

The ECTS Course Catalogue in practice



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The ECTS Course Catalogue

The ECTS Course Catalogue is one of the supporting documents of the European Credit Transfer (and Accumulation) System (ECTS). According to the ECTS Users' Guide, the ECTS Course Catalogue should include "detailed, user-friendly and up-to-date information on the institution's learning environment that should be available to students before entering and throughout their studies to enable them to make the right choices and use their time most efficiently" (ECTS Users' Guide 2015, p. 54).

The ECTS Course Catalogue has always played an important role in the Erasmus programme. However, the importance of the ECTS Course Catalogue is not limited to international mobility in the framework of Erasmus+. Providing insight into an institution's educational programmes and teaching and learning environment is also important for (international) recruitment in general and for collaboration with other higher education institutions and with stakeholders in the world of work.

To emphasize the importance of the ECTS Course Catalogue, the ECTS label was introduced in 2009. Institutions that could demonstrate that they had an ECTS Course Catalogue that complied with the guidelines in the ECTS Users' Guide could apply for and be awarded the ECTS label. When the Erasmus+ programme was launched in 2014, the ECTS Course Catalogue received a prominent place in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE). By signing the ECHE, higher education institutions agree to comply with the requirements regarding the ECTS Course Catalogue.

For many higher education institutions, creating and maintaining an ECTS Course Catalogue presents a challenge. The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 gives guidelines on what an ECTS Course Catalogue should contain (pp. 54-57), but the information may be found a little too general or vague. That is why the Dutch team of Bologna Experts decided to produce this document, which provides additional information and suggestions. It was produced with a view to supporting Dutch higher education institutions in the process of creating an ECTS Course Catalogue. We have chosen to write this document in English, because we hope that it may also be of use to higher education institutions outside the Netherlands.

Some general instructions from the ECTS Users' Guide 2015 (p. 54)

- **“The Course Catalogue should be published on the institution’s website.”**

Whereas in the early years of the Erasmus programme, the ECTS Course Catalogue was typically a brochure/booklet for incoming international exchange students, the ECTS Course Catalogue is nowadays often only available via an institution’s website. It is advisable to make sure that the ECTS Course Catalogue is accessible for all visitors of the institution’s website and is not ‘hidden’ on the institution’s intranet and only accessible for those with a password.

Although an institution may have good reasons to use a different name for their course catalogue, it is advisable that an internet search for “ECTS Course Catalogue” will direct the visitor to the appropriate pages.

- **“It should be published sufficiently in advance for prospective students to make their choices.”**

It is up to the institution to decide when the information in the ECTS Course Catalogue is published and up-dated. It is advisable to make sure that the relevant information for prospective students is available well before the institution’s application deadlines.

- **Language**

The general information about an institution and the information about study programmes and individual educational components should be available in a widely-spoken language (e.g. English) and the language of instruction.

If the language of instruction in a programme or a course is e.g. Dutch, the information should be available in Dutch and in English. If the language of instruction is English, it is up to the institution to decide whether they also want to provide the information in Dutch.

This guideline may be a point of debate within an institution. Some may feel that it is not relevant to provide information in English about individual educational components that are only taught in the national language. However, an ECTS Course Catalogue is not only aimed at (prospective) students, but at a much wider audience, including employers, colleagues in other institutions and partner institutions, and other stakeholders.

- **“The institution is free to decide the format of the Catalogue, as well as the sequencing of the information. However, following a common structure as set out below makes Course Catalogues more easily comparable and improves transparency. In any case, the Course Catalogue should include the general information on the institution, its resources and services, as well as academic information on its programmes and individual educational components.”**

On the next pages, the three levels of information (general information; information on programmes; information on individual educational components) will be discussed in greater detail.

General information

The general information on the institution will in most cases be published on the institution's website. Where the listed information is placed will depend on the structure of the institution's website.



