

ATEST

Project Final Report



Project Final Report
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ATEST Project Final Report

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**THE ATEST PROJECT HAS BEEN REALISED AS AN ERASMUS+ KA2 PROJECT
WITH A FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE YEAR 2014-2016**

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1. Introduction of the ATEST project

The ATEST project (Assessment of Traineeships within the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) was realised as a two year Erasmus+ project (activity KA2); the main outcome of which is a recommendation for the approval of credits for Erasmus traineeship activities.

The reason for the project proposal was to enhance the quality and relevance of traineeships by developing an assessment and recognition system of Erasmus Traineeships for participating institutions and to disseminate it to the other universities as well. Since the beginning of the LLP/Erasmus Programme, student mobility has also focused on placements/traineeships in institutions abroad. The traineeship programme under the Erasmus+ programme is further extended to another group of participants - graduates who may complete their traineeship during the 12 months after graduation, provided that they have been accepted for the traineeship during their studies.

The past years have been marked as a period of intense traineeship activities. The Erasmus traineeships started in 2007 and between 2007/2008 and 2009/2010, the number of Erasmus traineeships increased by 78 % (compared to a 31 % increase in regular Erasmus student mobility for study) and it is still growing. Out of 272,497 Erasmus students, 60,289 went on work placements abroad in 2013/2014 (22 % of all Erasmus students). This represents an annual increase of 9 %. Since its inclusion in the Erasmus programme, work placements abroad have grown rapidly, and today the annual number of placements is more than three times higher than the number of placements in 2007/2008.

Grants enable students to spend a period of 3 to 12 months (or 2 to 12 months) doing a work placement abroad. Spending time in a company abroad helps students to adapt to the requirements of the labour market and develop specific skills. It also boosts cooperation between education institutions and companies. Almost 80 % of students involved were working in SMEs. Of those students one in three were offered a job by their host firm, while one in ten went on to create their own company.

The increasing importance of Erasmus traineeships stresses the need for quality and relevance for the assessment. While for the Erasmus mobility study programme the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is settled, there is a lack of guidelines and precise rules for the assessment of internships/traineeships (quality assurance based on ECTS or other form of credits), mainly non-compulsory traineeship activities.

The current practice used for the assessment and recognition of traineeship results shows us huge differences between universities and even within a university among different departments. Based on analyses made by some project participants, we can see large differences in the manner of allocating credits for traineeships performed within the Erasmus programme (from 0 ECTS to 30 ECTS within the same period of traineeship). It is important to have a common system for assessment of traineeship programmes which will bring similar methods used for assessment and recognition of traineeship results.

When traineeship is a part of the curriculum, credits (ECTS) are specified in the study plans but there are no rules or recommendations for assessment and recognition of traineeships if it is not a part of the curriculum (study plan). The objective of the project is to find a consensus for evaluation, assessment and recognition of Erasmus traineeships. We strongly believe that the most convincing way to promote ECTS in traineeships is a hands-on approach.

Traineeships will become more attractive for university students if a clear assessment of their traineeships is used and the results are recognised as a regular part of study.

Thanks to the Erasmus traineeships being included as a part of the study, students gain practical experience in their field of study in another way – through practical activities which are very important and essential for their further professional development. Traineeships (work placements) in companies abroad have been supported through the Erasmus Programme since 2007. Previously they had been managed within the Leonardo da Vinci Programme for vocational education and training and have accounted for the largest increase in the number of students in recent years.

Erasmus grants have already been awarded to more than 210,000 students to undertake placements and over 30% of them received a job offer from their hosting enterprise¹. This growth in the number of traineeships is providing more and more young people with practical work experience and helps to strengthen links between higher education and business.

¹ Erasmus –Facts, Figures and trends. The European Union support for students and staff exchanges and university cooperation in 2013-2014 Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, ISBN 978-92-79-38575-9.

The problem of accumulation of credits appears when students are participating in traineeship activities outside of the regular study programmes (out of curricula) and it is seen as a voluntary activity (optional, not mandatory) which is not a part of the curriculum and the traineeship is only an additional activity of students over their given study programme.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) has a relatively short history. It was used for the first time in 1989 to transfer study results (accumulated credits) earned during study abroad to be recognised by the home university. Nowadays, ECTS is used as a tool of the European higher education area for making studies and courses more transparent and thus helping to enhance the quality of higher education.

The time required to achieve one credit is 25 to 30 hours of learning activities, including self-preparation. For the whole academic year the number of expected credits is 60 ECTS and the hours 1500 – 1800.

If we accept the Erasmus traineeship programme as an integral part of study, it must be objectively evaluated in accordance with recognized rules, i.e. ECTS. For traineeships, it is not strictly given how to evaluate and recognize participation in Erasmus traineeships under the ECTS. The project partners have analysed the system of assessment and recognition of traineeships used in European universities. Together the project team has prepared common analysis on how the problem of recognition of traineeships could be solved based on ECTS according to the period, results and other aspects of traineeships.

Project Partners

The comprehensive project consortium consisted of partners active in Erasmus traineeships. The partnership for the project cooperation was established to represent different regions with participation of universities geographically covering the whole of Europe - from West to East and from North to South. There were 10 participants involved from 9 EU countries, of which nine of them were universities:

- **Nottingham Trent University, Great Britain**
- **Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands**
- **INSEEC Business School, France**
- **University of the Basque Country, Spain**
- **University of Trento, Italy**

- Deggendorf Institute of Technology, Germany
- Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia
- Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece
- The Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice, Czech Republic

The coordinating institution was **Educa International, o.p.s.**, which is a non-university NGO from the Czech Republic – an Erasmus consortium representing an additional 10 Czech universities in Erasmus+ traineeship activities. Project partners were invited to the project based on previous cooperation and good experiences in the Erasmus mobility programme and all of them were actively involved in the project work and contributed with their expertise to tackle the project task. There was no project partner without previous mobility project experiences.



Kickoff Meeting, Prague 2014

2. Methods of Work

Main Objectives

The goal of the project is to increase the quality of traineeships under the new Erasmus+ programme and to improve the professionalism of academic and administrative staff in the process of planning, assessment and recognition of traineeships.

The European Commission pointed out that, “In the particular case of a traineeship that is not part of the curriculum of the student, the sending institution shall provide recognition at least by recording this period in the Diploma Supplement or, in the case of recent graduates, by providing a traineeship certificate”². However, there are no commonly adopted clear rules, as in mobilities for studies, for quality assurance of traineeships based on a credit system (ECTS or other form of credits) for assessment and recognition, nor for its record on students’ academic files.

- Contribute to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the “*European Quality Charter for Mobility*” in the field of higher education.
- Promote the creation of mechanisms at the European level to foster the exchange of best practices and the involvement of the major criteria that define the quality of traineeships, as stated in the *European Quality Charter on Internships and Apprenticeships*³.

Specific Objectives

- Propose a set of recommendations to contribute to the quality of mobility practices and improve the recognition of traineeships within the curriculum and students’ academic qualifications.
- Develop a glossary providing a common understanding on specific aspects of Erasmus+ traineeships.

² Erasmus+ Traineeship web information provided by the European Commission, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/traineeships_en.htm

³ Available at: www.qualityinternships.eu

Working Methods

In order to achieve the goals of the project, the coordinator and partner universities considered following working methods combining work group meetings and individual work. The kick-off and project meetings represented an efficient means to facilitate fluent communication among the partners, to evaluate the progress of the assigned tasks, and to define further ones to be performed for upcoming meetings.

The project partners considered using a quantitative approach to analyze how traineeships are assessed at partner universities and at those with which partners collaborate in the Erasmus+ programme through mobility bilateral agreements.

In addition, partner universities followed a qualitative approach to offer a set of guidelines on how to evaluate and recognize work placements. This involves defining the evaluation instruments: host company/organization's report, student's essay or final report, and tutor's report, and proposing a percentage value for each instrument.

It was not the purpose of the project to perform an exhaustive analysis of the evaluation and recognition in credits of each and every single traineeship at higher education institutions involved in the Erasmus+ internship programme. A study of that magnitude would be incomprehensible for partners and exceed the project's purpose. It should also be remembered that traineeships are primarily subject to two different sets of regulations, one in the student's home institution and country, and the second in the country of the host company. In addition, European regulations and other legislative frameworks also add a higher level of complexity to the problem of traineeship assessment and recognition.

For the reasons above, the consortium ruled out developing a formal, specific "one size fits all" style proposal intended to be generalized to all traineeships on how and the extent to which they should evaluate and recognize such placements. Conversely, it was considered that the analysis of a pseudo random sample may be sufficient to provide an overview and expose the issue, to propose a set of recommendations of good practices to help higher education institutions that manage this type of mobility, and to incorporate them into their working methodologies.

