UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON

ACADEMIC BOARD

ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Erasmus+ staff and student mobility: recognition policy

1. Introduction

The University of Brighton has been awarded an Erasmus+ charter for staff and student mobility, and other cross-EU activities, for 2014-2020. The new charter brings with it new requirements in respect of the recognition of mobility activities and language preparation. This document sets out the University’s policy on recognition of participation in Erasmus+ mobility from 2014-15 onwards, as approved by Academic Standards Committee at its meeting on 27 February 2014.

This policy will be reviewed no later than the academic year 2019-2020, and may be reviewed earlier if changes are made to Erasmus+ policy and guidance which requires this.

This policy has been informed by the ECTS User Guide 2009¹ and Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code for HE 2012.²

2. Recognition of Erasmus mobility: the requirements

The 2014-20 Erasmus Annotated Guidelines sets out the following requirements for student mobility³:

Recognition/transfer procedures should ensure that the student’s mobility activities at the partner institution are recorded in a transparent way (indicating the original course/subject titles at the host institution in the national language and English) and that the credits gained abroad have been recognised as an integral part of the student’s degree programmes. All the credits that the student earns during the mobility period and were originally agreed in the Learning Agreement should be recognised by the home institution without the need for the student to take any further courses or exams.

- Erasmus study must usually be full-time
- Erasmus study/placement must be assessed by the host institution
- Erasmus credit must be recognized and must count towards the student’s final award
- Institutions must be satisfied that the programme of Erasmus study is acceptable for the degree or diploma the student is currently working towards
- Only periods of study which are part of the student’s curriculum are eligible
- Home institutions must award full recognition preferably by using ECTS credits or compatible system
- Home institutions must ensure full recognition for satisfactorily completed activities of study mobility and, where possible, traineeships in terms of credits awarded using ECTS credits or a compatible system

The Erasmus Handbook refers on to the ECTS User Guide; Annex 2 of this document gives guidance on recognition of credit from student mobility as follows:

¹ Education tools - ECTS guide
² QAA Information and Guidance
³ Funding - annotated guidelines
• Home institutions should agree with the student, in advance of Erasmus study, a Learning Agreement containing a programme of study abroad [...] this programme will have similar, complementary or coherent learning outcomes in relation to the programme in the home institution, but it will not necessarily have the same content
• Guarantee in advance that all credits gained abroad in the approved programme of study will be fully recognised, transferred into the home programme and used to satisfy the qualification requirements.

Neither the Erasmus Handbook or the ECTS User Guide includes detailed requirements on how to transfer grades when recognising Erasmus study, but the Learning Agreement signed by the home institution, host institution and student includes the statement “Fair translation of grades must be ensured and the student has been informed about the methodology.”

The Annotated Guidelines also require participating universities to specify how staff participation in Erasmus+ mobility will be recognised.

3. Policy on recognition of Erasmus+ student mobility and award of credit

3.1. Mode of study

Erasmus study should normally be full-time, that is 60 credits/30 ECTS per semester.

If Schools wish to agree a reduced programme of study for an individual student, the School should provide an academic rationale for this reduction with the Learning Agreement.

3.2. Erasmus study as part of the curriculum

In order to ensure that Erasmus study is formally recorded as part of the curriculum following tasks must be undertaken.

i) Schools define the learning outcomes for the student’s programme that will be met by Erasmus study and the amount and level of credit to be awarded. Schools may wish to develop generic learning outcomes for Erasmus study.

ii) Schools agree with the student a study programme, comprising modules offered by the host university to be undertaken during the Erasmus placement, which will allow them to achieve the defined learning outcomes. The amount of credit to be taken during the Erasmus placement will inform the amount of credit to be awarded on successful completion.

iii) Schools include the learning outcomes and credit information in the Recognition of Studies form.

iv) If a programme includes Erasmus placements as a study option, this should be recorded in the Programme Specification.

