaluation results into actual changes and quality enhancement of programme design and delivery is not always an easy process, unless some follow-up monitoring is provided. An ongoing dialogue among students, academic staff and responsible administrators will contribute to the consistent implementation of the programme.

Open dialogue / Participation

Student-centred learning requires an open dialogue and reflexive feedback between teachers and learners, through which learners' needs and aspirations can be expressed and discussed. Moreover, a constructive discussion of programme design and delivery should take place with all the stakeholders. The student representatives should participate in such discussions with equal status and full voting powers.

Flexibility

A flexible organisation of teaching, learning and assessment activities is essential to accommodate different learning styles and paces. This implies more opportunities for independent learning, widens the choices of teaching and learning materials and activities, and facilitates inclusion.

Effectiveness

Teaching, learning and assessment activities serve the purpose of the programme and can be considered effective when the students demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes through various learning activities and forms of assessment, accumulate the respective credits and obtain the qualification linked to them on time. High failure and dropout rates, as well as longer completion times, may indicate less effective teaching, learning and assessment. The effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment procedures, together with the quality of measures for access and support to students, should be evaluated by internal and external quality assurance procedures (see Section 6 on Quality).

Assessment of achievements

When designing the programme, statements of learning outcomes for programme components should always be accompanied by descriptions of clear and appropriate assessment methods/criteria for the awarding of credits, which make it possible to ascertain whether the learner has acquired the defined learning outcomes at the relevant level.

Credits can be awarded when appropriate assessment shows that the defined learning outcomes have been achieved. The number of credits awarded to the learner is the same as the number of credits allocated to the component. It is never adjusted according to the quality of the learner's performance, which is expressed by the national or institutional grading system.

313 Programme monitoring

The programme is monitored during its delivery to establish whether the estimated workload is realistic and adequate to the achievement of the defined learning outcomes. Monitoring can be managed in different ways through questionnaires, focus groups or interviews. Whatever method is used, student and staff feedback should constitute an essential element for checking and revising credit allocation. Data on completion times and the assessment results of programmes and their components could also be used.

It is important to inform students and staff about the purpose of the monitoring exercise, and how it will be carried out, ensuring accurate answers and a high response rate. If the information gathered reveals a discrepancy between the workload foreseen and the time actually taken by the majority of students to achieve the defined learning outcomes, a revision of the workload, credits, learning outcomes or teaching and learning activities and methods becomes necessary. This revision should be done as soon as possible without creating problems for the current students.

The use of credits based on student workload and learning outcomes requires an institutional framework as well as a profound understanding of the system by each member of the academic staff: there exists no unique formula to calculate student workload that should be applied to all study fields and all degree programmes. Likewise, the learning outcomes of the programme components should be coherent among themselves as well as with those at the degree programme level. Hence, institutional regulations should foster common understanding of and cater for the needs of different degree programmes taking into account many challenging issues, such as the profile of the programme, the resources available, the level of students and others.

Within the institutional culture, the right balance should be found between an agreed institutional credit framework and flexibility. What is needed is a common understanding of the system, and how it should be used.

Doctoral programmes

In some countries and institutions, ECTS is also used in the third cycle. ECTS credits are either allocated to the whole degree programme (e.g. 180 or 240 ECTS), or to some/all educational components (e.g. taught course units, laboratory work, dissertation, etc.). In both cases, they should follow the same guidelines as for first and second cycle programmes (i.e. description of learning outcomes for both programme and single educational components, estimation of workload, description of assessment procedures for the awarding of credits). The related information should be included in the Course Catalogue.

4 ECTS for Mobility and Recognition

4.1 The framework of recognition

ECTS facilitates learner mobility making it possible to transfer and recognise credits gained in another institution. Recognition of credits is the process through which an institution certifies that certain learning outcomes achieved and assessed in another institution satisfy certain requirements of one of the programmes they offer. Given the diversity of programmes and higher education institutions, it is unlikely that the credits and learning outcomes of a single educational component in two different programmes will be identical. Therefore, a flexible approach to recognition of credits obtained in another context is recommended. 'Fair recognition', which involves consideration of comparability or complementarity, is to be sought, rather than perfect equivalence. Such 'fair recognition' should be based on the learning outcomes – i.e. what a person knows and is able to do – and not on the formal procedures that have led to the completion of a qualification or its component. The recognition process should be transparent.

Nota Bene

Rules and regulations for recognition

The Lisbon Recognition Convention, adopted in 1997 and ratified by the countries of the European Region (as defined by UNESCO and the Council of Europe), provides a legal framework for all types of academic recognition of qualifications and their components.

