

ECTS KEY FEATURES (1 October 2007)

Number of comments received (13): AT, DE, DK, FR, IE, NL, NO, RO, TR, UK, UKRAINE, EUA, EURASHE

ORIGINAL TEXT	COMMENTS AND AMENDMENTS PROPOSED	REACTION AND CONCLUSION PROPOSED
	<p>General remarks:</p> <p>(UK) include more on the role of ECTS in the EQF (lifelong learning) and EHEA</p> <p>(EUA) How should ECTS be developed in the context of lifelong learning, and how should this be reflected in the key features?</p> <p>(UK) The draft 'key features' omits some important aspects, e.g. no definition of credit or credit level. Suggestion:</p> <p><i>Credit is a quantified means of expressing the volume of learning based on the learning outcomes achieved by an individual learner at a specified level, linked to an appropriate national and international level/cycle descriptor</i></p> <p>(UK) the draft does not include the agreed credit ranges for the first two Bologna cycles – this must be part of any key features</p> <p><i>ECTS credits are linked to the levels of the EQF and the</i></p>	<p>We will explain this aspect in the updated Users' Guide.</p> <p>The proposed text of the Key Features refers to lifelong learning and the recognition of learning acquired in different learning contexts. Further explanations and guidance are certainly needed and will find their place in the updated Guide.</p> <p>This definition omits the link between credits and workload (needed to achieve expected learning outcomes).</p> <p>The Bologna cycle credit ranges will be put prominently in the Users' Guide.</p>

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	<p><i>Bologna cycles on the following basis:</i> <i>First cycle - EQF level 6 - typically 180-240</i> <i>Short cycle (within or linked to first cycle) - EQF levels 5 & 6 - typically 120</i> <i>Second cycle - EQF level 7 - Typically 90-120 – with a minimum of 60 at second cycle level</i> <i>Third cycle - EQF level 8 - No credit ranges allocated</i></p> <p>(UK) - There should be a set of ECTS principles and purposes (4 or 5 statements). In addition the features would benefit from more on lifelong learning. Suggestion:</p> <p><i>ECTS is a meta-credit system that has the potential to facilitate the international measurement and comparison of learning achievements in the context of different qualifications, programmes and learning environments. It facilitates lifelong learning when linked directly to qualifications frameworks and learning outcomes. It provides a standardised means of measuring learning between diverse academic programmes, educational sectors, regions and countries.</i></p> <p>(Ukraine) ECTS Key Features presuppose concordance, mutual recognition and common understanding of the basic concepts (ECTS credits, learning outcomes, workload). Therefore, <i>guidelines</i> for the introduction of these should be worked out. Namely: - allocation of ECTS credits to a separate module, course unit, study programme; - description in terms of learning outcomes of a module, course unit, study programme, that relate to level descriptors in national, sectoral and European qualifications frameworks;</p>	<p>Reaction to first sentence: ECTS is not a meta-credit system it is the local credit system in most countries and used for both accumulation (vast majority of user) and transfer (mobile students). Other sentences: these messages are already in the text.</p> <p>Indeed, we will explain these aspects in the updated Users' Guide.</p>

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	<p>- determination of student workload taking into account basic learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, exams, self study, etc.) required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.</p>	
<p>ECTS is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer based on the transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes. It aims to facilitate planning, delivery, evaluation, recognition and validation of qualifications and units of learning as well as student mobility. ECTS is widely used in formal higher education and can be applied to other lifelong learning activities.</p>	<p>(UK) The use of ECTS for '<i>planning, delivery, evaluation, validation</i>' is mostly a matter of local competence. ECTS is a meta-system in relation to comprehensive local and national credit systems (where detailed regulations and practice is decided by autonomous bodies). Suggestion: <i>ECTS is a meta-credit system that is designed to improve international transparency, recognition and mobility by linking comprehensive national and local credit systems. ECTS does not replace national or local credit systems but augments them by providing a series of overarching reference points that ensure mutual compatibility.</i></p> <p>(UK) The 'key features', do not clarify the distinction between credit transfer and accumulation - ECTS 'key documents' (mentioned in the last line) do <u>not</u> relate to both. Suggestion: <i>The two functions 'credit transfer' and 'credit accumulation' are linked but they have different purposes and applications. Credit transfer refers to the process where the credits and grades obtained during an approved period of study away</i></p>	<p>ECTS is not a meta-credit system it is the local credit system in most countries.</p> <p>The Key Features explain the double function of a single instrument. Credit transfer is a subset of credit accumulation, not a very distinctive phenomenon. ECTS Key Documents serve both transfer and accumulation.</p>