3.3. Mechanism for recording credit from Erasmus study

When students return from their Erasmus study, the credit they have achieved as stated on a transcript from the host institution should be recorded on their SITS record using the process for recording pathway credit. Pathway credits can be allocated a mark/grade if required. Students who return from Erasmus study with only partial credit achieved should have that credit recorded, and the relevant Course Examination Board will be responsible for making progression or award decisions for students with a shortfall of credit in the usual way. The credit will appear on the student transcript as Erasmus credit. When recording Erasmus credit, schools must use the Erasmus pathway APL code ‘ERAS’. 
3.4. Transfer of grades

The following policy on transfer of grades has been approved.

i) Credit achieved through Erasmus study will be graded PASS or FAIL with no transfer of marks or grades. This system is compatible with the University's approach to APL credit and with Erasmus credit recognition at other UK HEIs.

ii) This will be a phased implementation to begin in 2014-15. Those Schools who can implement this immediately will be asked to do so. Those Schools who have arrangements for grade recognition that have already been communicated to students who will undertake exchanges in 2014-15 will be supported to devise a phased implementation.

In exceptional circumstances where additional partnership arrangements are in place, the current arrangements for transfer of grades will remain in place. ASC has approved the following programme as an exception to this policy:

BSc (Hons)/DEST European Computing

In the instance of this course, arrangements for grade transfer were approved at validation and periodic review, and the student is eligible to receive two awards.

4. Erasmus as part of a placement year

A number of programmes use Erasmus study to form all or part of a placement year. There are various practices in place to recognise the credit achieved, but issues remain to be resolved regarding the contribution of credit to degree classification and use of synoptic modules to recognise Erasmus study.

The ECTS User Guide states that institutions should “use the credits gained abroad for accumulation purposes to satisfy specific curricular requirements, as previously agreed in the Learning Agreement; recognising credits gained abroad as additional credits would not fulfil the commitment to full academic recognition”.4

The following policy on using Erasmus within a placement year has now been approved in order to ensure that Erasmus placements used in this way meet the requirements of the Erasmus+ charter:

i) The policy and process set out in section 3 above apply to Erasmus study undertaken during a placement year. This will help ensure that Erasmus study is related to learning outcomes which in turn relate to the students’ programme of study at Brighton.

ii) The placement year must be a defined part of the course which enables students to achieve the learning outcomes for the programme, and be described in the programme specification.

4 EU, ECTS User Guide (2009), p40
iii) The placement year must have specific learning outcomes, which are assessed (in part for those placement years that include a shorter Erasmus placement) through Erasmus study/work placements.

iv) The University recognises the achievement of students during Erasmus placements as a means of achieving the learning outcomes specified for the placement year.

v) Students who achieve credit for Erasmus study during a placement year will achieve extra credit in addition to their required 360 credits, but as this credit will be recognized as PASS/FAIL only, it will not count towards their final degree classification. As described above, this credit will be recorded as pathway credit and not against any specific module.

vi) Synoptic modules that draw on learning achieved during Erasmus study but require the completion of additional assessments, or condense the amount of credit achieved, will be phased out. This change is to ensure that students’ achievement during Erasmus placements is recognised without further assessment.

5. **Erasmus+ mobility for students on research degrees**

Because student achievement on research degrees is not defined in terms of credit, the above credit recognition arrangements do not apply. However, Erasmus+ mobility must still be recognised as an integral part of the student’s programme of study and contribute to their final award. The following process should be followed for University of Brighton research degree students undertaking Erasmus+ mobility:

i) the Erasmus academic co-ordinator, in liaison with the student’s supervisory team, should define the learning outcomes to be achieved at the host university and how these are integrated with the student’s overall programme of study, and include these on the learning agreement to be signed by all parties in advance of study mobility;

ii) the Erasmus academic co-ordinator should state on the Recognition of Studies form that the University will recognise the learning outcomes successfully achieved at the host institution as contributing to the student’s programme of study;

iii) at the end of the period of mobility, the Erasmus academic co-ordinator will request that the host university provide a statement confirming to what extent the learning outcomes have been met.

Transcripts are not issued for research degree students so Erasmus+ mobility is not recorded on transcripts in these cases.

6. **Recognition of staff participation in Erasmus+ mobility**

Recognition of staff participation will be managed through the annual Staff Development Review process.

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15 December 2014