



**GHENT  
UNIVERSITY**

# USING LEARNING OUTCOMES IN MOBILITY: CLOSING THE LOOP

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# CONTENT

- Definitions and concepts
- Learning outcomes and credits as the key building blocks for mobility
- ECTS Principles and Supporting Documents
- Towards a new Learning Agreement → closing the loop?
- Conclusions

# LEARNING OUTCOMES

*Statements of what an individual knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning activity*

(at a given level within a qualifications framework)

# CREDITS

*In ECTS: credits express the amount of workload related to a learning activity*

*Workload = an estimation of the time the individual needs to complete this learning activity*

1 ECTS-credit = 25 - 30h workload

# ECTS

- Developed in parallel with the Erasmus programme (°1989)
- Gradually its use broadened (also outside mobility context)
  - From transfer in different context
  - To accumulation of credits
- More and more focused on learning outcomes
- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

# LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CREDITS IN LEGISLATION IN FLEMISH COMMUNITY (BE)

- *“Each HEI describes the learning outcomes of each programme and each course”*
- *“Credits = an international unit\* that is accepted in Flanders of min. 25 and max. 30 hours of education, learning and evaluation activities, expressing the volume of each programme or course”*

\* = Reference to ECTS

# LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CREDITS IN MOBILITY

- Create transparency and transferability
- Main building blocks in degree and credit mobility
- But also
  - key elements in HE programme design
  - potential crucial elements in transition to the labour market and hence labour & social mobility



# STARTING POINT: LO'S AND CREDITS IN PROGRAMME DESIGN

Recommended: 10-12 learning outcomes at programme level

6-8 learning outcomes for educational components

## Guideline

- S
- Learning outcomes should:
- reflect the context, level, scope and content of the programme
  - be succinct and not too detailed;
  - be mutually consistent
  - be easily understandable and verifiable
  - be achievable within the workload
  - be linked with appropriate learning activities, assessment methods and assessment criteria