The Convention stipulates that recognition of foreign qualifications/study periods abroad should be granted unless a substantial difference can be demonstrated between the qualification/study period of which recognition is requested.

In the context of the Erasmus+ programme, several charters such as the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (Institutional Commitment), the European Quality Charter for Mobility, the Erasmus+ Student Charter (European Code of Good Practice for Erasmus+ students) provide a framework for arranging mobility and recognition.

In practice, recognition means that the number of credits gained for compatible learning outcomes achieved in another context will replace the number of credits that are allocated for compatible learning outcomes at the awarding institution.

In ECTS, credit recognition for the purpose of accumulation and transfer can be facilitated by key documents: a Course Catalogue, a Learning Agreement, a Transcript of Records (in case of mobility for studies) and a Traineeship Certificate (for mobility for traineeships) (see section 7).

These documents provide information on the learning outcomes achieved, on which the qualification-awarding institution can make decisions on credit recognition and transfer. Institutions should make their recognition policies known and easily accessible.

The NARIC network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) provides information and advice concerning the recognition of diplomas and periods of study undertaken in other European countries as well as advice on foreign academic diplomas in the country where the NARIC is established.⁶

⁶ <http://www.enic-naric.net/>

Nota Bene**Automatic academic recognition**

The Bologna Bucharest Communiqué committed participating countries to the long-term goal of automatic recognition of comparable academic degrees. A Pathfinder Group of countries is exploring ways to achieve this and will report to the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan in 2015.

Nota Bene**Recognition of Professional Qualifications**

Directive 2013/55/EU⁷ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 aims to simplify and facilitate fair recognition of professional qualifications/diplomas. It amends the previous directive 2005/36/EC⁸.

Thanks to the amended directive, Bachelor and Master degree programmes, leading to qualifications required for the exercise of a regulated profession, can express the duration of a programme, formally prescribed in hours and/or academic years, also in ECTS, without affecting other requirements for automatic recognition. This is also the case for medical doctors, general care nurses, dentists, veterinary surgeons, midwives, pharmacists and architects.

Both pharmacy and architecture degree programmes feature traineeships. These can be undertaken in any EU member state, irrespective of where the professional qualification is delivered, and to enjoy full recognition. The competent authorities should publish guidelines on the organisation and recognition of professional traineeships carried out in another Member State or in a third country, in particular on the role of the supervisor of the professional traineeship.

42 Managing Mobility and Recognition**421 Agreed Mobility**

There are numerous practices in recognising and recording study periods abroad around Europe. The guiding principles of recognition are flexibility and fairness. The study period abroad should be clearly identified in the student graduation documents (e.g. Diploma Supplement).

In the case of agreed student mobility, the three parties involved – the student, the sending institution and the receiving institution or organisation/enterprise in the case of traineeships – should sign a Learning Agreement⁹ prior to the mobility period. In such cases, recognition of the credits by the sending institution is automatic if the conditions stipulated in the Learning Agreement have been fulfilled and if the student is successful in all relevant assessments.

The educational components to be taken abroad, listed in the Learning Agreement, should not be selected on the basis of their equivalence with single educational components offered at home. The learning outcomes of the whole programme of study abroad should be compatible with the learning outcomes of the home degree programme, so that the credits gained in the receiving institution can

⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0132:0170:en:PDF>

⁸ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:255:0022:0142:EN:PDF>

⁹ The Erasmus+ programme provides templates for the Learning Agreement for studies and for traineeships for institutions participating in the programme. It also provides guidance for institutions on how to use the templates, and sets out specific deadlines institutions need to comply with.

flexibly replace an equivalent number of credits in the home degree programme. Therefore, the Learning Agreement should not only identify a set of suitable educational components to be taken at the receiving institution, but also, a set of educational components to be replaced in the home degree programme.

Upon successful completion of the set of educational components taken abroad, the sending institution should fully recognise the agreed number of ECTS credits, by transferring them into the student's programme and using them to satisfy the qualification requirements. If there was any exception to this (e.g. in the case of additional educational components exceeding the required number of credits needed for the student's degree), this should be documented in an annex of the Learning Agreement and agreed by all parties. In cases where it is agreed in advance that credits will not count towards the final degree, additional credits should be recognized and recorded in the student's Transcript of Records and the Diploma Supplement for lifelong learning purposes. It is also recommended that adequate provisions should be made for credit recognition if some educational components are not successfully completed by the student at the receiving institution.

New modes of ICT-enabled learning allow students to access and follow courses outside their own institution ("virtual mobility"). In this case, too, a student should be offered clear academic guidance with the support of a Learning Agreement signed by the sending institution and the student.