The first project meeting adopted the working plan and established a project management committee to ensure effectiveness, decisiveness, flexibility and quality of work for the whole project period. The first project period was oriented to individual work within each partner university, and EDUCA as Erasmus

coordinator worked with material from consortia members to analyze the system used for the assessment and recognition of the traineeship results in much greater detail. In between meetings, partners used for communication email, Facebook, and video conferences. Each communication method has been used for different types of activities depending on the specific actions solved. 4 meetings have been held (1 "kick off" meeting and 3 other project meetings including a final meeting), each for 1 or 2 participants from each participating university and consortium. The participants for the meetings were nominated among teaching and administrative staff actively involved on planning traineeships and evaluation of results.

The kick-off and project meetings represented an efficient means of establishing fluent communication among the partners. To support this, partner members had regular contact by phone, email, skype, etc. The participants have all the skills, expertise and competencies required to carry out all proposed project activities. Regarding technical expertise, all of the partners from academia and administration have sound, relevant previous experience in the implementation of the EU projects, and performed the tasks and activities with efficiency and diligence in groups and individually in order to achieve the goals of the project.

Working Programme

1st Phase: Project kick-off meeting. Project outlines and work programme (Prague, December 2014)

- Task 1: adoption of the working plan and establishment of the project management committee.
- Task 2: preparation of the specific questionnaire and distribution among partner universities.
- Task 3: data collection by each partner university.

Mapping of the various models of traineeship assessment and recognition was carried out through a desk analysis based on the collection and exploitation of the information from the questionnaire and web, textual sources, and media of different nature. The questionnaire is a template for the mapping of existing criteria in traineeship assessment and the collection of best practices. It was addressed to universities and to other higher education institutions that host and provide services for Erasmus+ internships.

2nd Phase: Analysis of the collected data and identification of best practices in Internship assessment and recognition (Paris, October 2015)

- Task 4: evaluation of existing criteria of assessment and recognition methods used by partner's institutions;
- Task 5: recommendations to the working group to prepare the draft of the final report;
- Task 6: preparation of the dissemination material for Web and publication of running activities;
- Task 7: elaboration of the Glossary.

3rd Phase: Discussion of the preliminary final report – (Eindhoven, January 2016)

- Task 8: final report draft presentation and discussion;
- Task 9: project's recommendations discussion.

4th Phase: Project's final report presentation – (Bilbao, June 2016)

- Task 10: activities and assessment outcomes;
- Task 11: strategy for the assessment and recognition of traineeships;
- Task 12: *ECTS in Traineeships: Handbook for HEIs* leaflet preparation, translation to partner's home languages;
- Task 13: project outcomes dissemination.

The working programme above illustrates how the consortium proceeded to achieve the envisaged objectives, and that the progress of the project activities had been assessed against project meetings as milestones, and tasks as measurable indicators. This working method played an important role in the performance of the quality of the work programme and performed project activities.

3. Questionnaire

The online questionnaire has been the main source used to survey European universities and higher education institutions involved in Erasmus internships. It has been developed by EDUCA International in collaboration with project partners.

The questionnaire was prepared to obtain valuable data and information from European universities about their methodologies for evaluation, classification and recognition of Erasmus+ traineeship periods. The main objective of the questionnaire was to analyze how universities assess, classify and recognize Erasmus+ internship periods. The online questionnaire was sent to more than 800 European universities and higher education institutions involved in traineeship programmes. 66 European universities took part answering the questionnaire of which 62 of them gave valid answers.

Information has been obtained from 14 different European countries: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, France, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Information was gathered for 2011 to 2013 time frame and for all study cycles (Bachelor, Master and PhD).

Questionnaire Content

The questionnaire is divided into four sections and has been designed to gather the information, both quantitative and qualitative, on monitoring, evaluation, recognition and classification of practices in European universities.

Section 1- General Information

The first section of the questionnaire is intended to collect quantitative factors from surveyed universities. These factors help measure the size of the universities in number of enrolled students and in their level of activity within the Erasmus+ programme. Such activity is considered in terms of the number of outgoing students, for both studies and traineeship and for the various existing cycles, and in the number of signed bilateral agreements.

The collection of this data provides information on the progress of the Erasmus for studies in comparison to Erasmus internships. The number of Erasmus internship mobilities from 2011/12 to 2013/14, and for the various existing cycles— Bachelor, Master and PhD., might show the trend in the number of students participating in traineeships in recent years for the three existing cycles.

ATEST Project – a Questionnaire

University:

ECHE:

Total number of regularly enrolled students at the University (2013/2014 - full time + part time):

Number of Erasmus mobility contracts /bilateral agreements/ for study in 2013/14:

Number of Erasmus cooperation agreements for traineeships in 2013/14, if any:

Number of outgoing Erasmus student mobilities in 2011/2012

Write number of Students and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus student mobilities in 2012/2013

Write number of Students and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus student mobilities in 2013/2014

Write number of Students and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus mobilities - Traineeships in 2011/2012 - Bachelor

Write number of Traineeships and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus mobilities - Traineeships in 2011/2012 - Master

Write number of Traineeships and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus mobilities - Traineeships in 2011/2012 - Ph.D.

Write number of Traineeships and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus mobilities - Traineeships in 2012/2013 - Bachelor

Write number of Traineeships and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus mobilities - Traineeships in 2012/2013 - Master

Write number of Traineeships and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus mobilities - Traineeships in 2012/2013 - Ph.D.

Write number of Traineeships and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus mobilities - Traineeships in 2013/2014 - Bachelor

Write number of Traineeships and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus mobilities - Traineeships in 2013/2014 - Master

Write number of Traineeships and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Number of outgoing Erasmus mobilities - Traineeships in 2013/2014 - Ph.D.

Write number of Traineeships and total of Months (Please, use this format: "Students: xxxx; Months: yyy")

Section 2 - Compulsory Traineeships

This section is aimed at collecting primary data on compulsory traineeship, those that are part of the curriculum for 2013/14 academic year, and can offer information on whether the Erasmus+ programme could be a platform for supporting students' compulsory traineeship mobilities.

Secondly, this section aims to know if the allocation of credits to traineeships is the same for all compulsory internships within the same university, regardless of their duration. Or conversely, differences between the duration of this type of traineeship depending on the specialization, may suggest different rules according to different specialisations that might add higher complexity to the assessment, recognition and allocation of credits within the universities.

Thirdly, section 2 is intended to figure out if Erasmus+ is the main financial source for supporting traineeships, or if universities are using different types of grants to fund compulsory internships. The data from this question will reveal how rooted the Erasmus+ programme for traineeships is in European institutions, it might also allow us to compare the different existing funding sources between countries and within countries, between different universities.

Compulsory Traineeships (data for year 2013/2014 only)
 Traineeships obligatory from the curricula

Do you support traineeships (which are a part of curriculum) via Erasmus programme?

a) Yes, only for compulsory traineeships
 b) For both (compulsory and facultative traineeships)
 c) No
 Otro:

Is the time of compulsory traineeships different for various specialisations ?
 (If different time is proposed for various specialisations, put only the shortest /A/ and the longest traineeships /B/. If you answer NO, put the same date in A and B.)

Yes
 No
 Otro:

A. Number of months:

A. Number of ECTS:

B. Number of months:

B. Number of ECTS:

Do you have compulsory traineeships funded by other type of grants?
 Please, explain how many and what are the types of funding.

Section 3 – Facultative/Optional/Non-compulsory Erasmus Traineeships

The third section is the largest of the questionnaire and focuses on the improvement level of facultative Erasmus traineeship. For that, the information gathered regards to the implementation by universities of internal methodologies for Erasmus traineeship; to the recognition in ECTS credits for traineeships, and to the number of credits allocated depending on the duration.

This section also pursues the questions, “In which way are optional traineeships recognized by universities in terms of ECTS allocation?” and “If they are recognized, what is the number of credits?” In the case of traineeships with no credit recognition, we ask if some other kind of recognition is issued.

Facultative/Optional/not compulsory Erasmus traineeships (period 2013/2014):

Does your university have own methodology (internal rules) for allocating ECTS credits to facultative traineeship activities?

Yes
 No
 Otro:

If YES, what is the maximum duration admitted for traineeships (3-12 months) within Erasmus programme?

Do students obtain ECTS credits for Erasmus traineeships?

Yes
 No
 Otro:

Is the number of ECTS credits fixed for any traineeship lengths/duration?

Do students obtain ECTS credits for Erasmus traineeships?
 If different faculties allocate a different number of ECTS credits, please specify (area of study and ECTS credits allocated)

If the number of ECTS credits is not fixed, please explain

In the cases in which universities implemented specific rules for recognition in ECTS of voluntary practices, it is to know which is the maximum duration allowed in months, and if there is a fixed number of ECTS credits established to be recognized regardless of the duration of the internship. Experience shows that recognition of practices in companies are usually set in advance, however it may vary depending on the faculty or areas of specialization where voluntary practices are carried out. In these cases, the information related to duration and credit recognition for different areas is also collected.

