Comparative table of definitions across EHEA working documents

In light of the Bologna tools and instruments expected to be endorsed by or discussed at the BFUG meeting in Dublin, the EHEA Secretariat prepared this Comparative table of definitions across EHEA documents to support ensuring conceptual alignment and consistent use of clear terminology across the documents within the Bologna Process.

The initiative started with a meeting facilitated by the EHEA Secretariat in January 2026, where the lead authors of the main documents met and discussed the compatibility of the definitions. The Comparative table prepared by the EHEA Secretariat includes the following editions of the documents:

- The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA (ESG) – the draft submitted to the BFUG in Dublin
- The European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA) – the 2015 version as the current EA draft has not included the glossary yet
- The Note on Terminology prepared by the Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility, as last discussed at the WG meeting in spring 2026
- The Bologna Process Implementation Report 2024, as the draft submitted to the BFUG in Dublin does not include a glossary yet.

At the European Commission's suggestion, we also included the UNESCO-OECD-EU (UEO) and Eurostat manuals in the table for a more comprehensive overview.

The document considers the definitions provided in the glossaries of any of the documents above and whether it is either defined (double definition) or used (definition + reference) in the other documents. The overview shows that, with few exceptions, the definitions are fully aligned. When they diverge, there is usually a clear reason for doing so (e.g. definition for statistical purposes or definition for policy purposes). Nevertheless, some concepts (e.g. joint programme, joint degree, the rather inadequate interchangeable use of programme vs qualification vs degree) should be revisited in order to ensure consistent use.

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Reading the table

Status	Meaning
Aligned (Green)	Same substance across the documents, even if minor differences in language
Difference (Yellow)	The wording differs in at least one substantive aspect
Single source (Grey)	Defined in one document only, used in others

Suggested order of borrowing

We considered that each term has a lead source from which the other documents would be expected to take their wording and which we use as the main reference point for comparison (i.e. looking whether that definition is consistently applied for other documents unless obvious reasons dictate otherwise).

Please note that terms defined only in one document and not used at all in others (e.g. internationalisation of the curricula, staff mobility, intercultural competencies, inclusive/green/balanced mobility, stackability, ECTS-related technical terms) are not included.

Lead source	Used as the reference for
UOE / Eurostat	statistical core of mobility terms: credit mobility, degree mobility, incoming, outgoing, country of origin (A3–A5, A7, A8)
ESG 2027	quality assurance terms, higher education, institution, stakeholders, programme in the QA sense (C1, D1–D6, D8)
EA 2027 glossary (to be written)	joint programme, joint degree, double/multiple degrees (C2–C4)
ECTS Users' Guide 2027	credit transfer, recognition of credits, automatic recognition of credits, validation, learning agreement, traineeship, mobility window, free mover, micro-credential, learner (A6, A12–A14, B1, B2, B4–B7)
Note on Terminology	policy terms: internationalisation, IaH, virtual exchange, blended/hybrid, TNE, inclusive/green/balanced mobility, portability (A1, A2, A9–A11, A15, A16; Section 4)

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No.	Term	ESG 2027 / European Approach 2027 (Draft 1)	BPIR 2024	Note on Terminology (Draft 2.3, March 2026)	ECTS Users' Guide 2027 (Draft 4.2)	UOE / Eurostat	Observations
A. Internationalisation and learning mobility							
A1	**Internationalisation**			Internationalisation of higher education is the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society. (De Wit, Hunter and Howard 2015)			
A2	**Internationalisation at home**		A set of instruments and activities 'at home' that aim to develop international and intercultural competences of students. A variety of instruments can be used to internationalise teaching and learning, including guest lectures, international case studies or, increasingly, digital learning and online collaboration (Beelen and Jones, 2015).	Internationalisation at Home (IaH) is a concept where all students and staff, not just those who study abroad, get the chance to gain international and intercultural learning experiences within their own country or institution. It focuses on integrating international and intercultural perspectives into the curriculum; creating a campus environment where diverse cultures interact; and connecting local and global issues in teaching and activities (WG I&M Draft 2025).			Note on Terminology treats it as a concept, the BPIR as a toolbox