The recognition of credits in the framework of joint programmes is stipulated in the regulations of the programme, which has to be coherent and quality assured according to the pre-agreed scheme adopted by the partners. There should be no need for Learning Agreements for mobility in the case of joint programmes as the credits achieved in the partner institution are automatically recognised if the rules of the joint programme are followed and the conditions are satisfied.

Nota Bene

The Golden Rule of recognition

All credits gained during the period of study abroad or during the virtual mobility - as agreed in the Learning Agreement and confirmed by the Transcript of Records - should be fully recognised and counted towards the student's degree without any additional work by or assessment of the student.

422 Institutional rules and regulations

Experience has shown that the following recommendations facilitate the management of mobility and recognition.

First, clear statements on principles of recognition of other learning experiences should be available at the institutional level. Institutional rules should deal with different aspects of credit accumulation and transfer through various types of mobility, work experience, virtual learning, prior and informal learning.

As for periods of mobility abroad, the institution should ensure that student application procedures and selection criteria are transparent and fair, and that an appeal mechanism is in place.

Selection of partner institutions

It is suggested to make exchange agreements with institutions:

- that offer adequate descriptions of their programmes, including credits, learning outcomes, teaching and learning approaches and assessment methods;
- whose teaching, learning and assessment procedures can be accepted by the sending institution without requiring the student to take any additional work or examination.

Agreements should not only be made with institutions offering similar programmes, but also with those providing programmes that are complementary to the ones of the institution, thus making further opportunities available to the students.

Integration of mobility into programmes

In order to structure mobility into curricula it is recommended to:

- identify the semester or year when a period of study abroad would best fit into the programme (mobility window);
- schedule in that semester/year the educational components whose learning outcomes can be more easily achieved abroad (e.g. international or comparative courses, supplementary/elective courses, preparation of dissertation, language courses, traineeships, etc.),
- identify where similar, complementary, and coherent learning outcomes could be achieved within the partner institutions, departments or curricula.

Allocation of academic responsibilities

An academic should be appointed in each department or subject area, who should have the formal authority to:

- sign the Learning Agreement, so to approve the student's programme of study abroad and exceptionally amend it, if needed;
- guarantee, on behalf of the responsible academic body, that the above-mentioned programme of study abroad will be fully recognised, if successfully completed. Students should not be asked to negotiate academic recognition with individual staff members or with a committee, neither before nor after their study abroad period.

Interaction with single outgoing students

Before the departure of the student, the responsible staff member should discuss with the student, and finally approve, a Learning Agreement containing a programme of study abroad. This programme will have learning outcomes compatible to the programme in the sending institution, but it will not necessarily have the same content. The number of credits to be gained at the receiving institution should be proportional to the time of study abroad. The student is expected to take educational components of about 30 ECTS credits per semester or 20 ECTS credits per trimester.

The receiving institution commits to provide the sending institution and the student with a Transcript of Records containing all the educational components agreed in the Learning Agreement within a certain period of time (stipulated between the two institutions) after publication/proclamation of the student's results at the receiving institution.

After the return of the student, the responsible person at the sending institution should:

- Issue a Recognition Document that indicates the educational components successfully completed abroad, together with the credits and marks awarded, as well as the educational components of the home programme that have been replaced by them.
- Transfer all credits gained abroad into the student's official records at the sending institution.

The educational components successfully completed abroad will subsequently be included in the Diploma Supplement with their original titles (and their translation if applicable), specifying the institution where they have been taken, the credits and marks awarded. In the case of traineeships abroad, the transfer of credits will be documented in the Traineeship Certificate and the Diploma Supplement or Europass Mobility Document (in the case of recent graduates' traineeships the use of the Europass Mobility Document is strongly recommended).

It is also possible to recognize the mobility period abroad as a whole, with the total number of credits. In these cases, it is essential that the transcript of records of the receiving institution be included in the Diploma Supplement, specifying the learning outcomes achieved abroad.

423 Grade Distribution Table

The ECTS Grading Table was introduced in the ECTS users' guide in 2009 as a replacement for the previous ECTS grading scales. It allows universities to ensure fair transfer and recognition of grades of mobile students.

European educational systems have developed different approaches to grading, rooted in their pedagogical and cultural traditions. While it is essential to acknowledge these differences, it is also important to make them transparent within the European Higher Education Area, so that grades attributed in all countries, institutions or subject areas can be properly understood and, when necessary, compared. Mobile students have a right to a fair treatment of their grades when credits are transferred from one institution/country to another, as grants or other benefits may depend on their level of performance. Transparency of performance levels is equally important for graduates applying for a job in their own or in another country.