The final question regards whether the Erasmus voluntary traineeships are included in the European Supplement, as recommended by the EU, or if the students obtain any other document, title or recognition which specifies their participation in the traineeship programme.

If the number of ECTS is not fixed for the above mentioned duration, please, explain

Do you notice/insert the traineeships to the Diploma Supplement?

Yes
 No
 Otro:

Do students obtain any other document confirming the traineeship (e.g. letter of reference, Europass Mobility, certificate, etc.)?

Yes
 No
 Otro:

If YES, please, specify.

Section 4 – Monitoring and Assessment of Traineeship

The fourth section of the questionnaire is intended to collect information about the methodology used to manage traineeships, as the improvement of desktop and field monitoring, fluency of communication between universities and companies, and the possibility to make any change on the learning agreement for traineeships. Thus, the information is gathered regardless of whether traineeships are mandatory or facultative.

In connection to traineeship monitoring the questionnaire tries to figure out if such monitoring is performed remotely (eg detailed documentation control), by tracking field (eg visiting institutions or companies), and detailing the frequency of such monitoring. In this regard, the questionnaire also gathers information on existing communication between the university and the institution or company.

As for the Training Agreement, the questionnaire seeks to determine its flexibility, that is, if universities allow changes to be made in the learning agreement and under which circumstances. In order to asses traineeships, which type of documentation should the student provide at the end of the traineeship period for its recognition.

Finally, the questionnaire seeks to asses the importance of the Transcript of Records issued by host companies at the end of the traineeship for the final recognition. The survey ends trying to figure out the procedures adopted by universities when students do not fulfil the conditions stipulated in the Training Agreement.

4. Analysis of data

Questionnaire Analysis

The online questionnaire has been designed to gather qualitative and quantitative data on the current state of affairs at institutions offering traineeships for students. The main aim was to learn about practices regarding credit allocation of traineeship and recognition of traineeship results. The online questionnaire was distributed to higher education institutions in Europe and to institutions involved in traineeship programmes. The project participants used contacts of their national and international partner institutions as well as databases from Erasmus+ National Agencies. The institutions have been invited to participate in the analysis via e-mail, telephone and face to face interviews. However, not all the institutions participate in Erasmus+ traineeship activities and therefore were unable to answer the questions. For example, in the case of Italy, 238 Universities have an ECHE but only 113 take part in traineeship activities (data from 2012/2013).

Altogether 66 institutions took part in the online survey. The number of institutions with valid answers used for questionnaire analysis was 62. The countries and individual institutions which participated in the survey are as follows:

Belgium – 1 institution

- Ghent University

Czech Republic – 17 institutions

- The College of Karlovy Vary
- Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design, Prague
- Tomas Bata University in Zlín
- Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice
- Metropolitan University Prague
- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague
- Higher Professional School of Information Services in Prague
- Moravian University College Olomouc
- PB Higher Professional School of Management, Prague
- University of Defence, Brno
- Private College of Economic Studies, Znojmo

- University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice
- Silesian University, Opava
- Palacky University, Olomouc
- Masaryk University, Brno
- Banking Institute Research Center, Prague
- Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem

France – 2 institutions

- Université Savoie Mont Blanc
- INSEEC Paris

Germany – 6 institutions

- Justus Liebig University Giessen
- Deggendorf Institute of Technology
- Osnabrück University
- University of Konstanz
- Karlshochschule International University
- Weißensee Academy of Arts

Greece – 3 institutions

- Technological Educational Institution of Athens
- Hellenic Open University, Patras
- University of the AEGEAN, Mytilene

Hungary – 1 institution

- IBS International Business School Budapest

Italy – 8 institutions

- Università di Trento
- Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia
- Università di Macerata
- Università degli Studi di Pavia
- Università degli Studi di Verona
- Università Carlo Cattaneo – LIUC, Castellanza
- Conservatorio “Niccolò Piccinni” di Bari
- Libera Università di Bolzano

The Netherlands – 6 institutions

- University of Twente
- Eindhoven University of Technology

- Fontys University of Applied Sciences, Eindhoven
- Design Academy Eindhoven
- Tilburg University
- Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences

Poland – 2 institutions

- Wrocław Medical University
- Opole University of Technology

Portugal – 2 institutions

- Universidade de Aveiro
- Universidade do Porto

Slovakia – 4 institutions

- Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice
- Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica
- University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Kosice
- Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava

Spain – 8 institutions

- Universidad de León
- Universidad de València
- Universidad de Málaga
- Universidad de Salamanca
- Universidad of the Basque Country, Bilbao
- Universitat de les Illes Balears, Palma de Mallorca
- Universidad de Zaragoza
- Universidad de la Rioja

Sweden – 1 institution

- Kristianstad University

United Kingdom – 3 institutions

- Nottingham Trent University
- University of Glasgow
- Cardiff University

The online questionnaire was divided into four sections.

SECTION 1 included questions related to quantitative factors about:

- number of regularly enrolled students at the university (2013/2014 - full time + part time);
- number of Erasmus mobility contracts /bilateral agreements/ for study in 2013/14;
- number of Erasmus cooperation agreements for traineeships in 2013/14 (if any);
- number of outgoing Erasmus student mobilities for study in 2011/2012, 2012/2013, 2013/2014;
- number of outgoing Erasmus student mobilities for traineeships in 2011/2012, 2012/2013, 2013/2014 (divided among Bachelor, Master, PhD).

Our respondents were from universities in which the number of enrolled students in 2013/14 ranges from 183 – 46,935 students (2 respondents did not answer the question):

less than 100 students	1 institution
100 – 1000 students	9 institutions
1000 – 5000 students	9 institutions
5000 – 10 000 students	8 institutions
10 000 – 50 000 students	37 institutions

SECTION 2 was focused on **compulsory traineeships** (data for year 2013/2014 only) and we were interested in:

- individual institutions support in traineeships (which are a part of the curriculum) via Erasmus programme;
- if the time of compulsory traineeships differs for various specialisations;
- if the institutions have compulsory traineeships funded by other types of grants.

The analysis has shown evidence that institutions consider the Erasmus programme as a platform for supporting students' compulsory traineeship mobilities. The institutions involved in the analysis are aware of the opportunities presented by the Erasmus programme and use Erasmus traineeships as a tool for supporting compulsory traineeships, and this approach has presumably become a solid part of their institutional policy. Altogether 57 institutions (92%) claimed to support compulsory traineeships via the Erasmus programme. Only 5 institutions (5%) declared no support for compulsory traineeships via the Erasmus programme.

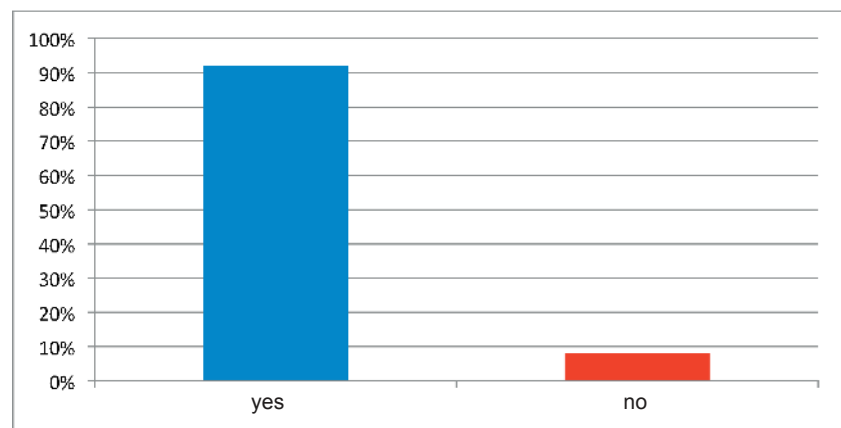


Chart 1: Support of compulsory traineeships via Erasmus programme

Further analysis presents results on differences between the duration of compulsory traineeships in different specialisations. We were interested in the situation at institutions and wanted to know if the time allocated to traineeships which form part of studies are the same within the institutions or the rules differ with regard to different specialisations. If the rules differ, then the situation with credit allocation within the institution and recognition of credits becomes more difficult and institutions have to develop transparent mechanisms for credit allocation and recognition. Altogether, 58 respondents declared that they have compulsory traineeships. The analysis has shown that 34 institutions (55%) answered YES – this means that the time of compulsory traineeships is different for various specialisations, 24 institutions (39%) answered NO – this means that the time of compulsory traineeships is not different for various specialisations, 3 institutions (5%) do not have compulsory traineeships and 1 institution did not answer the question.

The last question of Section 2 asked about other financial sources used by institutions for compulsory traineeships of students. Our intention was to learn if the Erasmus programme is the only financial source for traineeships or if there are other types of grants. The questionnaire analysis revealed that 11 universities (out of 62 in total) use other sources. Other respondents reported that they either do not use other types of grants or they did not answer the question. One respondent answered 'do not know' (because it is managed through a different office).