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A3	**Student learning mobility**			Student learning mobility refers to the physical movement to a country other than the country of residence for part (credit mobility) or all (degree mobility) of a programme. It may also take the form of traineeships, apprenticeships or youth exchanges as long as they are embedded in higher education programmes. The majority of such mobility takes place in the context of planned and organised programmes, however there is also a considerable amount of 'free mover' mobility where a student participates in (credit) mobility outside an organized student mobility program. (WG I&M draft 2025)		**Eurostat manual §1.1:** learning mobility is "the physical crossing of national borders between a country of origin and a country of destination" followed by participation in tertiary-level activities in the destination country. A change between learning systems that does not cross a national border is not learning mobility. **Country of origin** = country of prior education, i.e. where the upper secondary qualification was obtained (Eurostat §1.1; UOE Manual §2.8).	The Note anchors mobility on the "country of residence", UOE on the country of prior education. The Note further includes apprenticeships and youth exchanges, whereas UOE counts study-related traineeships recognised for the qualification and excludes entirely work-based training (UOE Manual §1.1).
A4	**Credit mobility**		Credit mobility is a short-term form of mobility – usually a maximum of one year – aiming at the acquisition of credits in a foreign institution in the framework of on-going studies at the home institution.	Credit mobility is a limited period of study or traineeship abroad set within on-going studies at a home institution - for the purpose of gaining credits (with the aim of having achieved learning outcomes recognized). After the mobility phase, students return to their home institution to complete their studies.	Credit mobility – The mobility of a learner, who stays at a receiving institution/organisation for a period, during which they can carry out activities and are awarded the allocated credits, which are then recognised by the sending institution.	**Eurostat manual §1.4.1:** "Credit mobility is defined as temporary tertiary education or/and study-related traineeship abroad within the framework of enrolment in a tertiary education programme at a 'home institution' (usually) for the purpose of gaining academic credit (i.e. credit that will be recognised in that home institution)."	BPIR "usually a maximum of one year" has no other basis. UOE sets a minimum (3 months/15 ECTS), as does the EHEA mobility strategy 2012. ECTS does not say temporary, physical or cross-border (as it can also be national). The Note on Terminology additionally refers to recognised "learning outcomes".

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				(Based on Erasmus+ Glossary)		Only stays of at least 15 ECTS or at least three months (uninterrupted) are counted (§2.2.3, §1.4.4.2); only physical mobility (§1.4.4.6). Reported by the home (sending) country.	
A5	**Degree mobility**		Degree mobility is a long-term form of mobility which aims at the acquisition of a whole degree or certificate in the country of destination.	A period of study abroad aimed at acquiring a full degree in the destination countries. (Erasmus+ Glossary)		**Eurostat manual §1.3.1:** "Degree mobility is defined as the physical crossing of a national border to enrol in a degree programme at tertiary-level in the country of destination. The degree programme would require the students' presence for the majority of courses taught." Distance learners are not mobile (§1.3.4; UOE Manual §2.8). Degree-mobile graduates: country of origin differs from the country where the degree is obtained (§1.3.1).	
A6	**Free mover**			*(within "Student learning mobility") …* 'free mover' mobility where a student participates in (credit) mobility outside an organized student mobility program.	Free mover – A student participating in credit mobility outside an organised student mobility programme (for example Erasmus+). A free mover chooses a receiving institution and organises their credit mobility at that institution.	**Eurostat manual §1.4.4.3:** free movers who organise the recognised mobility stay on their own are included. "Bridge mobility" not recognised by the home institution is not reported.	The Note and ECTS say the same; UOE adds the condition that the stay must be recognised by the home institution.

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A7	**Incoming (inward) mobility**		Incoming mobility refers to students that moved (i.e., crossed a national border) to a specified country to study	Incoming mobility refers to students that moved (i.e., crossed a national border) to a specified country abroad to study. (BPIR)		**No formal definition of "incoming/inward"** in either manual. In UOE practice, degree-mobile students *and graduates* are reported by the destination country, identified by country of origin = country of prior education	Note: credit mobility is reported by the sending country, so hosted credit-mobile learners may be outside capturing by this indicator.
A8	**Outgoing (outward) mobility**		Outward mobility refers to students that left their country of residence (i.e., crossed a national border) to study elsewhere (in which they are counted as inwardly mobile students).	Outward mobility refers to students that left their country of residence (i.e., crossed a national border) to study elsewhere abroad (in which they are counted as inwardly mobile students) (BPIR)		No definition per se. Outward mobility is derived from the destination countries' data by country of origin (= prior education), and credit-mobile graduates are reported by the country of origin	
A9	**Blended mobility** **(in subsidiary, Blended Intensive Programme)**		Blended learning mobility – Refers to the combination of a period of physical mobility and a period of online learning.	Blended mobility – A mobility activity that combines physical mobility and a virtual component, facilitating collaborative online learning exchange/teamwork. (Erasmus+ Glossary)	Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) – A specific type of short learning opportunity delivered in a blended format. A BIP combines a virtual exchange component (online learning and collaboration) with a short-term physical stay.	No definition of virtual or blended mobility; no UOE evidence on these forms. Only the physical stay is covered; students in a distance programme in their country of prior education who physically move abroad are included in credit mobility (Eurostat §1.4.4.6).	
A10	**Virtual exchange**			Virtual exchange - Acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences through the use of digital technology tools that allow participants to have a meaningful transnational or international learning	Virtual exchange – Learning delivered online to learners of another education institution, within the same country or abroad.		The ECTS entry is broader because ECTS concerns credit award and recognition for all online learning with another institution, while the Note concerns international virtual exchange as a policy instrument.