Name and address	Name in the national language. If the institution has a name in a widely-spoken language, such as English, this name should also be given. List of campuses and addresses at which the institution is established.
Description of the institution (including type and status)	Any general description of the institution should clearly mention the type of higher education institution, especially in the case of a binary system. In Dutch: universiteit (university) or hogeschool (university of applied sciences).
Academic authorities	Provide information on the governance structure of the university, including the names and positions of the members of the Executive Board (in Dutch: College van Bestuur).
Academic calendar	Start and end of the academic year (specify per year, if these dates vary over the years) and main holidays.
List of programmes offered	Provide a comprehensive survey of the faculties or schools and the degree programmes (Ad, B, M, PhD) that are offered. The names of the degree programmes should be available in a widely-spoken language and in the language of instruction. In the Netherlands: Programmes that are taught in Dutch, should list the Dutch and English name of the programme. If the Dutch-taught programme has an English name (in CROHO), this does not need to be translated into Dutch.
Admission requirements, including language policy, and registration procedures	This information may be given at an institutional level and/or at the level of individual programmes. Make sure that it is clear whether the information applies to fee-paying students (national and/or international) or to exchange students.
Arrangements for the recognition of credit mobility and prior learning (formal, informal and non-formal)	Describe the procedure for the recognition of credits that students have earned during a mobility period abroad (for study or traineeship). Also describe the institution's policy on the recognition of prior learning.
ECTS credit allocation policy (institutional credit framework)	Describe how ECTS credits have been allocated to the programmes. If there is an institutional or national policy with regard to the number of hours workload that represent 1 ECTS credit, provide this information. In the Netherlands: The national law on higher education (Whw) stipulates that 1 ECTS credit represents 28 hours workload. It is relevant to provide this information on the website. In the Netherlands it is common to use the term EC for ECTS credit. However, the term EC is not an internationally widely-used term. It is therefore advisable to use the term ECTS credit throughout the catalogue.
Arrangements for academic guidance	Describe what types of academic guidance are available.

Student affairs office	<p>The information on these topics is relevant for both national and international students and for both fee-paying and exchange students. Depending on the target group, the nature of the information may differ. Make sure that it is unambiguous to whom the information applies.</p>
Accommodation/housing	
Meals	
Cost of living	
Financial support for students	
Medical facilities	
Insurance	
Facilities for students with disabilities and special needs	
Learning facilities	
International mobility possibilities	
Practical information for incoming mobile students	
Language courses	
Work placement possibilities	
Sports and leisure facilities	
Student associations	

Information on programmes

A complete ECTS Course Catalogue provides information on all degree programmes that are offered by the institution, so not only programmes that are open to international students (fee-paying and/or exchange).

The information should be available in a widely-spoken language (e.g. English) and the language of instruction.

In The Netherlands: If the language of instruction is Dutch, the information should be available in Dutch and in English. If the language is English, it is up to the institution to decide whether they also want to provide the information in Dutch.

Make sure the information detailed below tallies with the information on the Diploma Supplement that is issued to students who complete the programme.

Qualification awarded, length of programme, number of credits	Be specific about the type of qualification, e.g. Bachelor of Arts, or Bachelor of Nursing. Give the length of the programme in years or in months. Give the total number of ECTS credits for the programme.
Level of qualification according to the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework	E.g. Bachelor's degree; EQF for LLL: level 6; NLQF: level 6
Field(s) of study (e.g. ISCED-F)	The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) was developed by UNESCO to facilitate comparisons of education statistics and indicators across countries on the basis of uniform and internationally agreed definitions.
Specific admission requirements (if applicable)	This information may be given at an institutional level and/or at the level of individual programmes. Make sure that it is clear whether the information applies to fee-paying students (national and/or international) or to exchange students.
Specific arrangements for recognition of prior learning (formal, non-formal and informal) (if applicable)	This information may be given at an institutional level and/or at the level of individual programmes. Make sure that it is clear whether the information applies to fee-paying students (national and/or international) or to exchange students.
Qualification requirements and regulations, including graduation requirements (if applicable)	Normally, students will receive a diploma when they have completed the (official) study programme and have obtained the required number of credits. If there are any other specific requirements that students need to have fulfilled, mention them here.
Profile of the programme	It could be argued that the collective information in this section is a programme profile. However, it is important that the ECTS Course Catalogue includes a brief description of the main focus of the programme.
Programme learning outcomes	List the learning outcomes at programme level. It is advisable to limit the number of learning outcomes to approximately 20. It is also advisable to make sure that the programme learning outcomes in the course catalogue correspond with those on the Diploma Supplement.