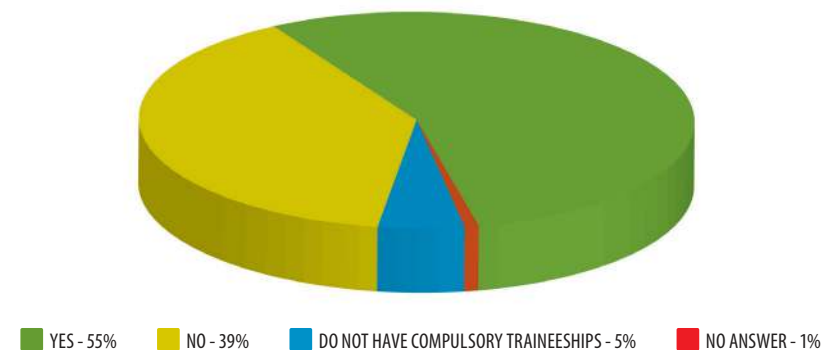


Chart 2: Different Duration $\hat{=}$ specialization

Other types of grants used by universities for compulsory traineeships are as follows:

- PROMOS, RISE, various donators/inside scholarships;
- own internal grants;
- DAAD/PROMOS: travel allowances funded for compulsory traineeships in overseas countries (20 trainees in 2013/2014);
- state budget (Ministry of Education);
- business partner grants;
- Ministry of Defence grants;
- university and research institutions;
- national grants.

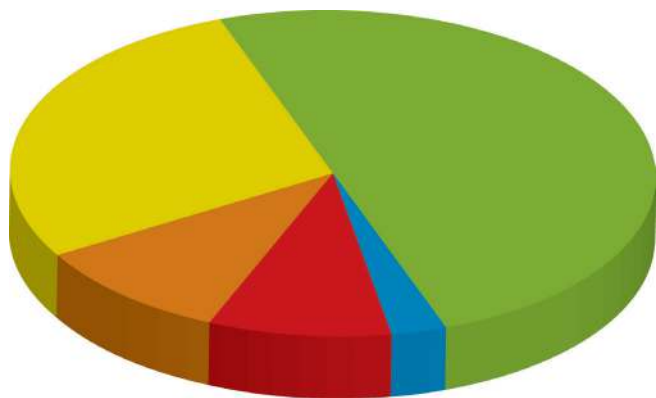
SECTION 3 was focused on **facultative/optional/non-compulsory Erasmus traineeships** (period 2013/2014) and we were interested in:

- individual methodology used by universities (internal rules) for allocating ECTS credits to facultative traineeship activities;
- maximum duration admitted for traineeships (3-12 months) within Erasmus programme;
- if students obtain ECTS credits for Erasmus traineeships;
- if different faculties allocate a different number of ECTS credits;
- number of ECTS allocated for a traineeship of 3 months period (Erasmus), 4 - 12 months period (Erasmus);
- how many credits are allocated if the number of ECTS is not fixed for the above mentioned duration;
- including traineeships in the Diploma Supplement;

- any other document which is issued by individual universities in order to confirm the traineeship (e.g. letter of reference, Europass Mobility certificate, etc.).

The questionnaire analysis results demonstrate that facultative/optional/non-compulsory traineeships are supported via the Erasmus programme and 28 respondents have a methodology for allocating ECTS credits to facultative traineeship activities. 5 institutions answered that that methodology depends on the faculty policy, 1 respondent follows credits specified in a syllabus, 16 universities do not have their own methodology, 12 institutions did not give an answer to the question. The maximum duration of traineeships within the Erasmus programme ranges from 3 months to 12 months. The majority of respondents offer a maximum of 12 months duration of traineeships to students via the Erasmus programme.

In the question regarding ECTS credits for Erasmus traineeships 50% of our respondents indicated that students obtain ECTS credits (see Chart 3), 10% claim that it depends on faculty/department, 3% answered that students sometimes obtain credits and 28% institutions demonstrate that students do not receive ECTS credits. 9% of respondents did not answer the question.



■ YES - 50% ■ NO - 28% ■ DEPENDS ON FACULTY/DEPARTMENT - 10% ■ NO ANSWER - 9% ■ SOMETIMES - 3%

Chart 3: Do students obtain ECTS credits for Erasmus traineeships?

Along with the previous question on obtaining credits for Erasmus traineeships we included two additional questions. The first additional question asked if the number of ECTS is fixed for any traineeship lengths/duration. Only 1 respondent answered the additional question (answer 'YES'). The rest of respondents left the question unanswered.

In the second additional question we asked our respondents to explain what strategies they use when the number of ECTS is not fixed. We received a variety of answers:

...our students usually get a Europass certificate for training, the companies usually don't know how many credits to give them, we would like to develop our own credit system hoping for further cooperation with other subjects...

...it depends on the internal rules of each faculty how many ECTS each trainee obtain...

...students have the ability to carry out a compulsory traineeship, which is evaluated only by credit without ECTS validation...

...in the area of Humanities we recognize 10 credits for 2 months while 15 credits in the case of 3/4/5 months...

...some faculties require their students to spend a semester abroad (either for studies or for traineeships) but do not allocate ECTS for this stay...

...different handlings throughout the departments...

...students in the non-compulsory traineeships are not awarded ECTS credits...

...the number of credits awarded depends on the hours a student works during his/her traineeship: we then follow the European equivalence where 25 hours work = 1 ECTS...

...some traineeships are not recognized by the means of credits. This is mainly the case of traineeships which are carried out toward the end of a particular study cycle...

...depends on the length of the traineeship and the programme: credit allocation is the responsibility of each department/faculty...

...for the old programme (vecchio ordinamento), it's impossible to allocate ECTS. In the Bachelor and Master degree we allocate ECTS...

...the ECTS credits do not depend on the length of the traineeship...

...It depends on each faculty or the study programme of the student. Students can obtain no ECTS credits or usually 5-10 ECTS...

...differs per programme and depends on the choice of the student under approval of their tutor. Specifically whether the programme has a compulsory or optional traineeship and whether the student wishes to extend the duration by exchanging a

free elective course for another 5 ECTS/1 month worth of traineeship. The number of credits is thus fixed in 5 ECTS increments and has per study programme a fixed maximum amount of credits to be recognized in the curriculum...

...cf. individual study regulations...

...students can go for an optional internship. They are free to stay up to 12 months, however, they can only earn 15EC (in case the exam committee has approved the traineeship)...

The following chart surveys data on ECTS credit allocation with different duration of traineeships within the Erasmus programme. Our analysis has shown that the number of ECTS is very diverse across the institutions. As to 3 months duration of traineeships the institutions allocate 0 – 20 ECTS, 4 months traineeships 0 – 30 ECTS, 6 months traineeships 0 – 30 ECTS and 9 months traineeships 0 – 27 ECTS.

ECTS	3 months	4 months	6 months	9 months
-	34 universities didn't answer this question 4 universities – depending on faculty	42 universities did not answer 3 universities – depending on faculty	39 universities did not answer 3 universities – depending on faculty	44 universities did not answer 3 universities – depending on faculty
0 ECTS	7 universities grant 0 ECTS	7 universities grant 0 ECTS	5 universities grant 0 ECTS	7 universities grant 0 ECTS
3 ECTS	1 university grants 3 ECTS 1 university grants 3 – 6 ECTS			
4 ECTS	1 university grants 4 ECTS			
5 ECTS	2 universities grant 5 ECTS	2 universities grant 5 ECTS	2 universities grant 5 ECTS	2 universities grant 5 ECTS
6 ECTS	1 university grants 6 ECTS	1 university grants 6 – 9 ECTS	1 university grants 6 – 12 ECTS	
7 ECTS	1 university grants 7 ECTS			
8 ECTS		1 university grants 8 ECTS		
9 ECTS		1 university grants 9 ECTS		
12 ECTS	1 university grants 12 ECTS 1 university grants average 12 ECTS	1 university grants 12 ECTS 1 university grants average 12 ECTS	1 university grants 12 ECTS 1 university grants average 12 ECTS	1 university grants average 12 ECTS

15 ECTS	5 universities grant 15 ECTS 1 university grants 15 – 20 ECTS		2 universities grant 15 ECTS	
18 ECTS			1 university grants 18 ECTS	1 university grants 18 ECTS
20 ECTS	3 universities grant 20 ECTS	4 universities grant 20 ECTS	2 universities grant 20 ECTS	2 universities grant 20 ECTS
23 ECTS		1 university grants 23 ECTS		1 university grants 23 ECTS
27 ECTS				1 university grants 27 ECTS
28 ECTS		1 university grants 28 – 30 ECTS	1 university grants 28 – 30 ECTS	
30 ECTS			5 universities grant 30 ECTS	
45 ECTS				1 university grants 45 ECTS

The Diploma Supplement, is a document which aids recognition of students' traineeships. It is used by the majority of institutions involved in our research; 40 institutions (64%) demonstrate that they record traineeships in the Diploma Supplement. Only 3 universities provide students with Europass as a document which records their traineeships. 5 institutions claimed that they use other documents, but they did not specify the documents.