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				experience, fully online without any physical component. (Based on Erasmus+ Glossary)			
A11	**Blended learning / Hybrid learning**		Blended learning – A mode of learning that combines online teaching with classroom-based learning. No hybrid learninig	No blended learning (see blended mobility above) Hybrid learning - Hybrid learning and teaching implies physical classroom learning in combination with online attendance: whereas some students attend in the classroom, others attend at the same time remotely online, out of choice, or a condition preventing them from physical attendance. (Based on EUA 2021).	"Hybrid" appears as a mode of delivery ("on site, online, hybrid"); "blended" appears only in "Blended Intensive Programme".	**Eurostat §1.3.4:** distance education is characterised by "less than half the teaching" being provided face-to-face. No blended/hybrid category.	Two distinct concepts (blended = mix of modes; hybrid = simultaneous in-class and remote attendance), each defined in only one source. ECTS uses "hybrid" without a definition.
A12	**Mobility window**			A mobility window is a period of time reserved for international student mobility that is embedded into the curriculum of a study programme (ECTS Users Guide)	A mobility window is a period of time reserved for international learner mobility that is embedded into the curriculum of a learning opportunity (Ferencz et al., 2013).		
A13	**Learning agreement**			A Learning Agreement is a formal agreement between the student, the sending institution, and the receiving institution or organisation. It defines the goals, content, and expected learning outcomes of the mobility period to ensure its quality	Learning Agreement – A formalised agreement of the three parties involved in a pre-organised mobility - the learner, the sending institution and the receiving institution or organisation/enterprise – to facilitate the organisation of credit		The Note says credits "will be recognised", ECTS User's Guide says "automatically recognised". The ECTS User's Guide provides for amendments after signature, the Note only mentions signature before the start.

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				and relevance. Signed by all three parties before the start of the mobility, the agreement also serves as a guarantee that credits gained abroad will be recognised by the home institution. (WG I&M draft 2025)	mobility and its recognition. The agreement assures the learner that their credits achieved during the mobility period will be automatically recognised by the sending institution. See 5.2 a) Credit mobility and 7.2 Learning Agreement.		
A14	**Traineeship / work placement**	**ESG 1.2, 1.4:** "well-structured placement opportunities"; recognition of "work placements".		Not defined. Used in "credit mobility" ("study or traineeship abroad") and "student learning mobility" (traineeships, apprenticeships, youth exchanges "embedded in higher education programmes").	Traineeship – A planned period of experience outside the institution (for example, in a workplace) to help learners to develop particular skills, knowledge or understanding as part of their programme (also called work placement and internship). Footnote 1 of the Guide states that "work placement", "placement", "training period" and "internship" are often synonyms.	**Eurostat §1.4.1–1.4.2:** a study-related traineeship counts if "done for the purpose of contributing to the qualification and recognized by the home institution". Entirely work-based training is excluded (UOE Manual §1.1).	Vocabulary differs (ESG "placement", ECTS/Note "traineeship") but ECTS documents the (perceived) synonymy.
A15	**Portability of grants and loans**		Portability (of grants and loans) – The possibility to take abroad the support available to students in their home country (within EHEA) for credit mobility (credit portability) or degree	Portability of support, grants and/or loans – The portability of support, grants and/or loans is a system which assures students the possibility of taking similar support, grants and/or loans that are available for studying in the home country with			

