



**Conference on
Student Mobility and Recognition of Study Periods Abroad
(Western Balkans – EU)**

11-12 October 2010

Conference Centre at Hotel Mons
Ljubljana, Slovenia

RECOMMENDATIONS

(A) FOR THE GOVERNMENTS: MAKE MOBILITY AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF EVALUATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

1. Indicate ***Student mobility as a strategic target*** considering that, as stated in the Leuven Communiqué of the Bologna Process, ***in 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad¹***.
2. ***Change or adapt the national rules to allow the transparent description of study periods abroad in national certificates.***
3. Provide ***financial incentives to the Institutions*** able to increase quality (credit recognition, overall student satisfaction, etc.) and quantity of Student exchanges.
4. Encourage Institutions to publish all ***mobility data and other information required by the ECTS users guide² on their websites.***
5. ***Simplify visa issuing procedures*** for study, training and research periods for exchange students.
6. Provide exchange Students with ***logistical support*** (accommodation, etc).

(B) FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: MAKE MOBILITY PART OF THE INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

B1. Actors

- a. Appoint an ***Institutional Coordinator*** or ***Rector's Delegate for International Mobility*** and ***Academic Coordinators*** for each Faculty or School or Degree Course ***allowing them to manage and to sign all relevant documents related to Student mobility*** and provide to the ***International Relations Offices*** sufficient staff experts in mobility issues.
- b. If needed, the Institutional or Faculty Coordinator may refer to a ***board of Academics*** when dealing with procedures related to specific disciplines.

B2. Tools & Instruments

- a. Create ***flexible curricula***, possibly including ***mobility windows of 30-60 credits*** to be obtained abroad.
- b. Issue the ***diploma supplement³***.
- c. Publish online a ***detailed catalogue in English*** of degree courses containing all relevant academic and logistical information.

¹http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference/documents/leuven_louvain-la-neuve_communique%C3%A9_april_2009.pdf

²http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

³http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1239_en.htm

- d. Provide a **website of the Institution in English**.
- e. Increase the offer of **degree courses in English, of courses of English language** and organise **internationally recognized tests of the English language** such as TOEFL⁴ or IELTS⁵.
- f. Calculate **statistical distribution of the grades** for each degree course to allow an accurate conversion of grades of exchange Students according to the procedure described in the new ECTS guide.¹ Refer national (or institutional) grading scale to the ECTS grading scale
- g. Publish online **all procedures** related to Student mobility in the national language and in English.
- h. Keep record of the credits (courses, internships, etc.) taken abroad and recognized in the past for each degree course and provide information in advance to perspective outgoing Students.
- i. Allocate a sufficient number of credits to the preparation and writing of the **thesis**. Allow and encourage the Students to prepare it abroad. In this regard, it can be useful to ask in advance to the partner Institution a list of potential thesis Supervisors and subjects.
- j. Organize **mobility or welcome days** to encourage interaction of incoming Students with potential outgoing Students.
- k. Provide outgoing Students with **additional funding or loans** ensuring that they will not lose, when abroad, the ones they are already receiving at home.

B3. Responsibilities and Procedures

- a. Select very carefully the partner Institutions checking in advance the **equivalence or the compatibility of the study programmes**. In addition, agreements with Institutions providing **complementary programmes** can also be useful to provide the Students with further interesting opportunities.
- b. Monitor the agreements to assure quality control.
- c. To introduce/develop the **learning outcomes** approach and define them in order to contribute to the mobility of students by facilitating the recognition of their qualifications, to improve the transparency of qualifications, to simplify credit transfer and to provide a common format that helps promote lifelong learning and can assist in creating multiple routes through and between different education systems.
- d. Increase the **mutual trust and confidence** by encouraging **exchanges of International Relations Officers, Academic Coordinators, and other Academics for periods of collaboration, training, teaching and research**.
- e. **Select very accurately outgoing Students** making sure that the mobility grants are awarded to the most motivated and dedicated Students.
- f. **Use the official European forms recommended by the ECTS users guide.**²
- g. **Make sure the learning agreement is signed by a person (Academic Coordinator, etc) with sufficient authority to guarantee the full recognition of the academic activities performed abroad even in case of change of the staff of the Institution.**
- h. Keep in touch with outgoing Students while they are abroad providing counselling and eventually helping them in changing the learning agreement using the **change form**.
- i. Make sure the hosting Institution send the **transcript of records** in time. This document should provide the statistical distribution of grades of the degree course involved (point B2-f).
- j. Provide **full recognition** of the academic activities performed abroad certified by the transcript of records and previously included in the learning agreement. **The recognition should be awarded by the Academic Coordinator**, upon approval, if appropriate, by specific Faculty or degree course boards (point B1-b and B3-2) but **not by the individual Professors to avoid possible re-evaluation of the Student**. A flexible approach is recommended and **fair recognition rather than perfect equivalence is to be applied**.

⁴ <http://www.ets.org/toefl/>

⁵ <http://www.ielts.org/default.aspx>



(C) FOR THE STUDENTS: MAKE YOUR MOBILITY A VERY RESPONSIBLE CHOICE

- a. **Inform** yourself well in advance before your mobility period
- b. Make sure you have a good knowledge of the **English language** and/or of the **language of the host country**.
- c. Fill in the **application forms** very accurately to provide the host Institution with all the information necessary for your acceptance.
- d. Fill in the **learning agreement** very precisely **and make sure you have it signed before departure**. If necessary, follow up changes with the **change form**
- e. **Keep in contact with your home university**.