

# Review of the ECTS Users' Guide

BFUG Board, 4 November 2025



# Recap: Timeline

When	What	
Feb – Sep 2025	Desk research, surveys, focus groups	
June/July 2025	Advisory Group meeting	review draft 0
September 2025	Advisory Group meeting	review draft 1
3 November 2025	Consultation session	Use of ECTS outside HE, esp. VET
<b>4 November 2025</b>	<b>BFUG Board</b>	<b>update incl. draft 2</b>
5 November 2025	Advisory Group meeting	review draft 2 (as circulated to Board)
<b>15/16 December 2025</b>	<b>BFUG</b>	<b>Review of draft 2</b>
January 2026	Advisory Group meeting	review draft 3
<b>Q2 2026</b>	<b>BFUG</b>	<b>Endorse draft 3 (final)</b>
Q2 2027	EHEA Ministerial Conference (Moldova/Romania)	

# Key Findings from the Study

- Data underlying findings
  - Desk research and survey covering 10 HEIs each from 8 EHEA countries (Austria, Bulgaria, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Spain, Sweden)
  - Focus groups at 2 HEIs per country
- Programme design and delivery
  - ECTS universally used, regarded as increasing transparency
  - Workload concept understood, but monitoring inconsistent
  - Student-centred learning welcomed, but suffers from resource constraints
  - Programme flexibility differs
  - Course catalogue information not always complete, but satisfactory for students

# Key Findings from the Study (cont'd)

- Mobility, transfer and recognition
  - Automatic recognition based on Learning Agreement largely works, but ...
  - Rigid approaches persist: one-to-one matching, detailed content equivalence, ...
  - Issues became “hidden” at Learning Agreement preparation stage
  - Grade conversion rarely works, very few institutions in EGRACONS
  - Institutions continue to use deprecated A-E/F scale
- Lifelong learning, incl. micro-credentials
  - ECTS allocated only for ca. 60% of micro-credentials
  - Regulatory uncertainty, esp. QF level assignment inconsistent
  - Recognition of prior learning options often not known and underutilised

# Key Changes: Overarching and Structural

- **Key features:** thoroughly reviewed to include all essential elements & quoted in the remaining Guide to avoid repetition
- **Clarified** language and terminology
- Separated learning opportunity design and delivery (= formal education focus) from awarding and accumulating credits (= includes non-formal and informal)
- **Mainstream lifelong learning:** recognition of non-formal and informal learning integrated with awarding and accumulating chapter, rather than separate
- **Streamlined QA chapter:** focus on indicators for ECTS implementation
- Anticipate **alternative publication format** (e.g. web-based)
- **Shortened glossary** (no key feature duplication)

# Key Changes: Micro-Credentials

- **Clarify applicability**
  - Use of ECTS for all learning opportunities, incl. micro-credentials
  - Adjust language throughout Guide: whenever “programmes” are mentioned, also small standalone learning opportunities are
  - Reflect MCs as a regular offer, on par with full programmes
  - Articulate between “accumulation” and “stacking” of credits
- **Transparency**
  - ECTS credits always come with QF level indicated

# Key Changes: ECTS outside Higher Education

- ECTS as **universal credit system for LLL**
  - Suitable for learning at all levels
  - All contexts: formal, non-formal and informal
  - Not entirely new, but growing relevance since ECVET repealed
- **Terminology** changes (e.g. student → learner)
- **Awarding of credits** and QA references for all EQF level
- ECTS remains “**owned**” by **EHEA ministers**
  - EHEA: use of ECTS is a key commitment, i.e. obligatory
  - Other sectors (or regions): use of ECTS is optional

# Key Changes: Mobility and Recognition

- Clearer **distinction of key concepts**:
  - Transfer = move credits from A to B
  - Recognition = count those credits towards a qualification
- Structure **follows practical stages**:
  - Information
  - Planning
  - Mobility period
  - Credit transfer
  - Recognition towards degree

# Key Changes: Mobility and Recognition (cont'd)

- Distinguish different mobility scenarios
  - **Individual pre-agreed:** classical Learning Agreement (LA) → automatic recognition
  - **Embedded pathway** (e.g. joint programme or alliance offers): general agreement instead of individual LA → automatic recognition
  - **Free individual mobility:** no LA → recognition decided ad-hoc afterwards
- Grade transparency and conversion
  - **Statistical** method: simplify distribution info, as part of Transcript rather than separate
  - **Reference table:** map local grades to qualitatively defined levels A-E/F, and use as translation tool
  - Ensure interoperability of both methods

# Key Changes: Digitalisation

- Reflect advancement in digital infrastructure
  - Erasmus Without Paper standards and network for mobility documents
  - European Digital Credentials for Learning as universal format for documenting learning (and credits)
  - Current digital approaches to publish course catalogues
- Add basic principles regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI)
- Reference key Europe-wide standards where applicable

# If credits were Lego blocks...



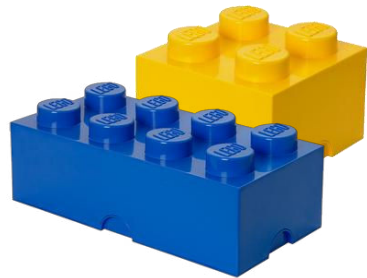
accumulation



stacking



qualification/degree



HEI A



transfer



HEI B



recognition

# Questions for the BFUG

- Provide **feedback on key changes**
- Review in particular:
  - Clarified **provisions on credit awards** at different QF-EHEA/EQF levels
  - Options for **grade transparency and conversion**
- Do you agree that a **web-based publication** would be preferable over (only) a monolithic PDF document? Should this be part of the EHEA website?
- Do you agree on the proposed **modalities for future changes**:
  - “Principles and Objectives” and “Key Features”: ministers' approval
  - Remaining, explanatory chapters: BFUG to commission and approve changes
  - “Further reading” boxes: can be updated by the European Commission and EHEA Secretariat, BFUG to be informed

Thank you!