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			mobility (degree portability).	them, while going abroad for studies. (BFUG Working Group Portability of Grants and Loans)			
A16	**Transnational education (TNE) and cross-border education**	**ESG 2027 Scope:** the ESG "also apply to transnational and cross-border provision of higher education within and outside of the EHEA". **Programme key term:** "...international provision such as joint, transnational and cross-border education." "Transnational" and "cross-border education" themselves are not defined (only "cross-border quality assurance", D6).		Transnational Education (TNE) – A subset of cross-border education where study programmes, or sets of courses, or educational services borrow or transfer elements of one country's higher education system (or non-country specific education systems) from or to another country. It may involve the movement of faculty, learners, knowledge, programmes, providers and curricula across jurisdictional borders. It may encompass a wide range of mode of delivery (including distance and blended learning) and may or may not require learners mobility. The programme(s) and qualification(s) awarded may belong to the domestic education system of reference of the providing institution, to the education system of a State different from the State in which the providing institution		).	

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				operates, or may be independent of any national education system (UNESCO and CoE 2025) "Cross-border education" is not defined separately.			
B. Credits, recognition and learners							
B1	**Credit transfer (transfer of credits)**		Took the ECTS 2015 wording	Credit transfer/Transfer of credits – Is the process of having credits awarded in one context (programme, institution) recognised in another formal context for the purpose of obtaining a qualification. Credits awarded to students in one programme are transferred from an institution to be accumulated in another programme offered by the same or another institution. Institutions, faculties, departments or specific study programmes may make agreements which guarantee automatic recognition and transfer of credits (Based on European Commission, 2015 included in BPIR).	Transfer of credits is the process by which credits awarded by one education institution are included (i.e. accumulated) in the learner's record at another provider, in a learner's personal wallet, or in a learner's account/profile in a national database or repository. Any ECTS credits awarded in line with the provisions above must be accepted as validly achieved (at the indicated level) and thus eligible for transfer by any other European education institution or other organisation concerned.		The Note equates transfer with recognition ("recognised … for the purpose of obtaining a qualification"). ECTS 2027 keeps them apart: transfer = the credit is recorded (accumulated), no assessment; recognition = the credit is stacked towards a qualification (B2).
B2	**Recognition of credits**	**ESG 1.4 (not a definition):** "Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study, work placements, and prior learning, including non-formal and informal	Took the ECTS 2015 wording	Recognition of credits – The process through which an institution certifies that learning outcomes achieved and assessed in another institution meet (some or all) requirements of a	Recognition of credits is the process of having transferred credits accepted to be stacked, i.e. counted towards a qualification. For example, credits transferred after a mobility period are		

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		learning, is essential…"; institutional practice "in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention".		particular programme, its components or qualification. (ECTS Users Guide 2015)	counted towards the credits required for obtaining a qualification, replacing credits usually acquired through a course or module that is part of the programme. Between higher education institutions, the provisions of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) must be observed. Credit recognition should be primarily based on a comparison of learning outcomes, while taking into account level and workload (number of ECTS credits). Credit recognition is necessary for successful mobility.		
B3	**Recognition (general / academic recognition)**	**ESG 1.4:** recognition procedures rely on practice "in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention" and cooperation with the national ENIC/NARIC centre. **EA 2027 B2 2.2:** "Recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) should be applied in line with the Lisbon Recognition		Recognition – A formal acknowledgment by a competent recognition authority of the validity and academic level of a foreign education qualification, of partial studies, or of prior learning for the purpose of providing an applicant with outcomes including, but not limited to: the right to apply for admission to higher education; and/or the possibility to seek employment	Recognition (academic recognition) – An institution accepts that learning outcomes achieved and assessed in another institution satisfy the requirements of one of the learning opportunities it offers. This includes: (1) recognition of qualifications for the purpose of access to a learning opportunity; (2) recognition of credits for periods of learning, e.g. in relation to student mobility; that is, the credits gained for		Standardise the treaty title: the Note says "Global Recognition Convention", the ECTS Guide "UNESCO Global Convention" (full title: Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, 2019).