To tackle this problem, in addition to describing the grades of their national/institutional grading scale, each European institution should provide a statistical distribution table of passing grades in a *standardised* format (Grade Distribution Table) so as to ensure transparent and coherent information on institutional grading traditions and student performance. A Grade Distribution Table is completed for a homogenous reference group of reliable size (number of students, number of years awarded, etc.). This generally consists of the positive grades awarded in degree programmes belonging to the same field of study. Based on the reference group identified, the total numbers and the percentages (including cumulative percentages) of the passing 'local' grades awarded to these students, over a given period of time, are calculated.

Therefore, grading distribution tables represent the statistical distribution of positive grades (pass and above) awarded in each field of study in a specific institution. They show how the national scale is actually being used in that context and allow for comparison with the statistical distribution of grades in a parallel reference group of another institution.

The following is an illustrative example of how a grading table could be presented:

National/institutional grades (from highest to lowest passing grade)	Number of passing grades awarded to the reference group	Percentage of each grade with respect to the total passing grades awarded	Cumulative percentage of passing grades awarded
10	50	5%	5%
9	100	10%	15%
8	350	35%	50%
7	300	30%	80%
6	200	20%	100%
Total:	1,000	100%	

This Grade Distribution Table can be produced for national/institutional grading scales of any size from data for a given reference group which are easily available in institutional records. When included in the Transcripts of Records and Diploma Supplements of the students from the degree programmes included in the reference group, the table will facilitate the interpretation of each grade awarded to them and will allow for the conversion of grades from one system or context to another. Therefore, it does justice to the level of academic performance of all learners. Used correctly, it

bridges different grading systems as well as different cultures in the European Higher Education Area and beyond.

The following steps should be taken to produce the Grade Distribution Table:

1. Identify the reference group for which the grade distribution will be calculated.
2. Calculate the number of passing grades awarded to the reference group identified. Fail grades/marks are therefore not included.
3. Calculate the grade distribution in terms of percentages and cumulative percentages for the reference group. Develop a table with both percentages for each group.
4. Include the Grade Distribution Table (in full or in abridged version) for the reference group in every Transcript of Records/Diploma Supplement of students/graduates from such group.
5. Compare your own Grade Distribution Table with the one developed by another institution for a parallel reference group in the same cycle. The position of each mark/grade within the two tables can be compared and, on the basis of this comparison, individual grades are converted.

The first four steps in the procedure concern all programmes and are purely administrative tasks. The academic responsible for credit transfer may get involved in step 5 when general guidelines for the conversion of grades are being established.

Example based on two Grade Distribution Tables in two institutions using different grading systems:

Institution country X (*National system with passing grades between 18 and 30 cum laude*)

National/institutional grade (from highest to lowest passing grade)	Percentage of each grade with respect to the total passing grades awarded	Cumulative percentage of passing grades awarded
30 cum laude	5.7%	5,7
30	15.7%	21,4
29	0.5%	21,9
28	12.3%	34,2
27	11.8%	46
26	9.0%	55
25	8.2%	63,2
24	11.3%	74,5
23	2.7%	77,2
22	6.0%	83,2
21	2.3%	85,5
20	5.7%	91,2
19	1.9%	93,1
18	6.9%	100
Total:	100%	

Institution country Y (*National system with passing grades between 10 and 20*)

National/institutional grade (from highest to lowest passing grade)	Percentage of each grade with respect to the total passing grades awarded	Cumulative percentage of passing grades awarded
20	0%	0
19	0.06%	0,06
18	0.22%	0.28
17	0.43%	0,71
16	2.30%	3,01
15	3.65%	6,66
14	9.46%	16,12
13	12.05%	28,17
12	18.45%	46,62
11	18.59%	65,21
10	34.79%	100
Total:	100%	

In this example, 27 in the institution X is easily converted into 12 in the institution Y.

5 ECTS and Lifelong Learning

Not all learners are full-time students enrolled in regular learning programmes. A growing number of learners follow 'stand-alone' educational units, without necessarily pursuing a specific qualification. Higher education institutions face increasing demands to satisfy the needs of a diversified student group and to provide individual learning pathways. Consequently, a large number of them are diversifying their offer, providing these educational units with innovative modes of teaching and learning for all, through new technologies and open educational resources.