Programme structure diagram with credits (60 ECTS credits per full time equivalent academic year)	Provide an overview of the structure of the entire programme. This can be done with a diagram, but other forms of presentation are also possible, as long as it is clear. It should be made clear whether a programme is based on e.g. semesters or trimesters. In some institutions, a semester is divided into two periods of around 10 weeks.
Mode of study	Indicate whether the programme is e.g. full-time, part-time, dual, e-learning.
Examination regulations and grading scale	The examination regulations should be accessible, although most institutions will not choose to give this type of information a very prominent place on the website, since the information tends to be very detailed. Provide information on the grading system used at national and/or institutional level. If the institution/ programme does not (yet) use the ECTS grading table, provide information on how the transfer of grades awarded by partner institutions is done.
Obligatory or optional mobility windows (if applicable)	Provide information on whether students have the option or are obliged to do part of their study programme outside of the institution. The term mobility window generally refers to a study period or work placement abroad.
Work placement(s) (if applicable)	Provide information on whether the programme contains (a) work placement(s) (internships; traineeships) and whether these are obligatory or optional parts of the programme. Include the number of credits for (each of) the work placement(s).
Work-based learning (if applicable)	If the programme contains a form of work-based learning other than a (traditional) work placement, give a brief description.
Programme director or equivalent	It may be an institution's policy not to provide names and contact details of individual members of staff on the institution's website. In that case, general contact details should be provided.
Occupational profiles of graduates	Give a brief description of the types of jobs for which the programme prepares students and/or that graduates generally fulfil.
Access to further studies	Describe what types of further study (e.g. Master or PhD programmes) are accessible for graduates.

For joint programmes (additional information)

For joint programmes	Information on the form of the diploma and Diploma Supplement (joint/ double/multiple)	A joint programme may lead to different types of degrees. Joint degrees can only be awarded by a consortium of two or more educational institutions. Joint programmes more often lead to a double or multiple degree; in this case, each of the participating institutions awards their own degree.
	Members of consortium and their role	List the educational institutions which form the consortium that is responsible for offering the programme and, in the case of a joint degree, are responsible for issuing the diploma.
	Mobility structure of the programme	Joint programmes generally involve a mandatory mobility period at (one of) the partner institutions that offer the joint programme. Provide information on which parts of the programme the student has to do abroad, including the number of ECTS credits.

Information on individual educational components

The information on the individual educational components that make up a study programme is what is often understood to be the 'real' course catalogue. It is important to provide a clear link between the information about a programme and the information about the individual educational components that are part of a programme.

As with the information at programme level: the information should be available in a widely-spoken language (e.g. English) and the language of instruction.

In The Netherlands: If the language of instruction in an individual educational component is Dutch, the information should be available in Dutch and in English. If the language of instruction is English, it is up to the institution to decide whether they also want to provide the information in Dutch.

Code	Code that is assigned to the component in the institution's student administration system.
Title	Make sure that the English translation of the name of the individual educational component tallies with the names listed on the Transcript of Records (which is part of the Diploma Supplement)
Type (compulsory/optional) and cycle (short/first/second/third)	Cycle (short/first/second/third) refers to Ad/Bachelor/Master/Doctorate. It may not be necessary to provide this information for every individual educational component, as long as it is clear which programme the component is part of.
Year of study when the component is delivered (if applicable)	Indicate in which year students normally complete this component. If the programme is not based on fixed years, at least indicate whether it is a component in the Propedeuse or the hoofdfase (main phase).
Semester/trimester when the component is delivered	Indicate whether the component is (only) offered in the first or second semester of the academic year, or in both.
Number of ECTS credits allocated	Give the number of ECTS credits that has been allocated to this component.
Learning outcomes	Provide a list of the learning outcomes for this component.
Name of lecturer(s)	Provide information on the lecturer(s) that are responsible for teaching this component. It may be an institution's policy not to provide names and contact details of individual members of staff on the institution's website. In that case, general contact details should be provided.
Mode of delivery	Provide information on the mode of delivery of the component, e.g. via e-learning, face-to-face, etc.
Prerequisites and co-requisites (if applicable)	Provide information on whether a student must have successfully completed certain courses before s/he can take this course.
Course content	Provide a brief description of the content of the course. This information bears a close link to the learning outcomes of the component, but has a different function.

General information	Recommended or required reading and other learning resources/tools	Provide a list of the (most important) literature that students are required or recommended to read, but also include other learning resources. The information is not only relevant for students, but also for (potential) partners, in that it indicates the main focus and the approach that is used.
	Planned learning activities and teaching methods	List the most important modes of delivery for this component, e.g. lectures, group work, seminars, tutorials, etc.
	Assessment methods and criteria	Provide information on how this component will be assessed, e.g. by means of a written or oral exam, a report, a presentation, a project, group work assessment.
	Language of instruction	Indicate in which language(s) the component is taught. If the component is taught in the domestic language (in The Netherlands, Dutch), but may include guest lectures given by international guest lecturers or group work with international groups of students, it is relevant to mention that the language of instruction can also be English.



