ECTS-A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR RECOGNITION

Gayane Harutyunayn,
Head of Bologna Secretariat, Armenia
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NECTS - EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER & ACCUMULATION SYSTEM

BRIEF HISTROY-HOW DID IT DEVELOPED?

• **1989 EU Pilot**: ECTS was introduced as a pilot scheme in ERASMUS Program (145 HEI, 5 subject areas).

• **1999: Bologna Declaration** identified ECTS as a tool to be used for all students rather than for purposes of recognition.

• **2002 EUA Zürich conference**: endorsed the central role of ECTS in higher education: accumulation & transfer; workload and learning outcomes.

• ECTS is adopted as the national credit system in majority of the Bologna countries and most of them have done it by law.
BASICS

- 47 member countries
- 8 consultative members:
  - Higher Education Institutions-EUA EURASHE
  - Students and faculty-ESU, EI
  - Other stakeholders-ENQA, BUSINESSEUROPE
  - International institutions-European Commission, Council of Europe, UNESCO;
  - EQAR
- Over 6000 universities
- 30 mln student population
TOOLS FOR RECOGNITION: MUTUALLY INTERLINKED

- Lisbon Recognition Convention
- Diploma Supplement
- ENIC-NARIC Network, etc.
- EAR-Manual
- ECTS
- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
- National QA systems
- Overarching Qualifications Frameworks: QF-EHEA and EQF for LLL
- National qualifications frameworks—can contain more detailed national credits
- Learning outcomes

arrangements
ECTS USER’S GUIDE: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 1994 - ECTS for transfer
- 2005 - ECTS for accumulation and transfer
- 2009 - ECTS for accumulation and lifelong learning
- 2015 - ECTS will take into account recent developments: establishment of EHEA, consolidation of lifelong learning; learner-centred HE; increasing role of learning outcomes, etc.

*Further slides are based on 2009 ECTS Users’ Guide.*
STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE (2009)

• Six parts: introduces ECTS as a tool, its operational principles and the contexts in which it is used
• References for further reading
• Glossary
• Five annexes:
  • Learners’ perspective in using ECTS
  • Suggestions on recognition
  • ECTS Grading table
  • Standard key documents
  • Overview of national regulations
MAIN PARTS OF THE GUIDE

Key Features
- ECTS as a learner-centred credit system
- ECTS & LOs
- ECTS, levels & level descriptors
- ECTS credits & workload

Principles-Implementing in HEIs
- ECTS credit allocation
- Awarding credits
- ECTS credit accumulation & progression
- Credit transfer in ECTS
- ECTS & LLL

Tools-Key documents
- Course Catalogue
- Students application form
- Learning agreement
- Transcript of records

QA & ECTS QFs & ECTS
ECTS KEY FEATURES

• ECTS system now turned to a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer based on the transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes.
• Widely used in formal higher education and can be applied to any mode of delivery (full-time, part-time, distance learning).
• An instrument to facilitate planning, delivery, evaluation, recognition and validation of prior learning and their parts (e.g. modules, course components, work placements, thesis, etc.) & learner mobility
• This approach opens possibilities to use the ECTS credit system for other activities as well (lifelong learning, i.e. prior learning – non-formal education and/or informal learning)
• ECTS credits are based on the workload students need in order to achieve expected learning outcomes
• 60 credits are attached to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning and associated learning outcomes
• Student workload ranges from 1500 - 1800 hours for an academic year; (38-42 weeks)
• 1(one) credit corresponds to 25-30 hours or work
LEARNING OUTCOMES (LO)

- LOs describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning. They relate to level descriptors in national and European qualifications frameworks.

- LOs are explicit statements about the outcomes of learning, i.e. the results of learning – two possible approaches exist: may be either threshold statements (showing min. requirement to obtain a pass) or reference points (showing the expected level of achievement of learners).

- LOs demonstrate a particular methodological approach for the expression and description of the curriculum (modules, units and qualifications) and levels, cycles, subject benchmark statements and the ‘new style’ qualifications frameworks.

- LOs are defined before credit allocation; ECTS credits are allocated on the basis of “the workload students need to achieve expected learning outcomes”
QUALITY ASSURANCE

• ECTS credits are in line with European Standards and Guidelines for QA

• ECTS should be part of the QA of programmes and awards at institutional & national level.

• It is expected to include:
  • explicit LOs (to all educational components)—must be clear which approach is used,
  • curriculum and programme design and content,
  • methods of delivery and assessment,
  • HEIs should regularly publish up-to-dates, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative on programmes and awards they are offering.

• Implementation and use of ECTS by HEIS should be quality assured through appropriate process (internal and external QA, feedback from students, etc.).
FOR RECOGNITION

- Qualifications as well as their educational components are expressed in terms of appropriate learning outcomes and clear information is available concerning their level, credits, delivery and assessment.

- Credit transfer processes are included in monitoring, review and validation procedures (in the internal regulations of the HEI).

- Trained staff with understanding of transfer of ECTS credits and recognition principles ('fair' recognition and not 1-1 equivalence).

- Clear Learning agreements, any changes should be approved.

- Mobile students take learning activities from the Course Catalogue; follow the regime of home students.

- Detailed transcript should be provided.

- Recognition given to all credits awarded for fulfilled learning activities agreed in Learning Agreement.
QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS

ECTS credits are part of qualifications frameworks

- Overarching Qualifications Framework for European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)

- ECTS credits associated with
  
  - 1st cycle (usually called Bachelor): 180 – 240 ECTS; (according to national context “short cycle“ within the 1st cycle – 120 ECTS)
  
  - 2nd cycle (usually called Master): 90-120 ECTS, minimum 60 ECTS gained at Master’s level

- National qualifications frameworks – can contain more detailed national credit arrangements

- High potential for recognition of prior learning; lifelong learning concept
BENEFITS OF ECTS

- Enables students to move freely for study and work
- Builds trust and transparency between HE systems
- Improves relevance and flexibility of curriculum
- Emphasises learning outcomes
- Encourages shift to a learner-centred approach
- Facilitates flexible learning pathways, lifelong learning and the use of new methods of learning and teaching
- Underpins shift to programmes developing skills and competences relevant to the needs of society.
Thank you for your attention!