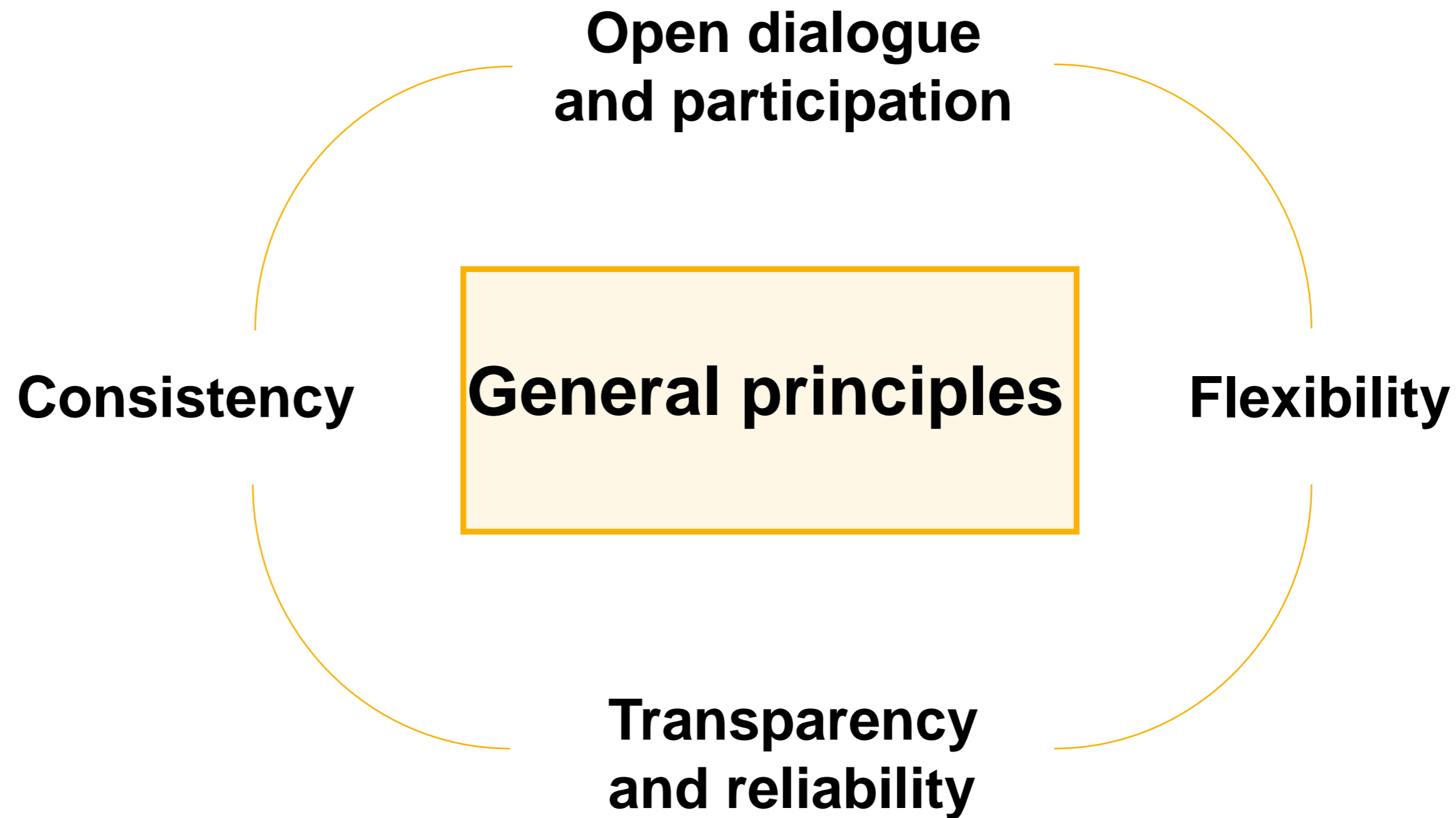
## Formulation

- Use an active verb to express what students are expected to know and be able to do
- Specify what the outcomes refer to
- Specify the way of demonstrating the achievement of the learning outcomes

# PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

- 60 credits for a full-time-equivalent academic year
- Use of modules – benefits for collaboration across subjects and faculties
- ‘Mobility windows’ facilitate learning mobility
- Progression requirements must be explicit
- Independent learners joining a formal programme should receive appropriate counselling/advice to support them

# ASSESSMENT AND AWARD OF CREDITS



# ECTS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Good practice in using ECTS will help institutions improve the quality of their programmes and their learning mobility offer
- ECTS should be quality assured through appropriate evaluation processes and continuous quality enhancement

## Evaluation indicators

- Educational components are expressed in terms of appropriate learning outcomes, and information is available concerning their level, credits, delivery and assessment
- Studies can be completed in the time allocated to them
- Annual monitoring examines any variations in patterns of achievement and results, and follows up with appropriate revision
- Students are provided with detailed information and advice
- Students are informed promptly of their results

# ECTS SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Course Catalogue
- Learning Agreement
- Transcript of Records
- Exist both for studies and for placements
- All refer to learning outcomes / credits

# LEARNING OUTCOMES & CREDITS IN ECTS: COURSE CATALOGUE

Includes detailed, user-friendly and up-to-date information on the institution's learning environment

## Recommended elements

- Name and address
- Description of institution
- Academic authorities
- Academic calendar
- Programmes offered
- Admission requirements
- **Recognition of credit mobility**
- **ECTS credit allocation policy**
- Academic guidance
- Information on programmes
- **Information on individual educational components**
- Student affairs office
- Accommodation and meals
- Cost of living and financial support
- Learning and medical facilities
- Insurance
- Facilities for students with disabilities/special needs
- International mobility possibilities
- Language courses
- Work placement possibilities
- Sports and leisure facilities
- Student associations

# LEARNING OUTCOMES & CREDITS IN ECTS: LEARNING AGREEMENT

Outlines the learning activities to be carried out by the student within the receiving institution

## Recommended elements

- Name and contact details of student
- Names, addresses and contact details of sending and receiving institutions
- Student's field of study at sending institution
- Study cycle
- Type of organisation/company
- **Period of study at the receiving institution and ECTS credits**
- **Learning outcomes**
- Traineeship period programme
- Working hours per week
- Level of competence in workplace language
- Monitoring and evaluation plan
- Provisions for changes to the Agreement
- Recognition arrangements
- Signatures of three parties







<sup>1</sup> **Nationality:** country to which the person belongs administratively and that issues the ID card and/or passport.

<sup>2</sup> **Study cycle:** Short cycle (EQF level 5) / Bachelor or equivalent first cycle (EQF level 6) / Master or equivalent second cycle (EQF level 7) / Doctorate or equivalent third cycle (EQF level 8).