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		Convention and subsidiary documents."		opportunities. (Global Recognition Convention)	comparable learning outcomes achieved in one institution/context will replace the number of credits that are allocated for comparable learning outcomes at another institution; (3) recognition of non-formal and informal learning, for access or for credit. Recognition of professional qualifications (professional recognition) – Recognition of a qualification for the purpose of access to or pursuit of a regulated profession. In the EU, professional recognition is regulated by Directive 2005/36/EC.		
B4	**Automatic recognition**		Automatic recognition of degrees – Refers to the automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification of a certain level to be considered for entry to a programme of further study in the next level in any other EHEA-country (access) (EHEA Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition, 2015). Automatic recognition does not imply automatic admission to		Automatic recognition of credits is the recognition of credits without undue delay, additional work for the learner or assessment. Automatic recognition can be based on the ECTS standard process and formats for individual learner mobility (i.e. Learning Agreement and Transcript of Records), on respective provisions in the curriculum, or on general agreements between education institutions or consortia		

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			any specific programme, but rather that holders of a qualification giving access to a programme of study at the next level have the right to be considered for entry.		(e.g. in the case of embedded mobility pathways). Automatic recognition must be ensured for all credits acquired at another education institution in line with a previously agreed Learning Agreement or other agreement. **Info box (5.4):** higher education qualifications "should be automatically recognised" if awarded in a system with ESG-compliant QA and a fully operational NQF (Rome Communiqué 2020); Council Recommendation 2018/C 444/01 addresses four types of automatic recognition.		
B5	**Recognition of non-formal and informal learning (validation)**	**ESG 1.4:** fair recognition of "prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning".	Recognition of non-formal and informal learning – Validation and formal recognition of learners' non-formal and informal learning experiences in order to: (a) provide higher education access to candidates without an upper secondary school leaving certificate; or (b) within a higher education programme, allocate credits		Recognition of non-formal and informal learning – The process through which an institution certifies that the learning outcomes achieved and assessed in another context (non-formal or informal learning) satisfy (some or all) requirements of a particular programme, its component or qualification (Council Recommendation 2012/C		

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			towards a qualification and/or provide exemption from some programme requirements.		398/01). See also Validation Validation of non-formal or informal learning – A process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard. See also Recognition of non-formal and informal learning and 4.3 Awarding of ECTS Credits for Non-Formal and Informal Learning +		
B6	**Micro-credential**	**ESG 2027 Scope:** the ESG apply to "short units of learning such as micro-credentials". **Programme key term:** "…small units of learning such as those leading to micro-credentials".		—	Micro-credential – A micro-credential is a certified small volume of learning (see MICROBOL Common Framework for Micro-credentials in the EHEA, 2022). The European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (Council Recommendation 2022/C 243/02) defines a micro-credential as the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning, proven through an assessment against transparent and clearly defined criteria. The allocation of ECTS	Largely outside UOE scope: the collection covers formal programmes of at least the equivalent of one semester (UOE Manual §1.1).	

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					credits to micro-credentials is understood to be in accordance with applicable national legal frameworks relating to qualifications and credentials.		
B7	**Learner / student**	Uses students	Uses students	Uses students	Learner – An individual engaged in a learning process (formal, non-formal or informal learning). Student – A learner enrolled in a higher education institution. To reflect the shift towards more flexible learning and to enhance its usability in other education sectors, the more general term 'learner' is used throughout the Guide.	"The term 'student' is used for both pupils and students" (UOE Manual §3.1); students are those enrolled in formal education programmes.	
C. Programmes and degrees							
C1	**Programme (and learning opportunity)**	**ESG 2027 key term:** Programme – Refers to all higher education provision, including that which is not leading to a degree, regardless of the volume, mode of study, educational provider, place of delivery or form of education (digitally enhanced provision, lifelong learning opportunities and small units of learning such as those leading to micro-			Programme (educational) – A learning opportunity that usually consists of several educational components that are offered as a coherent curriculum and lead to the award of a qualification. Learning opportunity – An opportunity to achieve a given set of learning outcomes, offered by an education institution. A learning opportunity can be subdivided and consist		The ESG "programme" = any higher education provision, including non-degree provision and micro-credentials; the ECTS "programme" leads to a qualification. The ESG concept corresponds to the ECTS "learning opportunity".