The use of ECTS for lifelong learning enhances the transparency of learning programmes, provided that learning outcomes are recognised by higher education institutions. The fact that all learning achievements are documented and awarded a corresponding number of ECTS credits makes it possible for learners to have this learning recognised with a view of achieving a qualification, when the learning outcomes satisfy its requirements. Validation and recognition instruments used in formal education should adapt to the emergence of a much more diversified and flexible educational offer, including new forms of learning made possible by technology (blended learning, on-line learning, MOOCS).

When using ECTS for lifelong learning, the same principles for credit allocation, award, accumulation and transfer apply. As for credits allocated to components that are part of programmes, credits allocated to continuing education are based on the workload typically needed to achieve the defined learning outcomes.

Credits awarded for continuing education may be recognised and accumulated towards a qualification or not, depending on the desire of the learner and/or the requirements for the award of the qualification. Some learners may only be interested in following a particular educational component without wishing to obtain the qualification.

In terms of recognition of prior learning, higher education institutions should have the competence to award credits also for learning outcomes acquired outside the formal learning context through work experience, voluntary work, independent study, etc., provided that these learning outcomes satisfy the requirements of their qualifications or components. The recognition of the learning outcomes gained through non-formal and informal learning should be automatically followed by the award of the same number of ECTS credits attached to the corresponding part of the formal programme.

As with formal education, the award of credit is preceded by an assessment to verify the achievement of learning outcomes. The assessment methods and criteria should be constructed so as to measure the achievement of the required learning outcomes at the appropriate level, without reference to specific learning activities. For example, "participation in classroom discussion" of the subject matter would no longer be considered in assessment, whereas the corresponding learning outcome of "constructing arguments while interacting with a group" would become relevant.

Institutions are encouraged to publish their recognition policy and practices for non-formal or informal learning prominently on their website.

These policies should include elements such as feedback to learners on the results of the assessment or the possibility for learners to appeal. Institutions are also encouraged to create facilities for advice, counselling and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. These may take different forms depending on national and institutional practices (e.g., they may exist within single higher education institutions or as joint centres for several institutions).

By implementing procedures for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, the social dimension of higher education institutions is strengthened. Institutions fulfil the objective of facilitating access to learners from professional life and a range of non-traditional learning environments, and thus contribute to making lifelong learning a reality.

Nota Bene

The process of awarding credit to non-formal or informal learning has four main stages:

1. Initial advice and guidance (what does the process involve for the learner, what credit limits there are for non-formal/informal learning, what are the costs, roles and responsibilities of learner and tutor/advisor; and different learning pathways to a qualification)
2. Support (reflective process; understanding learning outcomes; identifying own learning outcomes; evidence gathering and selection)
3. Recognition/assessment (assessment of evidence of achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria)
4. Award of credit (credit awarded through this process is of same value as credit gained through formal learning)

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6 ECTS and Quality Assurance

The primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with each institution, as agreed by Education Ministers of the countries involved in the Bologna Process.¹⁰ Internal quality assurance involves all procedures undertaken by higher education institutions to ensure that the quality of their programmes and qualifications meets their own specifications and those of other bodies legitimately empowered to make specifications on the education the institution provides. External quality reviews undertaken by quality assurance agencies provide feedback to institutions and information to stakeholders. Quality assurance principles and processes are the same for all modes of teaching and learning (formal, non-formal, informal, new modes of teaching, learning and assessment). Taken together, internal and external quality assurance aim to implement the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.¹¹

Nota Bene

[The text concerning the use of ECTS and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) will be provided at a later stage, in line with the revision of the ESG]

In line with the ESG, the use of ECTS and its instruments enhances the quality of programmes and mobility in an institution. The implementation and use of ECTS by higher education institutions should also be quality assured through appropriate processes (e.g. monitoring internal and external quality reviews and students' feedback).

The quality of ECTS implementation can be made visible in the following ways:

- educational components are expressed in terms of appropriate learning outcomes, and clear information is available concerning their level, credits, delivery and assessment;
- studies can be completed in the time officially allocated to them (i.e., the workload associated with an academic year, a semester, trimester or a single course component is realistic);
- annual monitoring examines any variations in patterns of achievement and results gained;
- students are provided with detailed information and advice so that they can follow progression rules, exploit options for flexible pathways and select educational components at an appropriate level for their qualification;
- information on the results gained is sent promptly to the student.

With regard to mobile students and recognition this means that:

- credit transfer processes are included in the monitoring, review and validation procedures;
- appropriate staff are designated as responsible for credit transfer and recognition matters;

¹⁰ *Realising the European Higher Education Area*. Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003.