<sup>3</sup> **Field of education:** The [ISCED-F 2013 search tool](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/isced-f_en.htm) available at [http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/isced-f\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/isced-f_en.htm) should be used to find the ISCED 2013 detailed field of education and training that is closest to the subject of the degree to be awarded to the student by the Sending Institution.

<sup>4</sup> **Erasmus code:** a unique identifier that every higher education institution that has been awarded with the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) receives. It is only applicable to higher education institutions located in Programme Countries.

<sup>5</sup> **Contact person:** person who provides a link for administrative information and who, depending on the structure of the higher education institution, may be the departmental coordinator or works at the international relations office or equivalent body within the institution.

<sup>6</sup> An "educational component" is a self-contained and formal structured learning experience that features learning outcomes, credits and forms of assessment. Examples of educational components are: a course, module, seminar, laboratory work, practical work, preparation/research for a thesis, mobility window or free electives.

<sup>7</sup> **Course catalogue:** detailed, user-friendly and up-to-date information on the institution's learning environment that should be available to students before the mobility period and throughout their studies to enable them to make the right choices and use their time most efficiently. The information concerns, for example, the qualifications offered, the learning, teaching and assessment procedures, the level of programmes, the individual educational components and the learning resources. The Course Catalogue should include the names of people to contact, with information about how, when and where to contact them.

<sup>8</sup> **ECTS credits (or equivalent):** in countries where the "ECTS" system is not in place, in particular for institutions located in Partner Countries not participating in the Bologna process, "ECTS" needs to be replaced in the relevant tables by the name of the equivalent system that is used, and a web link to an explanation to the system should be added.

<sup>9</sup> **Level of language competence:** a description of the European Language Levels (CEFR) is available at: <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>

<sup>10</sup> **Responsible person at the Sending Institution:** an academic who has the authority to approve the Learning Agreement, to exceptionally amend it when it is needed, as well as to guarantee full recognition of such programme on behalf of the responsible academic body. The name and email of the Responsible person must be filled in only in case it differs from that of the Contact person mentioned at the top of the document.

<sup>11</sup> **Responsible person at the Receiving Institution:** the name and email of the Responsible person must be filled in only in case it differs from that of the Contact person mentioned at the top of the document.

<sup>12</sup> **Reasons for exceptional changes to study programme abroad (choose an item number from the table below):**

| <i>Reasons for deleting a component</i>  | <i>Reason for adding a component</i> |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Previously selected educational component is not available at the Receiving Institution | 5. Substituting a deleted component  |
| 2. Component is in a different language than previously specified in the course catalogue  | 6. Extending the mobility period     |
| 3. Timetable conflict  | 7. Other (please specify)            |
| 4. Other (please specify)  |                                      |

# LEARNING AGREEMENT

- General information on three parties involved
  - Student
  - Sending institution
  - Receiving institution
- Three essential parts:
  - Before mobility
  - During mobility
  - After mobility

# LA: GENERAL INFORMATION

## Learning Agreement

Higher Education:  
Learning Agreement form  
Student's name  
Academic Year 20.../20...



Erasmus+

## Student Mobility for Studies

|                       |              |                    |  |                          |           |   |                                 |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------|---|---------------------------------|
| Student               | Last name(s) | First name(s)      | Date of birth                                | Nationality <sup>1</sup> | Sex [M/F] | Study cycle <sup>2</sup>                        | Field of education <sup>3</sup> |
|                       |              |                    |  |                          |           |   |                                 |
| Sending Institution   | Name         | Faculty/Department | Erasmus code <sup>4</sup><br>(if applicable) | Address                  | Country   | Contact person name <sup>5</sup> ; email; phone |                                 |
|                       |              |                    |  |                          |           |   |                                 |
| Receiving Institution | Name         | Faculty/Department | Erasmus code<br>(if applicable)              | Address                  | Country   | Contact person name; email; phone               |                                 |
|                       |              |                    |  |                          |           |   |                                 |