SECTION 4 was focused on both facultative and optional traineeships and we asked about:

- providing desk monitoring (i.e. detailed control of documentation);
- providing field monitoring;
- communication with host institutions/companies;
- acceptance of changes in the Learning Agreement;
- documents that the student has to provide at the end of his mobility (confirmation of traineeship) period/traineeship certificate from Learning Agreement, evaluation of the traineeship from the institution/company, final report, essay, diary, time sheets etc.;
- influence of the Transcript of Records provided by the host institution/company for confirmation assessment of the traineeship;
- procedures in case the student does not fulfil the conditions of the Training Agreement/Learning agreement.

5. Different suggestions

Recommendations

The project partners agreed on 4 types of traineeships:

1. **Compulsory traineeships – with “credits for traineeship”** recognized in the curriculum (in this case the number of recognized credits is established by the rules of the degree in compliance with the national legislation for higher education systems).
2. **Optional traineeship – with “credits for elective activities”** recognized in the curriculum (in this case the number of recognized credits is established by the rules of the degree in compliance with the national legislation for higher education systems).
3. **Optional traineeship – with credits** “recognized extra curricular”.
4. **Optional traineeship – with no recognition** of credits.

There are differences between business schools/universities of applied sciences (where the traineeship is part of the curriculum from the very beginning) and universities (where traineeship activity has been introduced only recently and to enable students to better fit the labour market requirements).

With regards to the ECTS system, the ATEST project suggests reviewing the ECTS system considering there is a different workload in the case of study activities or in the case of traineeship. If for study the relation is 1 credit for 25/30 hours of work, for traineeship we propose 1 credit for 50/60 hours. We suggest only a minimum number of credits to be recognized not a maximum. The amount of credits should depend on the length (number of hours) of the traineeship.

We consider the quality assessment of the trainee through the final Transcript of Records and/or through any other assessment documents as a very important part of each traineeship. However, the performance of the student (if sufficient) does not influence the number of credits allocated to the traineeship, but only the final mark – if any (in some cases no mark is foreseen, only PASSED or FAIL).

Practical experiences in the evaluation and recognition of internships

1) University of Trento, Italy

At the University of Trento (UniTrento) both compulsory and voluntary traineeships are possible. However, in the selection process and in the allocation of scholarships/grants a priority is given to compulsory traineeships.

COMPULSORY TRAINEESHIP

The number of credits for mandatory traineeship depends on the course of study/curriculum, referring both to the field (economics, law, engineering, etc.) and the level of study (Bachelor or Master), and it is established in the academic rules and regulations of the study program, in compliance with the national accreditation system.

In certain curricula the traineeship activity is not included.

In some areas of study a number of ECTS credits is fixed for every month of mobility so the total amount of credits is a multiplication of the above mentioned parameters whereas in other subjects a total fixed number of credits is acquired independently of the duration of mobility.

The duration of the mobility however should be coherent with the number of recognized credits in order that the student doesn't lose time.

FACULTATIVE/OPTIONAL/NON-COMPULSORY TRAINEESHIPS

Although the traineeship is not compulsory, it is recognized in the online didactic system Esse3 and in the Diploma Supplement through ECTS credits, in two different ways:

- Not specifically with credits for “traineeship activities” but with credits for “other activities”, i.e. activities that are optional for the student (elective credits).
- With credits earned in excess of degree requirements (extra curricular credits): this means those credits are not counted in order to achieve the minimum credits required for Bachelor degree (180 credits) or Master degree (120 credits).

In some areas like Economics, Maths, Computer Science and Biology the number of recognized credits is fixed independently of the duration, e.g. 3 credits for 3/4/5/6 months' duration.

In the area of Humanities UniTrento recognizes 10 credits for 2 months and 15 credits in the case of 3/4/5 months.

For both compulsory and facultative traineeships, at UniTrento the Transcript of Records is very important and it is used for ECTS credits recognition.

The Transcript of Records confirms that the traineeship has been successfully completed and only through this document can we proceed in the recognition of credits. However, in the event of a compulsory traineeship, the number of credits to be awarded is agreed upon in the Learning agreement before the mobility start on the basis of the academic degree rules and regulations. Whereas, in the event of a facultative traineeship the number of credits to be awarded is agreed upon in the Learning Agreement before the mobility start on the basis of an individual decision of the academic staff.

In case the student does not fulfil the conditions of the Training Agreement, the traineeship is not recognized and the student must pay back the whole grant (or a part of the grant). The above mentioned measure is included in the grant agreement signed between student and home institution. So far, such a case has never occurred.

2) University of the Basque Country, Spain

The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) regulates and recognizes both compulsory and voluntary work placements in the Regulation for the academic traineeships of the students of the UPV/EHU (BOPV, 2012). This regulation defines the concept, nature, modalities, characteristics, requirements and the duration of the traineeships for both students and graduates. In the case of compulsory work placements, the allocation of credits differs from one study programme to another (from 12 to 84 ECTS), and the accumulation of credits of the compulsory traineeships depends on achieving the learning outcomes under approval of their tutor. In the case of non-compulsory/voluntary traineeships, the credit allocation differs from 6 to 24 ECTS depending on the study programme, and the voluntary traineeships can be extended under the approval of the tutor but with no extra credit recognition. In the UPV/EHU work placements, both compulsory and voluntary, are counted in hours rather than in months because students do their traineeships during their formation period, while the student attends classes. In this case students attend the traineeship for no more than 4 hours

per day. In summer and non school periods this rule can be more flexible and allow the students to perform up to 8-hour workdays. Erasmus work placements are ruled at the UPV/EHU by the same rule for domestic ones.

3) Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands

At Eindhoven University of Technology international traineeships are recognised and supported both within and outside the curriculum and both for students and for graduates. The numbers of ECTS recognized in the curriculum differ per study programme and depend on the choice of the student under approval of their tutor. Programmes have compulsory, optional or even no traineeships. There are possible traineeships within the Erasmus program which offer a minimum 10 to a maximum 30 ECTS which is completed in a minimum of 2 up to 6 months, and a student can extend the compulsory traineeship by using the free electives courses in the programme. Any extension up to the maximum is possible with 5 ECTS/1 month increments. Any surplus of credits will be recognised and mentioned as a surplus on the curriculum programme. Graduates automatically receive a Europass as proof of recognition while students must request them. The university has expressed the wish that in the future a semester abroad is standard for students' international experience; whether it be with courses in another university or a traineeship.

4) Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia

The Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia, recognises international traineeships either as substitutes for a traineeship in a curriculum, or as an activity outside of the curriculum. The traineeships are available for the students of the university as well as for its recent graduates. The faculties, departments, and institutes of the university use different systems of recognition, and as a result the numbers of ECTS credits awarded for the traineeships differ as well. While some study programs do not have a compulsory traineeship in the curriculum at all, the study in teacher education include compulsory traineeship in their study program, but at present do not accept an Erasmus+ traineeship mobility as a suitable equivalent for it. The majority of the Erasmus+ traineeships are facultative, but it has to be confirmed by the faculty/institute/department Erasmus coordinator if the traineeship is a useful supplement to the studies. The methodology for allocating ECTS credits to facultative traineeships depends on the study program, while for the

credit allocation the departments and faculties are responsible. The university does not have an official internal regulation for allocating ECTS credits for facultative traineeships.

5) Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece

At the Technological Educational Institute of Athens there are three main types of traineeships:

- Compulsory traineeships – with “credits for traineeship” recognized in the curriculum (in this case the number of recognized credits is established by the rules of the degree in compliance with the national legislation for higher education systems).
- Non-compulsory traineeship – with credits “recognized extra-curricular”.
- Non-compulsory traineeship – with no recognition of credits.

In particular, at the Technological Educational Institute of Athens both compulsory and voluntary traineeships are possible. However, in the selection process and in the allocation of scholarships/grants a priority is given to compulsory traineeships.

At the Technological Educational Institute of Athens traineeships are recognised and supported both within and outside the curriculum and both for students and graduates. The numbers of ECTS recognized in the curriculum differ per study programme and depend on the choice of the student. Programmes have compulsory, optional or even no traineeships. Within the Erasmus programme traineeships are possible from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 20 ECTS equal to a minimum of 2 up to 6 months are possible, as a student can extend the compulsory traineeship. Any surplus of credits will be recognised and mentioned as a surplus on the diploma supplement.

For both compulsory and optional traineeships, at the Technological Educational Institute of Athens the Transcript of Records and the Learning Agreement (After the Mobility) are very important and they are used for ECTS credits recognition.