¹¹ [http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20(2).pdf)

- Learning Agreements are completed in all cases; their development, and any subsequent changes to them, should be subject to sensitive yet robust approval processes¹²;
- Incoming mobile students undertake educational components from the existing Course Catalogue; they are assessed and graded like local students;
- detailed transcripts are provided recording the credits and grades awarded;
- recognition is given to all credits associated with successfully completed educational components undertaken as part of an approved Learning Agreement (taking into account any exceptions that may have been initially agreed by all the parties in an annex); results should be issued and transmitted promptly;
- grading tables exist for interpreting the grades awarded, so that also grades – and not just credits – are properly reflected in any final qualifications gained.

Student representatives should be actively engaged in all quality assurance processes.

There are three levels of student engagement:

1. Internal level, where students: provide information (by responding to surveys on a regular basis, focus groups, etc.); participate in the preparation of self-assessment reports of the institution (as members of the self-evaluation group, writing the report, providing feedback to the report etc.); are actively engaged in the bodies responsible for internal quality assurance processes, with voting rights.
2. External level, where students: provide information (in consultation during external reviews), and are members of external review panels of higher education institutions and/or programmes, where they can be observers in the expert teams, have full-member status while sometimes holding the positions of chair and secretary within the teams, and have a recognised role at the decision-making level (essentially in audits or accreditation of programmes).
3. Governance of national quality assurance agencies, where students are members of the consultative and governance bodies and they plan the evaluation/accreditation programmes.

¹² The notion of sensitive 'fair recognition' and not strict equivalence should be used in developing learning agreements, as outlined in the 1997 *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region*, Explanatory Report: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/165.htm>

7 ECTS and Key Documents

The key documents described in this section constitute a widely used and accepted way of communicating those elements of information, which are useful for all learners (including mobile and non-mobile students), academic and administrative staff, employers and other stakeholders. Using the key documents correctly enhances recognition of study periods of the mobile students. It also ensures transparency of quality in higher education in general and of mobility in particular.

Increasingly, institutions keep track of learners' achievements in a systematic way within a computerised student records system, which makes it possible to generate data for the key documents and other documents such as the Diploma Supplement¹³. To serve the needs of the mobile students, institutions should record their achievements in a transparent and easily understood way. Therefore, this Guide provides the information items that should be included in the main mobility documents in order to foster better understanding between different institutions and countries.

71 Course Catalogue

The first key document is the Course Catalogue. It includes the information on the institution's learning environment that should be available to students before registering and in the course of their studies, to enable them to make the right choices and use their time most efficiently.

A checklist of the recommended contents of the Course Catalogue is given below. The checklist indicates the full range of information that should be provided. It is essential that information about the qualifications offered, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures, the level of programmes, the individual educational components and the learning resources available to students be well documented and easily understood. In the case of joint programmes, some additional elements should be added (see checklist).

The exact format of the Catalogue, as well as the exact sequencing of the information, is to be decided by the institution. It may be considered more appropriate to separate the general information for students from the academic information. In any case, all information should be detailed, user-friendly and up-to-date. The Catalogue should be published on the institution's website so that all interested parties can easily access it. It should be published sufficiently in advance for students to make their choices.

All learners should be able to identify an individual who will be able to give them relevant advice, at either institutional or departmental/subject level. It is therefore important that the Catalogue should include the names of people to contact, with information about how, when and where to contact them.

Transparency and accessibility apply equally to language. The publication should be available on the website, indicating the original course / subject titles at the receiving institution in the national language and in English.

Checklist for the Course Catalogue

Part 1 – Information on the institution:

- name and address
- academic calendar
- academic authorities
- general description of the institution (including type and status)
- list of programmes offered
- general admission requirements, including language policy
- general arrangements for the recognition of prior learning (formal, informal and non-formal)
- general registration procedures

¹³ The Diploma Supplement is also part of the package of Europass transparency tools. <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Introduction/navigate.action>

- ECTS credit allocation based on the student workload needed in order to achieve defined learning outcomes
- Arrangements for academic guidance

Part 2 – Information on programmes

General description:

- qualification awarded (in case of joint programme, please specify)
- level of qualification (QF-EHEA or EQF-LLL)
- specific admission requirements
- specific arrangements for recognition of prior learning (formal, non-formal and informal)
- qualification requirements and regulations
- profile of the programme
- key learning outcomes
- occupational profiles of graduates
- access to further studies
- programme structure diagram with credits (60 per full-time academic year)
- traineeship(s), if any
- examination regulations, assessment and grading
- graduation requirements
- mode of study (full-time, part-time, e-learning,...),
- programme director or equivalent

For joint programmes, also add:

- members of consortium and their role
- mobility structure of the programme

Description of individual educational components:

- title
- code
- type (compulsory, optional)
- level (e.g. first, second or third cycle; sub-level if applicable)
- year of study (if applicable)
- semester/trimester when the component is delivered
- number of ECTS credits allocated
- name of lecturer(s)
- learning outcomes
- mode of delivery (face-to-face, distance learning)
- prerequisites and co-requisites, if any
- course contents
- recommended or required reading and other learning resources/tools
- planned learning activities and teaching methods
- assessment methods and criteria
- language of instruction

Part 3 – General information for students:

- cost of living
- accommodation
- meals
- medical facilities
- facilities for special needs students
- insurance
- financial support for students
- student affairs office

- learning facilities
- international programmes
- practical information for mobile students
- language courses
- internships
- sports and leisure facilities
- student associations

72 Learning Agreement

A Learning Agreement should be drawn up for all types of mobility, be it traditional mobility under the exchange programme, short-term mobility, e.g. intensive study programme, or virtual mobility. It should be signed by the student, the sending institution, and the receiving institution. Those signing on behalf of the two institutions should be in a formal position of authority, which allows them to commit the institutions. For the receiving institution, the commitment is to register the incoming student in the planned educational components and to provide the required learning activities; for the sending institution, it is to grant recognition of the credits gained at the other institution. The Learning Agreement, the Transcript of Records together with the Recognition Document in the case of mobility for studies, or the Traineeship certificate in the case of traineeships, are designed to guarantee full recognition of the credits gained in the receiving institution or organisation. It is not necessary to circulate papers with the original signatures of the three parties, since the approval of the Learning agreement is possible through digital signatures or copies of scanned signatures sent electronically.

Learning Agreement for studies

The Learning Agreement provides a binding agreement before mobility takes place. Learning Agreements contain the list of the educational components the student is planning to take at the other institution, together with the code numbers and the ECTS credits allocated to them.

Changes to the Learning Agreement should be avoided in order to prevent recognition problems. Nevertheless, any of the three party can request, within a given period of time, changes to the programme of study, the responsible persons and/or study period. For example, a programme of study agreed by the three parties may need to be modified after the arrival of the mobile student at the receiving institution. However, this should not be common if the Learning Agreement is well prepared before the mobility period, and the receiving institution has respected its commitment to verify that the educational components in the Learning Agreement are in line with its updated Course Catalogue.

The amended version of the Learning Agreement should be signed again, within a given period of time, by the same three parties concerned: the student, the sending institution, and the receiving institution. Only in this way, the full recognition of the period of study continues to be guaranteed.

A good model form for the Learning Agreement for studies would contain all the basic elements of the checklist below:

1. Name and contact of the student.
2. Names, addresses and academic and/or administrative contact persons of sending and receiving institutions.
3. Subject area at sending institution.
4. Study cycle.
5. Period of study (from/to).
6. Study programme abroad: set of educational components to be taken at receiving institution (with codes and ECTS credits) with the link to the course catalogue at the receiving institution.

7. Commitment from the receiving institution to verify that the educational components in the Learning Agreement are in line with its course catalogue.
8. Set of educational components at the degree programme from the sending institution towards which the components taken abroad are counted.
9. Commitment from the sending institution to recognise all the credits gained at the receiving institution for the successfully completed educational components and to count them towards the student's degree.
10. Annex explaining exceptions regarding recognition towards the home degree in the case of additional components taken above the number of credits required to complete the degree.
11. Provisions that will apply in case part of the set of educational components at the receiving institution would not be successfully completed by the student.
12. Level of competence in the language of instruction that the student has or agrees to acquire by the start of the study period.
13. Signatures of the three parties (sending and receiving institutions, and student).
14. Provisions for changes in the Learning Agreement.

Learning Agreement for traineeships

Learning Agreements are also essential for traineeships. They should contain the same basic elements as the Learning Agreement for studies, although obviously there are differences.

In the case of traineeships, the Learning Agreement should clearly indicate the location of the traineeship, the period of the traineeship, the work (activities) to be undertaken (job description), the learner's rights and duties, and the defined learning outcomes. It will also need to indicate what assessment methods and criteria will be used in relation to the learning outcomes and who will be responsible for this, i.e. the role of the traineeship provider (employer) and, whenever applicable, the receiving institution.

The Learning Agreement for traineeships should be signed by the three parties: the learner (trainee), the sending institution and the traineeship provider (employer). Where a receiving institution is involved, for example in monitoring, it is also expected to sign the agreement. The primary responsibility lies with the qualification awarding institution. The Learning Agreement should indicate the number of ECTS credits that will be awarded on achievement of the defined learning outcomes.