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		credentials). It also refers to international provision such as joint, transnational and cross-border education.			of several smaller ones, such as courses or modules. A learning opportunity can be a programme leading to a full qualification or a shorter learning opportunity, e.g. leading to a micro-credential.		
C2	**Joint programme**	**EA 2027 (Draft 1):** no definition yet. Scope: applies to joint programmes "regardless of whether they lead to joint degrees or double/multiple degrees (see Glossary in Section *tbd* for definitions of these terms)"; "applicable primarily to joint programmes offered jointly by higher education institutions from two or more countries and does not aim to address the quality assurance of programmes delivered jointly by different institutions from a single country" **EA 2015:** "an integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions from EHEA countries, and leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree".	Joint programme – a programme organised and delivered by a partnership of two or more higher education institutions, and leading to a double, multiple or joint degree. Certified learning undertaken by students at partner institutions should be recognised automatically within the consortium.	A joint programme is a higher education (study or research) programme jointly designed, delivered and fully recognised by two or more higher education institutions. Joint programmes can be implemented at any higher education cycle, i.e. bachelor, master or doctorate or even short cycle. Joint programmes can be national (i.e. when all universities involved are from the same country) or transnational/international (i.e. when at least two different countries are represented among the higher education institutions involved). (Based on Erasmus+ Glossary)	Joint programme – **To do: To align with the forthcoming revised European Approach.** An integrated learning opportunity coordinated and offered jointly by several education institutions, leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree. See also European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes	**Eurostat §1.4.4.5:** "Joint or double degree programmes are programmes jointly developed and implemented by two or more educational institutions" leading to a double degree or a single award recognised by all of them. Students on such programmes are classed as credit mobile, not degree mobile, if they physically cross a border; reported by the country of prior education.	**Circular dependency** as ECTS waits for the EA; the EA draft moved its definitions to a glossary that is yet to be drafted; the Note uses the Erasmus+ text. **Substantive gaps:** (1) *National vs transnational:* the EA excludes national joint programmes from its scope, the Note includes them, ECTS and BPIR are silent. (2) "integrated curriculum" (EA 2015/ECTS) vs "jointly designed, delivered and fully recognised" (Note) vs "organised and delivered by a partnership" (BPIR). Suggested wording: "An integrated programme coordinated and offered jointly by higher education institutions from at least two countries, leading to a joint degree or double/multiple degrees." For programmes within one country add: "Programmes offered jointly by institutions of a single country are joint programmes in the general sense but outside the scope of the European Approach."

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C3	**Joint degree**	**EA 2027:** definition left to the glossary to be determined **EA 2015:** A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme.	A joint degree is a single document officially recognised by the appropriate (national or, if applicable, regional) authorities of at least two countries.	A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme. (EQAR Glossary)	Joint degree – **To do: To align with the forthcoming revised European Approach.** A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme. See also European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes	**Eurostat §1.4.4.5:** a "single award recognised by all the institutions" is one of the two outcomes of "joint or double degree programmes"; no separate UOE definition of "joint degree". Counted as credit mobility; third-country graduates reported where most time is spent; double counting to be avoided (§1.4.4.5).	EA 2015, ECTS and Note are almost identical (green); the Note adds "attesting the successful completion of this programme". BPIR uses a different recognition criterion ("authorities of at least two countries").
C4	**Double / multiple degrees**	**EA 2027:** definition left to the glossary to be determined **EA 2015:** Separate degrees awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme. (If two degrees are awarded by two institutions, this is a 'double degree').		At least two separate degree certificates awarded to a student upon successful completion of a joint programme. A double degree is a specific type of multiple degree. Each degree certificate must be signed by the competent authority of the institution concerned, and recognised officially in the countries where the different awarding institutions are located. (Erasmus+ Glossary)	**Double degree** – To do: To align with the forthcoming revised European Approach. Separate qualifications awarded by education institutions offering a joint programme attesting the successful completion of this learning opportunity. See also European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes **Multiple degrees** – To do: To align with the forthcoming revised European Approach. (identical text)	Grouped with joint degrees as "joint or double degree programmes"; students counted as credit mobile (Eurostat §1.4.4.5).	Double = two degrees; multiple = at least two; double is a type of multiple. ECTS says "qualifications", EA and Note "degrees". The Note adds criteria (signature by the competent authority; official recognition in the awarding countries) that the EA does not have.
D. Quality assurance and institutional terms							
D1	**Higher education**	**ESG 2027 key term:** Higher education – Education delivered/provided according to the	See "Institution" (D2): any institution providing services in the field of higher and/or tertiary	—	Higher education levels are "QF-EHEA short, first, second and third cycle level, EQF level 5 if considered higher	"Tertiary education (ISCED levels 5 to 8)"	