The Transcript of Records and the Learning Agreement (After the Mobility) confirm that the traineeship has been successfully completed and only through these documents can we proceed in the recognition of credits. However, in the

event of compulsory and optional traineeships, the number of credits to be awarded is agreed upon in the Learning agreement before the mobility start on the basis of the academic degree rules and regulations.

In case the student does not fulfil the conditions of the Training Agreement, the traineeship is not recognized and the student must pay back the whole grant (or a part of the grant). The above mentioned measure is included in the grant agreement signed between the student and the home institution.

6) Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice, Czech Republic

At the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, students submit a work placement (traineeship) diary, confirmation of work placement fulfilment and evaluation of their work placement after achieving the workload of their traineeship. Students obtain 20 ECTS credits for a 520 hour workload if goals of the traineeship are fulfilled. The supervisor fills out the performance evaluation of the student in a 2 page long document. The areas evaluated by the supervisor are: personal approach of the student, communication skills, and the ability to solve problems. There are five grades of assessment: excellent, good, fair, poor, fail. The goal is to know areas in which the student needs improvement and the interest concerns student’s strengths and qualities. Obtaining feedback from students is also very important. Students submit a 2 page long form in which they describe conditions at the traineeship, supervisor’s approach, approach of other employees, acquisition of skills.

7) Nottingham Trent University, Great Britain

Placement learning or Work Based Learning (WBL) that is not part of the standard 360 credits required for the Honours award, as an additional award to that of the overall course.

The placement learning or WBL should also be assigned a credit level and rating based upon its assessed learning outcomes. Students successfully completing the credits will receive a Diploma or Certificate depending upon the volume of credits:

A Placement, International Placement, or International Study Diploma will involve the successful completion of a minimum of 36 weeks of placement or study abroad, and all associated assessment at agreed levels.

THE FOLLOWING DIPLOMAS ARE AVAILABLE:

- Placement Diploma
- International Placement Diploma
- International Study and Placement Diploma
- International Study Diploma

In order for placement learning or WBL to lead to a Placement Diploma/Certificate it must demonstrate the following:

- outcomes that are clearly at either level 5 or 6 and which contribute to the award outcomes;
- a learning experience, appropriately designed and monitored, that allows students to develop the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills;
- a placement or study abroad environment that supports the student in achieving the outcomes and is comparable across the group or the student's peers;
- a suitable induction course that prepares students for the placement or study abroad;
- appropriate supervision throughout the placement or study abroad, both academic and practitioner, with regular feedback to students;
- assessments that are fit for purpose in measuring the intended learning outcomes and capable of moderation;
- appropriate assessment criteria.

8) Deggendorf Institute of Technology, Germany

COMPULSORY INTERNSHIP

A compulsory internship is part of every course of study/bachelor degree and has to last between 18 and 20 weeks (depending on the faculty), and be full-time (depending on the country/company). Such an internship, as part of the curriculum, has to be approved as *passed* by the DIT. For a *passed* internship 30 ECTS are granted. To *pass* an internship a student has to visit PLVs (1 – 5 depending on the faculty), apart from spending the time in the company. PLVs are generally one week classes where soft skills are taught (presentation skills, intercultural trainings). After the internship, the student has to hand

in an internship report. Those three parts (internship, all PLVs, report) are necessary to grant the 30 ECTS. The internship has to be related to the course of study and approved by the “Praxisbeauftragten” (a Professor of the faculty). The internship can be done in any country. Information of the compulsory internship can be found in the bachelor degree's certificate/diploma each student gets at the end of his/her study. [All of this is in addition to the Erasmus+ placement procedure with the international office].

FACULTATIVE/OPTIONAL/NON-COMPULSORY TRAINEESHIPS

Generally, it is possible to do non-compulsory internships worldwide and it is possible to do this within the Erasmus+ frame. Apart from the Erasmus+ procedure the DIT offers to add information about this additional work experience in the Diploma Supplement if it lasted more than 90 days (full-time). So far there is no further regulation or approval of optional internships at the DIT. ECTS are not granted for non-compulsory internships.

9) INSEEC Business School, France

Internships are an integral part of INSEEC Business School (IBS). One of the missions of IBS is to improve the employability of students after graduation. One way to achieve this goal is to continuously improve the internship experience and better manage the quality of internships.

IBS has three types of internships: curriculum-based / mandatory internships, mixed module / elective internships and voluntary placement / bonus internships.

The curriculum-based / mandatory internship is the most dominant form of internship for the business school. This is the final internship in which students are expected to hold an internship for 6 months. This quantifies into roughly 900 hours for the 6 month period. Using the ATEST recommended range for 50 / 60 hours equaling 1 ECTS, IBS is right on target. We offer 15 ECTS for this internship for international students newly integrated into the program and 10 ECTS for the students who integrated into the program one year prior to the internship. In other words, IBS offers .5 ECTS per week for full time employment.

Mixed module / elective internships are compulsory in the 1st and 2nd year of study at IBS. The internship completed during the 1st year is 8 weeks long. The credits from this internship are mixed with the 45 hour lecture course offered

during the students 2nd year. The same principle is true for the internships conducted during the 2nd year. Students must complete a 5 month long internship which will be worth 5 ECTS.

While studying at IBS, students can apply for an official gap year in which a voluntary placement / bonus internship will take place. The gap year internship is monitored and evaluated; however, it does not bear any ECTS. The work done during this gap year will appear on the student's diploma supplement.

Reporting of internships is closely monitored. After each internship, the student and the company must evaluate the experience. From the companies' side, a survey must be completed by the mentor of the student and from the students' side, they must write a 5 page report answering specific questions about the experience.

10) Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic

MUP has been involved with Erasmus mobility since 2008, and students take only optional internships. Upon beginning participation in Erasmus internship activities the participant receives 5 ECTS if he/she fulfilled the conditions of internship - duration of internship at least three months (now only two months) and declaration of an assessment made by foreign company. Any such traineeship must be confirmed by the head of the faculty and subsequently is entered into the SIS (Student Information System). Based on the experience of the first years of participation in the Erasmus traineeship program, the system for the recognition of traineeships has been enhanced and currently students participate in traineeships, which are done on a voluntary basis, but students can enroll their traineeship as an elective course, and thus a traineeship becomes part of the curriculum. Students gain 5 ECTS for traineeship and it becomes part of the curriculum and the credits are counted in the overall summary of ECTS per semester or an academic year (30 or 60 ECTS). 5 ECTS corresponds to ratings for compulsory optional subjects for MUP students.

6. Examples of Practice

As a minimum requirement for students undertaking Erasmus+, trainees are supplied with a traineeship agreement which details both the tasks the trainee will undertake, key skills to be obtained and details of whether the traineeships is accredited or not.

It was found that most universities that took part, either as partners in ATEST or by completing the survey, documented the student traineeships on the Diploma Supplement and in some cases used EUROPASS.

The duration of non-compulsory placements, like study, and compulsory placements varies across universities; this means that the criteria for assessing and attributing credits differs from programme to programme. Therefore, institutions need to develop transparent mechanisms for credit allocation and credit recognition to take into account the many forms and durations of placements. The problems of coming up with such mechanisms is further exacerbated as credit recognition, where it does happen, varies across courses. This may be because of the perceived outcomes for different subject matters and in some cases recognition of outcomes stipulated by outside bodies.

The credits assigned in hours were broadly similar across the survey respondents with 3 months being allocated between 15-20 credits and 20-30 credits for 6 month placements.

A number of universities have clearly set out criteria for assessing non-compulsory/ compulsory work placements and a few of these are described below:

INSEEC Business School, France – Generally, in French Business Schools credits are attributed based on the submission of a final report and an evaluation of the work placement of 40% and 60% respectively and grades are given by the placement supervisor within the company. Both compulsory and non-compulsory work placements take place.

University of Trento, Italy – recognised within the University's internal online didactic system and in the Diploma Supplement. In certain subject areas, such as Maths, Computing and Biology, credits are fixed and applied no matter the duration, for example 3 credits are applied for placements of between 3-6 months. This makes it easier for student to understand the credit applied for their placement; however in other areas such as Humanities it is fixed at 10 credits for 2 months and 15 for 3-5 months. The transcript of records is an important document as it records whether the traineeship has been successfully completed; credits are not applied if the conditions of the training agreement are not fulfilled.

University of the Basque Country, Spain – as with UniTrento, the allocation of ECTS for non-compulsory placements is very much related to the subject studied and can vary from 6 to 24 credits. However, it differs from other universities in that credits are awarded on the basis of hours worked as the students perform placements alongside their studies.

Technical Educational Institute of Athens, Greece – as with the other examples, credits are applied for non-compulsory placements and differ from subject to subject and range from 10-20 credits for between 2-6 months mobility.

Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands – again, the awarding of credits differs from subject to subject with between 10-30 ECTS possible for placements of between 2-6 months.

Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice, Czech Republic – requires students to complete a placement diary and evaluation of their placement after achieving the workload of their traineeship. Evaluation is based on hours with 20 ECTS being awarded for 520 hours of workload, so an average of 20 credits for a full time week over 3 months. The students are evaluated by a supervisor and assessment grades ranging from Excellent to Fail are awarded.

Nottingham Trent University, Great Britain – although it is possible to do a non-compulsory work placement without credits, students are encouraged to work towards an International Placement Diploma. In order to receive the award students must complete a minimum of 36 weeks of placements (as required by most compulsory placements). The award is assessed on clearly defined course outcomes, requires appropriate supervision and a placement with a learning experience suitably designed to complement the course learning outcomes.

Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic – optional traineeships are the main activities within the Erasmus placement activities and each student must fulfil a minimum of 2 months (60 days) of traineeship (minimum 3 months in LLP.) The evaluation of the traineeship is made by the International Office (formal evaluation – confirmation of traineeship period, language tests and online report) and the head of faculty is responsible for recognition of relevant ECTS (5 ECTS). After the recognition, the student obtains a certificate and the traineeship is registered in SIS and participation in the internship is entered into the Diploma Supplement. For graduates, only certificates are issued.

It can be seen from the above snapshot that universities apply different ECTS for different courses in the majority of cases. All include an assessed placement in line with course objectives and an average credit accreditation of between 10-20 credits for 2-6 months placements.

7. Quality Assurance

Unlike Erasmus study and placements that are an integral part of student's courses, it can be seen that the method of crediting non-compulsory placements is an area where there are no such guidelines. The increased number of Erasmus traineeships shows a marked increase of over 78% in the 3 years since its inception; the increased globalization of the working world means many students are likely to look for employment outside their home country and traineeships are an ideal tool for standing out in the labour market.

The fact that ATEST has identified that there is no common criteria for crediting non-compulsory work placements and that methods vary across countries and indeed, in some universities, across department's means that the value of non-compulsory work placements is not always fairly or evenly recognised. Employers have no sense of how a work placement is assessed and indeed whether the work placement was a useful and valuable student experience. This may lead to non-compulsory work placements being undervalued by employers that may discourage students from considering non-compulsory placements as a positive experience during their course.

There is a clear need for a consensus on the credits and manner of accrediting non-compulsory placements, the least of which is a need for robust quality assurance. Students taking part in study and placements in Erasmus+ as an integral part of their course have their work robustly assessed through credit transfer and assessment of work. Similar criteria should be applied to students on non-compulsory placements. Despite the fact that the credits obtained during non-compulsory placements do not generally count towards the total required for awarding a degree, it is nevertheless advisable to define learning outcomes related to the course and assessments to ensure that ECTS can be applied as supplementary credits. This is necessary in order for students to see that the work they complete has a meaningful and recognised outcome. This would enable institutions to then apply credits to the placements and, in a way similar to compulsory activities, be quality assured through appropriate processes (e.g. internal and external quality reviews and students' feedback) and could include a reflective diary or other piece of work to be completed during the student's placements to reflect on the skills they have acquired.

8. Final Recommendation

The standard definition of ECTS credits is that it is attributable to the workload and defined learning outcomes (“what the individual knows, understands and is able to do”) of a given course or program.

From results obtained from both the ATEST survey and from examples of best practices from partners in the project there are some recommendations that could be made. At the least, credit should be applied in order that students perceive non-compulsory placements as a recognised and worthwhile element of their degree course.

It has not been possible within the scope of the survey to establish the way in which non-compulsory placements are assessed in all countries taking part in the Erasmus+ programme. With the imminent introduction of international placements (between programme and partner countries) the number of students wishing to undertake placements can only increase; therefore prompting the need, more than ever, for a standardized way of accrediting placements not just as a tool to encourage students to take part but an integral part of an institutions Quality Assurance processes.

The pilot project partners were public universities, private universities and schools of Applied Science which includes French Business Schools (Grandes Ecoles). The field of study varied from partner to partner. It may be necessary in some cases, to create a policy of internship evaluation by field of study. The faculty of business vs education vs healthcare varied tremendously.

Based on the discussions and questionnaire research, basic recommendations could be made for all types of institutions. Three basic types of internships were identified: curriculum-based/mandatory internships, mixed module/elective internships and voluntary placement/bonus internships. All three types of internship can benefit from Erasmus+ funding.

It was concluded that all three types of institutions evaluate curriculum based internships in a similar way. A curriculum based internship is when an internship replaces a course or a semester. The internship receives the same ECTS credits that the course or semester would receive. It is built into the program and necessary for graduation.

The differences in evaluating internships appeared when looking deeper into the mixed module internships and voluntary placement. It was concluded that through the research of the ATEST partners at this time only mixed modules (courses and internships) can be harmonized at the European level.

By looking at the three types of internships within the framework of the ATEST project, perhaps we could find specific models of compulsory internships both the curriculum based and mixed module internships. Non-compulsory or voluntary internships seem to fall outside the sphere of national and/or international standards and norms. In other words, each institution is free to evaluate non-compulsory internships as they wish.

The ATEST partners would recommend that the European Commission evaluate how non-compulsory internships are being added to the Diploma Supplement.

In order to determine the range, the ATEST partners looked at how ECTS are defined for studies. ECTS credits are defined by workload. For studies, 25-30 hours of work load = 1 ECTS. For internships, it would be feasible to double the study hours. In this case, 1 ECTS credit holds a workload volume of 50/60hr. It is important to note that when analyzing full time internships (based on weeks worked and not hours as full time work is defined at the national level).

Reporting is also an important element of the internship. Some institutions attribute a completion grade while others require a more detailed report and still others want a demonstration of the skills learned. The ATEST partners recommend that all three types of internships undergo similar reporting. Each institution has developed their own set of reporting tools. The ATEST partners would like to recommend that the European Commission improve the mobility tool reporting system so that it may be used by the academic staff to evaluate the internship.

As with any other educational component, credits for work placements are only awarded when the learning outcomes have been achieved and assessed.

If a work placement is part of organised mobility (e.g. an Erasmus placement), the Learning Agreement for the traineeship should indicate the number of credits to be awarded if the expected learning outcomes are achieved. In the case of placement experiences undertaken during a formal learning process but not required by the study plan, it is nevertheless advisable to define the learning outcomes and the workload in a Learning Agreement. The learning outcomes achieved through non-compulsory work placements should then also be documented, for example, in the student’s Transcript of Records, the Diploma Supplement or Europass (mainly for graduates, for whom no other way of recognition exists). They can also be recognised by an award of corresponding ECTS credits which are in that case additional to the standard number of 60 ECTS credits for the academic year.

Another idea is to also allocate credits to graduates in order to make the workload more understandable to every part.

The use of appraisal forms in the monitoring process is also of great importance.

Other recommendations

The project partners also believe that the EU needs to put more responsibility on companies who hire interns through the Erasmus+ program. The companies are benefiting from Erasmus+ as they are able to have highly educated interns subsidized by EU funding. Increasing the companies' obligations on reporting or evaluation will inadvertently increase the dialogue between the companies and the universities. This enhanced communication could also assist the European Commission in achieving its goal of having industry, research and education all working together.

The ATEST partners would recommend access to a mobility tool for companies so the company feedback could become an integral part of internship evaluation. This would also allow the universities to manage the quality of the internships within the different companies as well as to better track job placement after the internship has ended.



Final Meeting, Bilbao 2016

9. Glossary

ACCUMULATION OF CREDITS

The process of collecting credits awarded for achieving the learning outcomes of educational components in formal contexts and for other learning activities carried out in traineeship informal and non-formal contexts. Credits are also transferable between programmes in the same institution, between different institutions within the same country, or internationally (often with certain limits about the proportion of the total that can be transferred).

ALLOCATION OF CREDITS

The process of assigning a number of credits to qualifications, degree programmes or single educational components. Credits are allocated to entire qualifications or programmes according to national legislation or practice, where appropriate, and with reference to national and/or European qualifications frameworks. They are allocated to educational components, such as course units, dissertations, work-based learning and work placements/internships.

ASSESSMENT

The total range of methods used to evaluate the learner's achievement in a course unit or module or during traineeship. The evaluations may be used to enable the learners to evaluate their own progress and improve on previous performance (formative assessment) or by the institution to judge whether the learner has achieved the learning outcomes of the course or the traineeship.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Descriptions of what the learner is expected to do and to what level, in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved and to what extent. The criteria are usually related to the cycle and/or level descriptors for the module being studied in the discipline concerned. They are normally presented to the students in course catalogues or similar documentation along with the intended learning outcomes, syllabus, etc., at the beginning of the course unit or at the beginning of the traineeship period.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

The whole range of written, oral and practical tests/examinations, projects, performances, presentations and portfolios that are used to evaluate the learner's progress and ascertain the achievement of the learning outcomes of an educational component (unit/module, traineeship).