A good model form for the Learning Agreement for traineeships would contain all the basic elements of the checklist below:

1. Name and contact of the trainee.
2. Names, addresses and contact persons of sending institution and receiving organisation/enterprise.
3. Subject area at sending institution.
4. Study cycle.
5. Size of the organisation/enterprise.
6. Period of training (from/to) and ECTS credits.
7. Detailed programme of the traineeship period, including tasks/deliverables and associated timing.
8. Number of working hours per week.
9. Learning outcomes to be acquired by the trainee at the end of the traineeship.

10. Level of competence in the workplace language that the trainee has or agrees to acquire by the start of the study period.
11. Monitoring arrangements and evaluation plan.
12. Commitment from the sending institution to award the agreed number of ECTS credits upon satisfactory completion of the traineeship (mandatory when the traineeship is embedded in the curriculum).
13. Commitment from the receiving organisation/enterprise to issue a Traineeship Certificate upon completion of the traineeship.
14. Signatures of the three parties (sending institution, traineeship provider and trainee).
15. Provisions for changes for the Learning Agreement for traineeships.

73 Transcript of Records (mobility for studies)

The Transcript of Records provides in an agreed format an up-to-date record of the students' progress in mobility for studies: the educational components they have taken, the number of ECTS credits they have achieved and the grades they have been awarded.

The receiving institution provides a Transcript of Records to each mobile student and sends it to the sending institution at the end of their period of study, in order to formally certify the work completed, the credits awarded, and the local grades received during the mobility period. The Transcript of Records should be sent within a certain period of time (stipulated between the two institutions) after publication/proclamation of the student's results at the receiving institution in order to avoid delays in the recognition procedures at the sending institution.

Since the Transcript is a vital document for recording the progress of all students and for recognising learning achievements, it is crucial to determine who is responsible for producing it, how it is issued and how it is delivered. Most institutions produce the transcript of records from the institutional databases that do not always respect the fact that the Transcript will be used in another institutional or educational milieu. This may result in the information being incomplete or unclear for other institutions, thus creating difficulties for recognising study periods abroad.

A good model form for the Transcript of Records would contain all the basic elements of the checklist below:

1. Name and contact of the student
2. Names and contacts of sending and receiving institutions
3. Field of study at sending institution
4. Year of study and reference to EQF (for outgoing student) / period of study (for incoming student)
5. Educational components taken at the institution (with codes, credits and local grades)
6. Description of the institutional grading system
7. Whether the educational component was successfully completed or not and grades awarded
8. Grade Distribution Table for the reference group identified
9. Date, stamp and signature of the responsible person

Recognition Document (mobility for studies)

After the receipt of the Transcript of Records from the receiving institution and without further requirements from the student, the sending institution issues the Recognition Document to the student, to provide transparency and bring forward the value of the student's mobility for studies experience. This document includes the information present in the Transcript of Records, as well as information to the student on the recognition outcomes towards the degree programme.

A good model form for the Recognition Document would contain all the basic elements of the checklist below:

1. Name of the student.
2. Subject area at sending institution.
3. Study cycle.
4. Actual period of study (from/to).
5. Set of educational components taken at receiving institution with codes and ECTS credits and statement on whether the student has successfully completed them and grades awarded.
6. Set of educational components at the degree from the sending institution towards which the components taken abroad are counted, number of credits awarded and sending institution grade (if applicable).
7. Annex explaining exceptions regarding recognition towards the home degree in the case of additional components taken above the number of credits required to complete the degree.
8. Signature of the sending institutions.

74 Traineeship Certificate (mobility for traineeships)

The traineeship certificate aims to provide transparency and bring forward the value of the experience of the learner's mobility for traineeships. This document is issued by the receiving organisation/enterprise upon the student's completion of the traineeship, and it can be complemented by other documents such as letters of recommendation. A good model form for the Traineeship Certificate would contain all the basic elements of the checklist below:

1. Name of the trainee.
2. Name of the receiving organisation/enterprise.
3. Sector of the receiving organisation/enterprise.
4. Address of the receiving organisation/enterprise [street, city, country, phone, e-mail address] and website.
5. Start and end of the traineeship.
6. Traineeship title.
7. Detailed programme of the traineeship period including tasks carried out by the trainee.
8. Knowledge, skills (intellectual and practical) and competences acquired (learning outcomes achieved).
9. Evaluation of the trainee.
10. Name and signature of the responsible person at the receiving organisation/enterprise.

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Annexes

Glossary

Recommended reading list (to be updated)

[Other appendices to be decided]

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