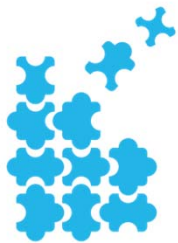


# Using ECTS and ECTS Tools to Best Advantage: Present and Future

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EUROPEAN  
Higher Education Area



ITALIAN **BFUG** SECRETARIAT  
2018-2020



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Our theme:

Understanding and using **fully** the potential of  
ECTS for present and future needs

What is it? What can it do for us? What do we  
need to do to maximise its usefulness?



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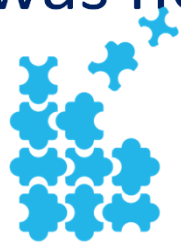
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First, something about the past.

I read “ECTS was **instituted** in 1989....”

ECTS was born as a tool to facilitate studies in another country (mobility) and to allow recognition of those studies.

It was not born fully grown. It had to be **invented**.



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The context: Erasmus 'born' in 1987  
ECTS Pilot Project starts in 1989:

At the beginning 11 countries, 5 pilot subject areas  
Very few countries had credit systems, very few a cycle system...

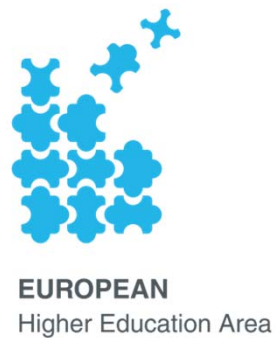
How to make mobility possible?



# How to find a common criterion?



## A Gold Standard? A common currency?



The solution? The total amount of time a 'typical' student has available in an academic /working year

...at first taken 'on faith', as a rule of thumb, that it was more or less the same for the typical student in every country/system



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After 9 years of work, the Sorbonne agreement;  
After 10 years, the Bologna Declaration...

ECTS was still a credit **transfer** system  
Slowly slowly, since then, ECTS has grown,  
developed and come to form the foundation  
blocks with which higher education programmes  
are built in the EHEA



In the EHEA – the Bologna system-- the Cycles (Bachelor, Master and often PhD) are defined according to ‘credit ranges’, which measure volume of learning (student workload) and learning outcomes.





Originally:

ECTS means:  
“European Credit **Transfer** System”

In the early 2000s it becomes the  
“European Credit Transfer **and Accumulation** System”



ECTS was not alone: for the 'system' to work we needed to build

- a Qualifications Framework,
- independent competent Quality Assurance bodies,
- a quality culture,
- a better understanding of output- competence-based student centred learning... a revolution in thinking about, planning, and practicing higher education



Now? an impression:  
in many, maybe in all, countries and institutions, the  
system is not yet fully understood and applied to best  
advantage.



After 30 years, most (but not all) are aware that ECTS is based on volume of learning connected to student time: but are all academics aware that ECTS credits are based on achieved learning outcomes? At programme level and at course unit level? And students? Do they participate in the planning and monitoring? Are learning environments, teaching approaches and assessment methods aligned and transparent? Are Course Catalogues correctly formulated, easily available and up-to-date? Are these aspects targeted in QA? Internal and external?



And in the future? In our 'vision', we see rapidly increasing 'flexibility', variety of learning styles, blended learning, small (short, sometimes intensive) learning experiences, workbased learning, etc.) in a lifelong learning context.



We foresee an increasing demand for non-traditional learning, of open and distance learning, and a need to be able to recognise units of learning achieved before during and after study for a degree.



We need to be able to recognise, and document prior learning of refugees and other learners from outside the traditional framework.



In 2018 (Paris Ministerial Conference) EHEA member countries were told that they can (are not obliged to) develop short cycle degrees in their frameworks: not necessarily at the beginning of Higher Education.





Right now:

we are discussing the implementation of a new  
'object':

the “**microcredential**”

...which perhaps will be included in some way in the  
next Communiqué (Rome 2020)



Can the existing tools (ECTS, Qualifications Frameworks) be used/adapted to this new scenario?



Let's take a look inside the ECTS Users' Guide...

[https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/ects-users-guide\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/ects-users-guide_en)



# ECTS Users' Guide



ECTS is thirty years old. It has been intertwined with the Bologna Process for 21 years. The present Users' Guide is official for the entire EHEA since 2015. It contains chapters on programme design, on recognition of prior learning, on flexible learning paths...  
Let's use it!



ECTS Users' Guide



Thank you!

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