

Final document

4.1 Activity: Review of existing ECT System

According to the document **ECTS USERS' GUIDE (Brussels 14 February 2005)** „ECTS makes study programmes easy to read and compare. It can be used for all types of programmes, whatever their mode of delivery, and for lifelong learning purposes. It serves both mobile and non-mobile students: it can be used for accumulation within an institution and for transfer between institutions. ECTS helps learners moving between countries, within a country, town or region, as well as between different types of institutions; it also covers self-study and work experience. “

The most important parts from above document are given furthermore.

- **ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System)** is a system for increasing the transparency of educational systems and facilitating the mobility of students across Europe through credit transfer. It is based on the general assumption that the global workload of an academic year of study is equal to 60 credits. The 60 credits are then allocated to course units or modules to describe the proportion of the student workload required for achievement of the related learning outcomes. Credit transfer is guaranteed by explicit agreements signed by the home institution, the host institution and the mobile student.
- **ECTS is based on the principle that 60 credits measure the workload of a full-time student during one academic year.** The student workload of a full-time study programme in Europe amounts in most cases to around 1500-1800 hours per year and in those cases one credit stands for around 25 to 30 working hours.
- Credits in ECTS can only be obtained after successful completion of the work required and appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes achieved.
- **Allocation of credits** to the different components of a study year is based on realistic estimation of the student workload required for the average student to achieve the learning outcomes established for each of the components.

Good practice in credit allocation suggests that institutions should use a common basic number of credits (for example 5 or 6) which makes it easier to combine credits from different departments.

- **Determining student workload:**
 - Introducing modules/course units
 - Estimating student workload



Teachers estimate the time required to complete the activities foreseen for each course unit / module. The workload expressed in time should match the number of credits available for the course unit. Teachers must develop suitable strategies to use to best advantage the time available.

- Checking the estimated workload through student evaluations

The most common method is the use of questionnaires to be completed by students, either during the learning process or after the completion of the course.

- Adjustment of workload and/or educational activities

Tuning offers two forms that can be helpful in making decisions on and adjustment of the student workload. The first form is for the teacher to plan the educational module and estimate the student working hours involved. The second is for the student to indicate the actual amount of time spent on the module, thus providing an opportunity to check whether the estimated workload corresponds to reality.

- **Learning outcomes** are sets of competences, expressing what the student will know, understand or be able to do after completion of a process of learning, whether long or short. Learning outcomes specify the requirements for award of credit.
- **The ECTS grading scale** is based on the rank of a student in a given assessment that is how he/she performed relative to other students. The ECTS system classifies students into broad groups and thus makes interpretation of ranking simpler. It is this grouping that lies at the heart of the ECTS grading system.

The ECTS system initially divides students between pass and fail groups, and then assesses the performance of these two groups separately. Those obtaining passing grades are divided into five subgroups: the best 10% are awarded an A-grade, the next 25% a B-grade, the following 30% a C-grade, the following 25% a D-grade and the final 10% an E-grade.

Those who have not achieved a performance sufficient to allow a passing grade are divided into two subgroups: FX (Fail – some more work required before credit can be awarded) and F (Fail – considerable further work is required). This distinction allows differentiation between those students who have been assessed as almost passing and those who have clearly lacked the required knowledge and skills.

- **The Information Package/Course Catalogue** is the most important ECTS document. It should make study programmes easy to understand and compare for all students and staff – local and foreign – and provide them with essential institutional, academic and practical information.

The Information Package/Course Catalogue is not a special guide solely for mobile students. It should be a document used by all students – local and visiting students alike.

The Information Package/Course Catalogue is essential because it provides all the necessary information on study programmes and it must be available before students undertake their studies.

- **The ECTS Student Application Form** has been developed for mobile students, who will spend a limited study period at a university in another



country. Students who intend to take their degree at another university will enroll according to the regular procedures of the institution concerned and will fill in other types of application forms.

- **The ECTS Learning Agreement** has been developed for mobile students, spending a limited period of time at a university in another country as is the case in the Erasmus programme
- **The ECTS Transcript of Records** is used to document the performance of a student over a certain period of time by listing the course units or modules taken, the credits gained, the local grades awarded and preferably the corresponding ECTS grades. It reflects both the quantity of work and the quality of achievement.

The achievements of all students, not only mobile students, can be handled systematically within a single computerized system in the Transcript of Records format. This will make it possible to insert an ECTS Transcript of Records in the Diploma Supplement issued to all graduating students, whether they were mobile or not.

- An **ECTS label** may be awarded to institutions which apply ECTS in the correct way in all degree programmes. Institutions from all Bologna Signatory States may apply for the ECTS label. Assessment of applications from other countries is not excluded but can not be guaranteed at this stage.
- **The Diploma Supplement** is an annex, an explanatory note attached to a diploma awarded by a higher education institution. It helps to explain the diploma which may often be understood only within the country concerned. When fully completed, this document provides all the information necessary to make a valid assessment of any degree or qualification.

The Supplement should be issued to every student of every type of degree programme, upon graduation, together with their official diploma, free of charge, in a widely spoken European language.

- A **Diploma Supplement Label** will be awarded to institutions issuing the Diploma Supplement correctly to every student, upon graduation, together with the diploma, free of charge and in a widely spoken European language.

Complete document „ECTS USERS' GUIDE“ available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/doc/guide_en.pdf

All of three EU partner institutions (Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of Maribor; School of Computing, Mathematical and Information Sciences, University of Brighton; Institute for Information Systems and Computer Media, University of Technology Graz) at TEMPUS JEP project „M.Sc. curriculum in e-Learning“ introduced credit system into their study programs.

Each partner institution has information package/course catalogue for their prospective students.



Education and Culture
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JEP - 41016 - 2006
M.Sc. Curriculum in E-Learning

Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of Maribor published document „Information package/International Exchange Students' Guide“ in December 2005. Document is available for foreign students at <http://www.feri.uni-mb.si/povezava.aspx?pid=133>.

At University of Brighton national CATS (Credit Accumulation and Transfer) scheme is in use. Students on other credit schemes can also gain credits for studying at University of Brighton.

School of Computing, Mathematical and Information Sciences, University of Brighton published Course Handbook 2007/2008 for Postgraduate programme in Interactive Technologies, available at

http://student.bton.ac.uk/Module_docs/CMIS/programme%20handbooks/PGPIT%20Hbk.pdf

Graz University of Technology is already advanced in regard to implementation of Bologna goals (ECTS Label-Holder since 2004, being one of only 11 universities in Europe at that time): All but one study programmes have been changed into the bachelor – master cycle, ECTS is being used for all study programmes. All about ECTS at TU Graz available at

http://portal.tugraz.at/portal/page?_pageid=133,68212&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

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