Review of the ECTS Users' Guide

BFUG, 5/6 November 2026

EUROPEAN
Higher Education Area

bologna process

European Commission



Recap: consultation since the last BFUG

When	What
9/10 March 2026	**BFUG – discussed draft 3.1**
March 2026	Further written comments on draft 3.1
5 June 2026	Draft 4.0 – incorporating any points discussed at BFUG
June/July 2026	Written comments on draft 4.0
15 September	Draft 4.1 submitted to BFUG Board
29 September 2026	BFUG Board – review of final draft 4.1
22 October 2026	Final draft (4.2) circulated to BFUG
5/6 November 2026	**BFUG – endorse final draft 4.2 for adoption by ministers**

Written consultation

- Open during March (first round) and June/July 2026 (second round)
- Comments from 13 EHEA members/consultative members:
  - AT, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, IE, MT, NO, SE, SI, UK
  - ETUCE
  - one follow-up comment (NO) after BFUG Board
- Further feedback obtained:
  - individual suggestions from some Advisory Group members
  - alignment with Erasmus+ programme documents (EAC-internal)
  - editorial comments

Scope and use of ECTS beyond higher education

- Focus remains higher education, use in other sectors is optional and at the discretion of national authorities
- Approach explicitly supported by several countries
- Concerns re. quality assurance arrangements by some countries
- Latest changes emphasises:
  - National autonomy/discretion where ECTS may be used and by which institutions, to agree in consultation with stakeholders
  - Need for robust and transparent quality assurance arrangements, always a minimum requirement – in higher education ESG, in VET EQAVET, in general EQF Annex

Micro-credentials

- Different contexts and scenarios, e.g.:
  - new, stand-alone MC
  - MC part of existing programme
- Importance that MCs are coherent and meaningful when offered stand-alone
- Need to be aligned with national regulatory framework
- Institution always decides on stacking and recognition

Awarding credits and issuing credentials

- Clarify that only recognised education institutions may award
- Transparency of provenance: formal, non-formal or informal context
- Importance of digital credentials to include learning outcomes and key metadata
- Level indication: must → should

Mobility and recognition

- Clarify that LRC only applies to higher education
- Transparency of pre-approved pathways
- Alignment of Erasmus+ templates/documents
- Standard formats
  - Clarify where elements are conditionally mandatory (“if applicable”)

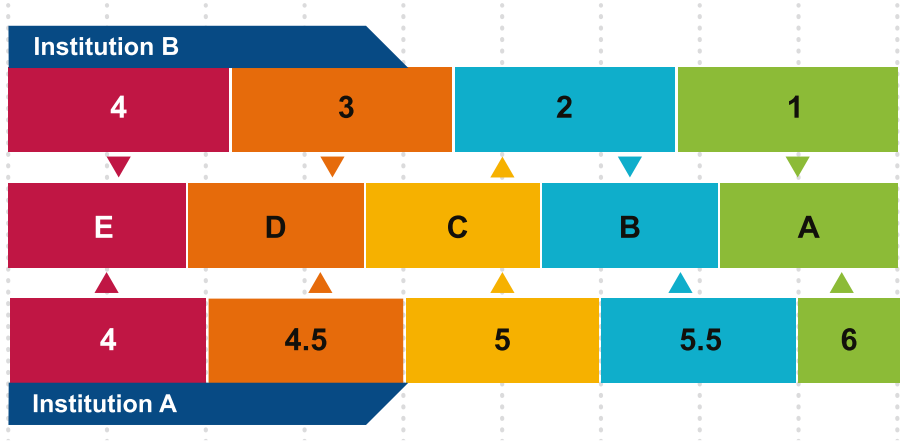
Grades and grade conversion

- Principle: transparency is obligatory, conversion is optional
  - Provide necessary information to understand grades
  - Recognising institution decides whether and how to convert
  - Two methodologies available
- Latest changes:
  - Reference grade descriptors refined
  - Table and some text simplified
  - Examples added/extended

1) Conversion based on grade distribution



2) Conversion via reference grades



Proposals not taken in

- Make quality assurance references more flexible, even in HE do not require ESG strictly
  - Clear link with ESG compliance maintained as is
- Add specific provisions for arts institutions
  - Kept the guide generic/subject-independent as is
- Further separate between formal and non-formal learning
  - Once learning has been validated and credits awarded, they should be equal
- Significantly shorten the key features
  - Level of detail was reviewed several times, Advisory Group considered a good balance

Thank you!