AWARD OF CREDITS

The act of formally granting students and other learners the credits that are assigned to the qualification and/or its components if they achieve the defined learning outcomes. National authorities should indicate which institutions have the right to award ECTS credits. Credits are awarded to individual students after they have completed the required learning activities or traineeship and achieved the defined learning outcomes, as evidenced by appropriate assessment.

COURSE

Often used as a synonym for programme or course unit. Tuning has adopted the term programme to designate a complete programme of study leading to a degree, and course unit for smaller units of structured teaching and learning in such a programme.

COURSE UNIT

A self-contained, formally structured learning experience. It should have a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes, expressed in terms of competences to be obtained, and appropriate assessment criteria. Course units can have different numbers of credits. These units, with thesis work and work placements/traineeships where appropriate, are the building blocks of programmes.

CREDIT (ECTS)

ECTS credits express the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. 60 ECTS credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent, which normally comprises a number of educational components to which credits (on the basis of the learning outcomes and workload) are allocated. ECTS credits are generally expressed in whole numbers.

More information: European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

CREDIT ACCUMULATION = ACCUMULATION OF CREDITS

CREDIT MOBILITY

The mobility of an exchange student, who stays at a host institution (for a study or traineeship period), during which she/he can carry out activities awarding academic credits, which are then recognised by the home institution.

CREDIT TRANSFER

A process that allows credit awarded by one higher education awarding body to be recognised and count towards the requirements of a programme at another institution; or that allows credit gained on a particular programme to contribute towards the requirements of a different one.

CREDIT RECOGNITION

A process that allows the home university to recognise the results of any educational components (course units, modules, traineeship,...) provided they are successfully completed by the student at the host university. In particular, a process that allows recognition of the results of the traineeship after successfully completing Erasmus internships by the home university.

CYCLES

All European higher education qualifications are located within three cycles. One of the objectives indicated in the Bologna Declaration was the "adoption of a system based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate". Doctoral studies are now included in the Bologna structure and referred to as the third cycle.

DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

The Diploma Supplement (DS) is an official document accompanying a higher education diploma, providing a standardised description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies completed by its holder. It provides more detailed information on the studies and traineeships completed during the study cycle. The Diploma Supplement is also part of the Europass framework transparency tools.

DISSERTATION

A formally presented written report, based on independent research/enquiry/project work, which is required for the award of a degree (generally a first or a second degree or a doctorate). It may also be called as a THESIS.

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT

A self-contained and formally structured learning experience (such as: course unit, module, work placement/traineeship).

ERASMUS+

EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for 2014-2020

ERASMUS WORK PLACEMENT (TRAINEESHIP)

A planned period of practical experience in an institution (or company) within European countries that take part in the Lifelong Learning programme and the following Erasmus+ Programme to improve and develop particular skills and knowledge of students and graduates as a part of their study programme.

ERASMUS COMPULSORY (OBLIGATORY) WORK PLACEMENT (TRAINEESHIP)

Traineeships that are mandatory part of the study program, are credited as part of the credit system used by the university.

ERASMUS NON-COMPULSORY (ELECTIVE/VOCATIONAL/OPTIONAL/VOLUNTARY) WORK PLACEMENT (TRAINEESHIP)

Traineeships, which are realized outside the mandatory study program as an optional (voluntary) activity, usually do not have a set number of credits and it is at the discretion of each university, as the university provides credit for this voluntary traineeship.

In the event that a traineeship can be chosen as an optional subject from elective courses, the number of credits awarded for this internship must be pre-defined.

If the traineeship is carried out entirely outside the study program and it cannot be considered as a part of the elective courses, there is usually no credit rating specified, and sometimes it's an individual decision of the academic staff, how many credits (ECTS) will be recognized for participating in a traineeship. In

doing so, it does not address the question, whether the credits are recognised as a part of the regular study results, or these credits are not included in the results of study (recognition extra curriculum or with no recognition).

EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER AND ACCUMULATION SYSTEM (ECTS)

A learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer, based on the principle of transparency of learning, teaching and assessment processes. Its objective is to facilitate planning, delivery and evaluation of study programmes and student mobility by recognising learning achievements and qualifications and periods of learning. ECTS credits express the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload.

EUROPASS MOBILITY

Europass is a set of five documents (Curriculum Vitae, Language Passport, Europass Mobility, Certificate Supplement, Diploma Supplement) which aim to make skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe. Europass Mobility is a document to record knowledge and skills acquired in another European country, completed by the institutions involved in the mobility – study and traineeship – of the individual (sending and receiving institution).

EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (EHEA)

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was launched on the occasion of the Bologna Process' 10th anniversary, in March 2010, during the Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Conference. Building on the main objective of the Bologna Process since its inception in 1999, the EHEA is meant to ensure more comparable, compatible, coherent and attractive systems of higher education in Europe.

EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

A European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is an overarching framework aiming at making the relationship between European national (and/or sectoral) educational frameworks of qualifications and the qualifications they issue more transparent and readable. It acts as a translation device to compare different countries' national qualification systems.

EXAMINATION (EXAM)

Generally a formal written or oral test taken at set points (e.g. end of a semester or term, mid-semester or term) or at the end of a programme, module or course unit.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of teaching and academic studies involves all those activities which aim at assessing their quality and fitness. Strengths and weaknesses of education and training can be identified by stocktaking, analysis and proposals formulated to ensure the sustainability of quality. Evaluation may be carried out through both internal and external procedures. Internal evaluation comprises the systematic collection of administrative data and feedback from staff, students and graduates, as well as structured conversations with lecturers and students. External evaluation may include visits by a review team to the department in order to assess the quality of the academic studies and teaching, the use of external examiners, external accreditation, etc. A significant element in enhancing quality is ensuring that internal and external procedures are used to improve students learning.

FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD CYCLE DEGREE

One of the objectives in the Bologna Declaration in 1999 was the 'adoption of a system based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate.' In 2003 doctoral studies were included in the Bologna structure and referred to as the third cycle. According to the Bologna Declaration, a higher education qualification awarded after the successful completion of the first cycle of studies should normally last a minimum of three years or 180 ECTS credits.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education applies to academic programmes of study that can be entered by students holding either an appropriate school leaving certificate from an upper secondary school or other relevant professional qualifications or approved prior learning and/or prior experience. Providers may be universities, universities of professional studies, higher education institutions, colleges, polytechnics etc.

LEARNING AGREEMENT FOR WORK PLACEMENT (TRAINEESHIP)

A formalised agreement of the three parties involved in mobility – the student, the sending institution and the receiving institution or organisation/enterprise – to facilitate the organisation of credit mobility and its recognition. The agreement is to be signed by the three parties before the start of the mobility period and is intended to give the student the confirmation that the credits he/she successfully achieves during the mobility period will be recognised.

LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME

EU programme for Education, Training, Youth for 2007-2013

OPTIONAL (NON-COMPULSORY, ELECTIVE, VOLUNTARY, VOCATIONAL) COURSE UNIT

A course unit or module that may be chosen as part of a study programme but is not compulsory for all students. Some systems distinguish between electives (i.e. course units chosen from a pre-defined list) and completely free optional course units.

QUALIFICATION

Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a recognized programme of study.

STUDENT WORKLOAD

The amount of time (expressed in hours) that an average learner (at a particular cycle/level) is expected to spend to achieve specified learning outcomes. This time includes all the learning activities the student is required to carry out (e.g. lectures, seminars, practical work, private study, professional visits, examinations).

STUDY PROGRAMME

An approved set of modules or course units recognized for the award of a specific degree. It is defined through the set of learning outcomes (expressed in terms of competences) that need to be achieved in order to obtain the specified credits.

TEACHING & LEARNING METHODS

A wide range of teaching techniques are used in universities. The set of teaching techniques strongly depends on the instructional form of education.

- Lectures
- Seminar (small group teaching)
- Tutorials
- Research seminar
- Exercise classes or courses
- Workshops (classroom based practical classes)
- Problem-solving classes
- Laboratory teaching
- Demonstration classes
- Placement (internship/traineeship)
- Work based practice

WORKLOAD

An estimation of the time learners typically need to complete all the learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, work placements/traineeship, individual study) required to achieve the defined learning outcomes in formal learning environments.

WORK PLACEMENT (TRAINEESHIP)

A planned period of experience outside the university (for example, in a company or institution) to help students to develop particular skills, knowledge or understanding as part of their study programme.

WORK PLACEMENT CERTIFICATE

A document issued by the receiving organisation/enterprise upon the trainee's completion of the work placement (traineeship). It can be complemented by other documents, such as letters of recommendation. It aims to provide transparency and bring out the value of the experience of the student's work placement.