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		descriptors of Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area and corresponding European Qualifications Framework. *Footnote 5: Levels 5, 6, 7 and 8 of EQF correspond to QF-EHEA cycles. In some higher education systems, level 5 EQF is not considered higher education.*	education, as defined by national law.		education, and EQF levels 6, 7 and 8" (Key features; 4.1). Glossary "Cycle" describes the cycles.		
D2	**Institution**	**ESG 2027 key term:** Institution – Refers to higher education institutions and other providers that deliver education aligned with the descriptors of the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area and corresponding European Qualifications Framework.	(Higher education) Institution = Any institution providing services in the field of higher and/or tertiary education, as defined by national law. This report focuses on 'Public higher education institutions' (see the related term).		No entry for "education institution", which the Guide uses throughout instead of "higher education institution" (e.g. credits are awarded "by higher education institutions or other formally recognised education institutions that are subject to quality assurance standards"). "Student" is defined by reference to a higher education institution.	"Educational institutions are defined as entities that provide either educational core or peripheral goods and services" (UOE Manual §2.4.1)	ESG = qualifications-framework-based; BPIR = national law; ECTS = "education institution", spanning other levels of education (without a criterion); UOE = statistical unit.
D3	**Quality assurance**	**ESG 2027 key term:** Quality assurance – Refers to all activities within the continuous improvement cycle (i.e. assurance and enhancement activities).			Quality assurance – The set of processes implemented to ensure the quality of learning opportunities and qualifications awarded. Quality assurance should ensure a learning environment in which the content of learning		ECTS blends the ESG key term with a sentence from the ESG introduction ("Quality assurance should ensure a learning environment in which the content of programmes, learning opportunities, services and facilities are fit for purpose …").

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					opportunities and facilities are fit for purpose. Quality assurance is often referred to in the context of a continuous improvement cycle (i.e. assurance and enhancement activities).		
D4	**Internal quality assurance**	**ESG 2027 key term:** Internal quality assurance – The continuous process of monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of higher education provision within an institution, or to internal mechanisms of quality monitoring, evaluation and improvement within an agency. It refers to a set of systematic processes and practices implemented within an organisation to ensure the quality, consistency, and effectiveness of its products, services, or activities. It is an essential part of quality assurance.	Internal quality assurance refers to the processes involved in assuring and/or improving the quality of defined areas of activity within higher education institutions. Typically, it involves the systematic collection and analysis of administrative data, as well as the feedback of students, lecturers, other staff and external stakeholders.	—			
D5	**External quality assurance**	**ESG 2027 key term:** External quality assurance – Refers to the comprehensive set of evaluation activities relating to teaching and learning in higher	External quality assurance refers to the process of evaluation or audit of a higher education programme or institution undertaken by a				The BPIR also admits "an ad hoc panel … constituted by the responsible ministry", which would not meet ESG 3.2 (independence) or 2.4 (peer reviewers).

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		education, carried out by peer reviewers using a predefined framework. The assessment of institutions is conducted by quality assurance agencies against set standards in line with processes as described in the Part 2 of the ESG, on a cyclical basis. Given the multiple needs of higher education institutions, external quality assurance may take various forms to achieve different objectives. These may include evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities, which may be carried out differently and at different levels (such as programme or institutional level), and may lead to judgements and formal outcomes, depending on the context.	specialised body outside the institution. Typically, the body may be a quality assurance or accreditation agency, or an ad hoc panel of experts and peers constituted by the responsible ministry. The evaluation will involve the collection of data, information and evidence for assessment against agreed standards.				
D6	**Cross-border quality assurance**	**ESG 2027 key term:** Cross-border quality assurance – External QA activities of a QA agency carried out in a country other than the one in which it is based or primarily operates. **EA 2027 Part C:** agencies "should communicate appropriately with the					

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		competent public authorities of the countries in which the cooperating higher education institutions are based".					
D7	**Quality assurance agency**		Quality assurance agency – A body established by national authorities or private entities with responsibility for external quality assurance. Agencies are intended to play a strong role in ensuring accountability of higher education institutions and may have specific objectives aimed at enhancing quality related to teaching, learning or other higher education missions.				
D8	**Stakeholders**	**ESG 2027 key term:** Stakeholders – All actors directly or indirectly interested in or affected by an institution's or agency's activity. Internal institutional stakeholders include students, staff (teaching, research, administration, management, support), while external stakeholders include, but are not limited to, alumni,					

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		employers, professional bodies, civil society and public authorities.					

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