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	<p><i>from the home institution are transferred and accepted as part of the home programme of studies - either between institutions in a national system, or between institutions in different countries (the traditional Erasmus mobility).</i></p> <p><i>Credit accumulation is more comprehensive than credit transfer in that it refers to the credit-based organisation of learning whereby credits are achieved and accumulated over time in relation to any planned programme of study, with or without a transfer element. It impacts on all students within an institution or country and not just those full-time students taking a part of their qualification in another country.</i></p>	
ECTS credits		
<p>ECTS credits are based on expected learning outcomes and the workload students need to achieve them.</p>	<p>(RO) ... the <u>average</u> workload students need ...(supported by IE, NL)</p> <p>(UK) The latest draft still does not integrate the concept of learning outcomes in a meaningful way and workload is still considered the dominant factor in ascribing the number of credits. There is no acknowledgement of the fact that the same learning outcomes can be achieved within different time frames. The workload ranges for an academic year are an unhelpful and misleading part of the Key Features if there is no reference to learning outcomes as a determining factor. Suggestion:</p> <p><i>ECTS credits are expressed in terms of learning outcomes. Sixty credits are attached to the learning outcomes and associated notional workload of a typical full-time year of</i></p>	<p>Okay: ECTS credits are based on expected learning outcomes and the <u>average</u> workload students need to achieve them.</p> <p>Not workload per se, but workload needed to achieve the expected learning outcomes. The text fully acknowledges the other timeframes (contexts). Workload ranges provide reference. Learning outcomes are determining only via the needed workload (in a formal context).</p> <p>Exceptions will be explained in the updated Users' Guide. In formal learning, credits will remain linked to</p>

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	<i>formal learning (an academic year) and 30 credits are attached to a semester. However, learning outcomes can be achieved in different time-frames depending on e.g. the design of the programme and admission criteria, etc.</i>	workload needed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.
<p><u>Learning outcomes</u> describe what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning. They relate to level descriptors in national, sectoral and European qualifications frameworks.</p>	<p>(AT) Many countries do not yet have finalised national qualification systems.</p> <p>(TR) ... learner is expected to know, understand <u>and</u> be able to do...</p> <p>(DE) ... level descriptors in national, sectoral and European qualifications frameworks.</p>	<p>They will in the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Okay</p> <p>Okay</p>
<p><u>Workload</u> indicates the time an average student needs to complete all learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, exams, self study, etc.) required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.</p>	<p>(RO) Workload indicates the <u>average time needed</u> to complete all learning activities(supported by IE, NL)</p> <p>(NL) Workload indicates the <u>average time of all the participating students</u> to complete all learning activities ...</p>	<p>Workload indicates the average time needed to complete all learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, exams, self study, etc.) required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.</p>
<p><u>60 ECTS credits</u> are attached to the learning outcomes and the associated workload of a full time year of formal learning (academic year). Normally, student workload ranges from 1500 to 1800 hours for an academic year, and one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work.</p>	<p>(RO) ... for an academic year, <u>hence</u> one credit corresponds</p> <p>(EURASHE) Would it not be wiser to put 60 credits as a general (average) reference, and <u>put more emphasis on obtaining the degree of 180 credits?</u></p> <p>(TR) Normally, <u>average</u> student workload ranges from <u>1360</u> to <u>1680</u> hours for an academic year, and one credit corresponds to <u>23</u> to <u>28</u> hours of work.</p>	<p>Not necessary</p> <p>The Bologna cycle credit ranges will be put prominently in the Users' Guide.</p> <p>The Current range met with general approval during the consultation.</p>