### Commitment

By signing this document, the student, the Sending Institution and the Receiving Institution confirm that they approve the Learning Agreement and that they will comply with all the arrangements agreed by all parties. Sending and Receiving Institutions undertake to apply all the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education relating to mobility for studies (or the principles agreed in the Inter-Institutional Agreement for institutions located in Partner Countries). The Beneficiary Institution and the student should also commit to what is set out in the Erasmus+ grant agreement. The Receiving Institution confirms that the educational components listed in Table A are in line with its course catalogue and should be available to the student. The Sending Institution commits to recognise all the credits or equivalent units gained at the Receiving Institution for the successfully completed educational components and to count them towards the student's degree as described in Table B. Any exceptions to this rule are documented in an annex of this Learning Agreement and agreed by all parties. The student and the Receiving Institution will communicate to the Sending Institution any problems or changes regarding the study programme, responsible persons and/or study period.

| Commitment  | Name | Email | Position | Date | Signature |
|---|------|-------|----------|------|-----------|
| Student   |      |       | Student  |      |           |
| Responsible person <sup>10</sup> at the Sending Institution   |      |       |          |      |           |
| Responsible person at the Receiving Institution <sup>11</sup> |      |       |          |      |           |

# LA: PART BEFORE THE MOBILITY

## Before the mobility

| <i>Study Programme at the Receiving Institution</i>   |                         |   |                                     |   |
|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Planned period of the mobility: from [month/year] ..... to [month/year] .....   |                         |   |                                     |   |
| <b>Table A</b><br>Before the mobility   | Component code (if any) | Component title at the Receiving Institution (as indicated in the course catalogue <sup>7</sup> ) | Semester (e.g. autumn/spring; term) | Number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) <sup>8</sup> to be awarded by the Receiving Institution upon successful completion |
|   |                         |   |                                     |   |
|   |                         |   |                                     |   |
|   |                         |   |                                     |   |
|   |                         |   |                                     |   |
|   |                         |   |                                     |   |
|   |                         |   |                                     |   |
|   |                         |   |                                     |   |
|   |                         |   |                                     | <b>Total: ...</b>   |
| Weblink to the course catalogue at the Receiving Institution describing the learning outcomes: [web link to the relevant information] |                         |   |                                     |   |

The level of language competence<sup>9</sup> in \_\_\_\_\_ [indicate here the main language of instruction] that the student already has or agrees to acquire by the start of the study period is: A1  A2  B1  B2  C1  C2  Native speaker

| <i>Recognition at the Sending Institution</i>   |                         |   |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Table B</b><br>Before the mobility   | Component code (if any) | Component title at the Sending Institution (as indicated in the course catalogue) | Semester (e.g. autumn/spring; term) | Number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) to be recognised by the Sending Institution |
|   |                         |   |                                     |  |
|   |                         |   |                                     |  |
|   |                         |   |                                     |  |
|   |                         |   |                                     |  |
|   |                         |   |                                     |  |
|   |                         |   |                                     |  |
|   |                         |   |                                     |  |
|   |                         |   |                                     | <b>Total: ...</b>  |
| Provisions applying if the student does not complete successfully some educational components: [web link to the relevant information] |                         |   |                                     |  |

**Commitment**

By signing this document, the student, the Sending Institution and the Receiving Institution confirm that they approve the Learning Agreement and that they will comply with all the

# LA: PART DURING THE MOBILITY

## During the Mobility

| Exceptional changes to Table A<br>(to be approved by e-mail or signature by the student, the responsible person in the Sending Institution and the responsible person in the Receiving Institution) |                               |   |  |  |                                  |  |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Table A2<br>During the<br>mobility  | Component<br>code<br>(if any) | Component title at the Receiving<br>Institution<br>(as indicated in the course catalogue) | Deleted<br>component<br>(tick if applicable) | Added<br>component<br>(tick if applicable) | Reason for change <sup>1,2</sup> | Number of<br>ECTS credits<br>(or equivalent) |
|   |                               |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/>                   | Choose an item.                  |  |
|   |                               |   | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>        | Choose an item.                  |  |

| Exceptional changes to Table B (if applicable)<br>(to be approved by e-mail or signature by the student and the responsible person in the Sending Institution) |                               |  |  |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Table B2<br>During the<br>mobility   | Component<br>code<br>(if any) | Component title at the Sending Institution<br>(as indicated in the course catalogue) | Deleted<br>component<br>(tick if applicable) | Added<br>component<br>(tick if applicable) | Number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) |
|  |                               |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                   |  |
|  |                               |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                   |  |

