

How does the ECTS recognition work in UNIC's inter-university learning and mobility offers?

1. Orientation for staff and teachers at UNIC universities

The aim of UNIC is to create opportunities for students of our ten universities to experience virtual, blended and physical mobility and international learning at and with partner universities.

To support students' study paths and progress, it is essential to ensure the integration of UNIC offers in their regular curricula and the recognition of the ECTS in their own degree programmes. Clarity about recognition practices also helps university teachers to integrate UNIC courses in their regular teaching load and to avoid extra work. The recognition practice varies depending on different learning and mobility formats, local regulations and practical agreements between the teachers.

This document contains an overview of recognition practices in different learning and mobility formats offered and promoted within UNIC. Please always keep in mind that local procedures might vary and contact your local UNIC teams for more detailed questions.

The ECTS User Guide provides additional information:

https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf

2. Open Online Courses

2.1 Definition

Open Online Courses (OOC) are regular courses, fully delivered online, that offer places to students from UNIC partner universities for free. The language of instruction is generally English. OOC offer students the opportunity to engage in a virtual mobility experience with low **entrance** barriers, without additional costs or concerns regarding environmental sustainability, and on topics that are of particular interest in addition to or as part of the students' degree. A structured OOC catalogue is at minimum a starting point for the first experiences in mobility for students and has potential to develop into a model for virtual exchanges. Students are intended to register for the OOC directly in the [UNIC Virtual Campus](#) where the course catalogue is available.

2.2 Recognition practice

Recognition procedures vary among institutions. However, the general process foresees that a student interested in taking an Open Online Course should clarify with their local academic advisor at the faculty/school if and in how far the course can be credited within student's own degree program. For this purpose, a template for a Learning Agreement (adapted from the Erasmus+ Learning Agreement) is available. However, its use is not obligatory but can support the recognition process. After successful completion of the course, the student receives a certificate or a similar document listing the credits earned and must then arrange for the recognition of the course with the local examination office. The recognition process is handled similarly to the courses recognized as part of a physical stay abroad.

3. Virtual Exchange

3.1 Definition

Virtual Exchange is a form of virtual mobility characterised by particularly intensive interactions between teachers and students involving classrooms in at least two countries. Virtual Exchange is characterised by the following features:

- Collaborative learning in small internationally mixed teams
- Communication takes place (exclusively) via online tools
- Collaboration of the involved teachers is crucial
- Learning activities are designed by the involved teachers
- Professional learning objectives and intercultural learning objectives are pursued
- The learning activity is embedded in the regular curriculum (as part of a regular course)

3.2 Recognition practice

Virtual Exchange is a setting of teaching and learning that is embedded in a course/module. **ECTS are therefore not to be recognised between different universities, as the students usually participate in the course as part of their regular curriculum in their home university.** Each teacher ensures on the local level that students receive ECTS as part of their study degree. In most cases the amount of the ECTS is the same for all involved universities and their students but, in some cases, the amount might vary on different sides based on internal requirements.

4. Blended Intensive Programmes

4.1 Definition

Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP) provided by Erasmus+ are a mobility format, which enables students and staff to **combine physical group mobility with virtual co-learning**.

Minimum extent: 3 ECTS credits

Minimum duration:

- physical onsite learning 5–30 days
- virtual period's duration not further defined (but at least a day)

Other requirements:

- 3 higher education institutions from 3 different countries participating in Erasmus+ (Erasmus+ Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA) between the participating universities must be active)
- Minimum of 10 participants from partner organisations
- Virtual period must take advantage of **collaborative online learning and teamwork**

4.2 Recognition practice

At the end of the programme, the receiving/hosting institution will issue a transcript to all students. If issuing the transcript is not possible, the receiving institution must provide at least a certificate, where the dates of the BIP as well as the received ECTS credits are clearly marked. The course will be included in the student's degree in accordance with the sending university's recognition of learning policies.

Depending on the host university's internal regulations, registration and enrolment as a short-term student might be required before the activity to ensure the transfer of the transcript of records afterwards.

5. Erasmus exchange

5.1 Definition

An Erasmus exchange is funded by the European Union and enables students and staff to study or work abroad in another European country. It's a key component of the Erasmus+ program, which promotes international cooperation and exchange in education, training, youth, and sport. Students participating in an Erasmus exchange typically study at a partner institution, earn credits towards their degree, and benefit from financial support like tuition waivers and grants with the exact amounts depending on national regulations and the universities' internal budgeting. Students can study for one or two semesters or do an internship abroad. Funding is available for up to 12 months per study period (Bachelor, Master, PhD). Teaching as well as admin staff also has the opportunity to take part in training programmes abroad and/or receive funding for a short teaching stay in another European country.

5.2 Recognition practice

The ECTS recognition in the context of Erasmus exchange is standardized on a European level. In case of a study stay abroad, a Learning Agreement (LA) that is to be signed by all three parties (sending and receiving institutions and the student) before the stay abroad ensures the recognition of courses included in the LA, given the student passes them during the stay abroad. It also defines in detail which module or course within the study program the student is currently enrolled in at the home institution is replaced by the courses studied abroad. After the mobility, it is the student's responsibility to provide the examination office at the sending institution with a transcript from the hosting institution abroad.

6. Further ways of formal recognition

6.1 ECTS in non-curricular activities

Some UNIC universities offer the possibility to gain ECTS for additional non-curricular engagement and activities as an incentive to participate in additional non-curricular activities. This depends on local regulations and must be proofed individually.

6.2 Diploma Supplement

A way to value students' engagement in UNIC is to indicate this in the Diploma Supplement in sub-section 6.1. "additional information". Sub-section 6.1. in the Diploma Supplement is precisely for this purpose. Please see the [general guidelines](#) of the European Union.

The Diploma Supplement is a mandatory component of the graduation documents. It provides information about the type and level of the academic degree, the status of the higher education institution, the study program, the grading system used, as well as the qualifications acquired for further access. Due to different cultural and academic traditions, grading varies in Europe. A grade distribution table and a ranking of the individual grade in relation to a reference group supplement the national grade. Other components of the Diploma Supplement include the Transcript of Records and the National Statement.

The purpose of the Diploma Supplement is to facilitate the assessment and classification of the academic degree when transferring to another higher education institution or applying for a job (both internationally and nationally), thereby enhancing the mobility of graduates. The Diploma Supplement is part of Europass, an initiative of European countries for the international documentation of job-market-relevant qualifications and competences.



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