



# **EUROPE AND CREDITS**

## **EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER (AND ACCUMULATION SYSTEM (ECTS):**

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## Background

Introduction EU ERASMUS mobility scheme in 1987

Every EU country having its **own** educational system:

**3 types:**

- Countries with a workload based credit system
- Countries with a system based on contact hours
- Countries without any system

**Major concern:**

How to organise and guarantee recognition of studies?

## ***Assumption***

Development of an **overarching credit transfer system** conditional for successful student mobility

Proposal: ***European Credit Transfer System*** (ECTS)

EC initiative: five pilot groups (1989-1995), followed-up by support system of counsellors (1996 - 2005)

### **Main features:**

- **60 credits** representing one year of full time studies
- **Credits allocation** on the basis of relative value  
(what is a typical student be able to do in one year?)
- **Workload based**, not contact hours based

## ***Why 60 credits a year?***

➤ ***Proposed by an experts group after studying the different models in the world; accepted by academic world without much debate***

➤ ***Basic assumptions:***

### ***Number of credits per year***

- ***should be unique to any individual country***

- ***should support semester and trimester programmes as well as block programmes (4/5/6 blocks) without applying decimals***

- ***Should allow for ‘communication’ with other existing systems in the world (e.g. Carnegie system USA)***

## *Why workload based?*

- To **bridge** different educational **models**
- To overcome **recognition issues** at country system level
- **Support recognition** of periods of studies in stead of course to course unit recognition by universities
- **Facilitate different types** of structured activities: lectures, seminars, laboratory work, independent work, exercise courses, thesis writing, internships/placements, etc.
- **Be fair to** the time investment of **students** in these activities including preparation and independent work

## As a response to the Bologna Declaration: ***Tuning Educational Structures in Europe*** initiative

One of its objectives: convert ECTS from a transfer system into a ***transfer and accumulation system***

### **Actions:**

- Base **credit allocation** on fixed programmes (***absolute value*** in stead of relative value)
- Decide number of working hours per credit
- ***Change the paradigm***: introduce student centred learning
- Base credit system on a combination of ***workload and intended / achieved learning outcomes***
- Use ECTS for ***curriculum*** design, delivery, evaluation and enhancement

## *Calculating credits*

Survey among ECTS experts to decide workload

**Outcome:** student workload in Europe ranges from (1200) 1500 – 1800 hours.

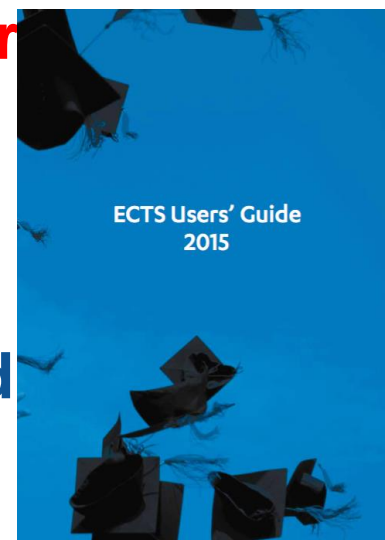
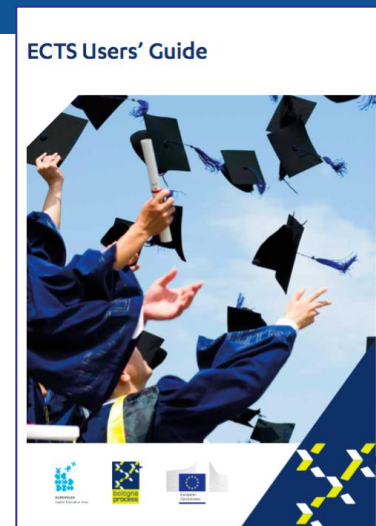
**Decision:** 1 ECTS credit reflects 25-30 hours of workload

Today ECTS system also applied for calculating workload of staff in many countries (in stead of teaching hours)

## Outcome of the experience

Anno 2017: ECTS is the official credit system of all 48 Bologna signature countries

- System **widely accepted** by the academic world
- Tool for both credit **accumulation and transfer**
- Very successful as a key **instrument for recognition** of studies (before and after mobility)
- Basis for documenting periods of studies and degrees: **Transcripts of Records and Diploma Supplement**





감사합니다 Natick  
Danke Ευχαριστίες Dalu  
Grazie Thank You Köszönöm  
Tack Obrigado  
Спасибо Dank Gracias  
谢谢 Merci Seé  
ありがとう