# LA : PART AFTER THE MOBILITY (“TOR” + RECOGNITION)

## After the Mobility

| <i>Transcript of Records at the Receiving Institution</i>                                      |                               |  |   |  |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| Start and end dates of the study period: from [day/month/year] ..... to [day/month/year] ..... |                               |  |   |  |  |  |
| Table C<br>After the<br>mobility   | Component<br>code<br>(if any) | Component title at the Receiving Institution<br>(as indicated in the course catalogue) | Was the component<br>successfully completed<br>by the student? [Yes/No] | Number of ECTS<br>credits<br>(or equivalent) | Grades received<br>at the Receiving<br>Institution |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  | Total: ...   |  |

| <i>Transcript of Records and Recognition at the Sending Institution</i>                        |                               |  |   |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Start and end dates of the study period: from [day/month/year] ..... to [day/month/year] ..... |                               |  |   |  |  |
| Table D<br>After the<br>mobility   | Component<br>code<br>(if any) | Title of recognised component at the Sending Institution<br>(as indicated in the course catalogue) | Number of ECTS credits<br>(or equivalent)<br>recognised | Grades registered at the<br>Sending Institution<br>(if applicable) |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   |  |  |
|  |                               |  |   | Total: ...   |  |

# TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDS

Records the educational components taken, the number of ECTS-credits achieved and the grades awarded during the mobility period

## Recommended

### elements

- Name of student
- ID and/or contact details of the student
- Names and contacts of the institution
- Field of study of the student and/or name of programme
- Current year of study
- Educational components taken at the institution
- Description of the institutional grading system
- Grade distribution information
- Date of issue and signature of the responsible person

# USING LEARNING AGREEMENTS IN PRACTICE: THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

## Home Institution

- Course 1
- Course 2
- Course n

- Learning Outcome A
- Learning Outcome B
- Learning Outcome X

## Host Institution

- Course 1'
- Course 2'
- Course n'

- Learning Outcome A'
- Learning Outcome B'
- Learning Outcome X'



# USING LEARNING AGREEMENTS IN PRACTICE

## Home Institution

- Course 1
- Course 2
- Course n

## Host Institution

- Course 1'
- Course 2'
- Course n'

- Learning Outcome A
- Learning Outcome B
- Learning Outcome X

- Learning Outcome A'
- Learning Outcome B'
- Learning Outcome X'

=

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# IN GHENT UNIVERSITY'S REGULATION

- For outgoing students, the curriculum committee will determine the exchange courses based on the content of the Learning Agreement. In this process, the committee aims to substitute a set of course units from the study programme at Ghent University for another set of exchange courses offered at the receiving institution, instead of substituting separate course units. Substituting the set of course units from Ghent University with the set of exchange courses offered by the receiving institution may cause deviations (in a positive or negative sense) from the total study load of the Ghent University programme. The negative deviation may only amount to a maximum of 2 ECTS-credits.

# NEW PROPOSAL CIRCULATING: CLOSING THE LOOP (1)

- New Erasmus+ programme from 2021 onwards
- Highly probable: opening Erasmus-mobility (“KA103”) to non-programme countries
- What about the “Erasmus Charter for Higher Education” (ECHE)?
  - ECHE → huge focus on ECTS *acquis*!

# NEW PROPOSAL CIRCULATING: CLOSING THE LOOP (2)

- At the same time: discussion about ‘full recognition’
- Adopt the Learning Agreement format
  - Before the mobility
  - During the mobility
  - After the mobility

# NEW FORMAT OF LEARNING AGREEMENT?

- Before the mobility
  - No ‘signature’ (official agreement) of host institution needed (speeds up process; host = not responsible for final recognition; in +70% of cases alterations were needed anyhow)
- During the mobility:
  - The “adjusted” plan (tables A2 and B2) become the ‘real learning agreement’
  - ‘signed’ (= digitally approved) by the 3 parties involved (student, home and host HEI)

# NEW FORMAT OF LEARNING AGREEMENT?

- After the mobility
  - Transcript of records → Learning Agreement after mobility clearly links original study programme (of home institution) and courses follow at host institution
- AND (proposal): learning outcomes will be mentioned - cf. also proposal for an adjusted diploma supplement (+ other relevant information to support the student?)

# CONCLUSIONS

# CONCLUSIONS

- Students have the right to be well informed and (certainly ‘Erasmus’-students) expect information and certainty about their programme and the recognition thereof before/at the beginning of their exchange period abroad
- We need to meet the expectations of students
- Learning outcomes (and credits) play a crucial role in this
- This role will most probably increase in the next Erasmus programme (also for non-European exchanges)



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