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	<p>(EUA) Is the key features the appropriate place to define the number of hours per credit / the number of hours per academic year?</p>	<p>The Current range met with general approval during the consultation.</p>
<p>Use of ECTS</p>	<p>(DK) add "<i>The use of ECTS might be subject to further regulations at national level</i>".</p> <p>The reason why we would like to add this sentence is the use of ECTS by Danish non-formal institutions and institutions that are not on a higher education level. There might be a national legislation on its way in Denmark, that entitles the national authorities to interfere with the use of ECTS.</p>	<p>National authorities are free to do so. No need to mention this in the Key Features.</p>
<p><u>Credits are allocated to entire qualifications or study programmes as well as to their educational components</u> (such as modules, course units, dissertation work, work placements, laboratory work, etc.). The number of credits ascribed to each component is based on its weight in terms of the workload students need to achieve the learning outcomes in a formal context.</p>	<p>(RO) ... based on its weight in terms of the <u>average</u> workload students need to achieve (supported by IE, NL)</p> <p>(TR) ... achieve the learning outcomes <u>expected</u> in a formal context...</p> <p>(DK) ... workload students need to achieve the learning outcomes in a formal context</p>	<p>dealt with before</p> <p>dealt with before</p> <p>Okay (educational components are in a formal context)</p>

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<p>Credits are awarded to individual students (<u>full time or part time</u>) after completion of the learning activities required by a formal programme of study or by a single unit and the successful assessment of the expected learning outcomes. Credits may be accumulated in view of obtaining <u>qualifications as decided by the degree awarding institution</u>. If students have already obtained the expected learning outcomes in other learning contexts (formal, non-formal or informal), the associated credits can be awarded after successful assessment, validation or recognition of these learning outcomes.</p>	<p>(RO) replace "unit" by "educational component" (supported by NL; TR suggested educational activity)</p> <p><u>"All credits allocated to an educational component have to be awarded to a student simultaneously."</u></p> <p>(TR) ... other learning <u>environments</u> (formal, non-formal or informal)...</p> <p>(DK) The <u>appropriate number</u> of credits can be awarded after successful assessment ...</p>	<p><u>Credits are awarded to individual students (full time or part time) after completion of the learning activities required by a formal programme of study or by a single educational component and the successful assessment of the expected learning outcomes. Credits may be accumulated in view of obtaining qualifications as decided by the degree awarding institution</u>. If students have already obtained the expected learning outcomes in other learning contexts (formal, non-formal or informal), the associated credits can be awarded after successful assessment, validation or recognition of these learning outcomes.</p> <p>Explanation for conclusion proposed 1) consistent use of words. 2) Associated credits are "appropriate"</p>

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<p><u>Credits awarded in one programme may be transferred into another programme.</u> Such a programme can be offered by the same or another institution. This transfer can only take place if responsible staff recognises the credits acquired elsewhere. Partner institutions should agree in advance on the recognition of periods of study abroad. Credit transfer and accumulation are facilitated by the use of the ECTS Key Documents (Course Catalogue, Student Application Form, Learning Agreement and Transcript of Records) as well as the Diploma Supplement.</p>	<p>(TR) ... (Course Catalogue, Student Application Form, Learning Agreement and Transcript of Records, <u>Proof of Recognition</u>)....</p> <p>(DK) Partner institutions should agree ... What about students who wish to transfer their credits from one programme to another without the two institutions being partners? I would suggest another phrasing instead of “partner institutions” or a sentence about free movers.</p>	<p>The Proof of Recognition (in the files of the institution) will end up in the Transcript of Records and the Diploma Supplement.</p> <p>Free movers are covered by the two preceding sentences.</p>
	<p>(AT) Suggestion to include definition/ description of key documents.</p>	<p>The Key Documents will be defined and explained in the updated Users' Guide.</p>
	<p>(FR), (NO) explicit overall approval of the text</p>	<p>Thanks</p>