

Introduction: European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

What is ECTS?

The ECTS - European Credit Transfer System - was developed by the European Commission in order to provide common procedures to guarantee academic recognition of studies abroad. Studying abroad can be a particularly valuable experience. It is not only the best way to learn about other countries, ideas, languages and cultures; increasingly, it is an important part of professional and academic career development.

The ECTS system is based on the principle of mutual trust and confidence between the participating higher education institutions. ECTS was introduced in 1989, within the framework of Erasmus, now part of the Socrates programme. ECTS is the only credit system which has been successfully tested and used across Europe. ECTS was set up initially for credit transfer. The system facilitated the recognition of periods of study abroad and thus enhanced the quality and volume of student mobility in Europe. Recently ECTS has developed into an accumulation system to be implemented at institutional, regional, national and European level. This is one of the key objectives of the Bologna Declaration of June 1999.

ECTS makes study programmes easy to read and compare for all students, both local and foreign. ECTS facilitates mobility and academic recognition. ECTS helps universities to organise and revise their study programmes. ECTS can be used across a variety of programmes and modes of delivery. ECTS makes European higher education more attractive for students from other continents.

The ECTS system is based on three core elements: **information** (on curriculum programmes and students' achievement), **mutual agreement** (between the partner institutions and the student), **use of ECTS credits** (to indicate student workload).

Components of ECTS

As it was mentioned above the ECTS system is based on **three core elements**: information (on curriculum programmes and students' achievement), mutual agreement (between the partner institutions and the student), use of ECTS credits (to indicate student workload). These components of ECTS are based on three basic documents of ECTS: Information Package, Learning Agreement and Transcript of Records. Credits are allocated to all educational components of a curriculum programme (such as modules, courses, placements, dissertation work, etc.) and reflect the quantity of work each component requires to achieve its specific objectives or learning outcomes in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a full year of study successfully. Full academic recognition means that the study period abroad (including examinations or other forms of assessment) replaces a comparable period of study at the home institution (including examinations or other forms of assessment), though the content of the agreed study programme may differ.

Credits of ECTS

ECTS credits are a value allocated to course units to describe the student workload required to complete them. They reflect the quantity of work each course requires in relation to the total quantity of work required to complete a full year of academic study at the institution, that is, lectures, practical work, seminars, independent work -- in the laboratory, library or at home -- and examinations or other assessment activities.

In ECTS, 60 credits represent one year of study (in terms of workload); normally 30 credits are given for six months (a semester) or 20 credits for a term (a trimester).

ECTS credits are also allocated to practical placements and to thesis preparation when these activities form part of the regular programme of study at both the home and host institutions.

ECTS credits are allocated to courses and are awarded to students who successfully complete those courses by passing the examinations or other assessments.

The main tools used to make ECTS work and facilitate academic recognition are:

- The information package, which describes in written form general information about the institution, its location, student accommodation, administrative procedures necessary to register and academic calendar.
- The learning agreement, describes the programme of study abroad and is drawn up by the individual student and institutions involved before the student goes abroad.
- The transcript of records, shows the learning achievements of the student prior to and after the period of study abroad.

ECTS students

The students participating in ECTS will receive full credit for all academic work successfully carried out at an ECTS partner institutions and they will be able to transfer these academic credits from one participating institution to another on the basis of prior agreement on the content of study programmes abroad between students and the institutions involved.

LEARNING CURRICULUM AND ECTS

The curriculum for undergraduated doctors', dentists, pharmasicts preparation at medical, dentistry and pharmaceutical faculty in specialty "General medicine", "Dentistry" and "Pharmacy" respectively is based on European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which is oriented towards the ability of students' study achievements recognition, irrespective of the place of study. The normative term learning curriculum realization is expected after 6 years of study (360 credits ECTS). After finishing it successfully student receives the diploma of doctor, dentist or magister of pharmacy

All the lectures, seminars, practical classes are taught in three languages: Ukrainian, Russian, English.

The structure of learning curriculum is integrated and is orientated towards following the logical succession of subject teaching.

The curriculum includes two stages of undergraduated doctors' preparation: preclinical and clinical. Three primary years of study are devoted to majoring in the main subjects. First of all these are: human anatomy, histology, cytology and embryology, medical chemistry, physiology, biophysics. These subjects are the main theoretical part of clinical medicine that doctor expert deals with. Clinical subjects are taught beginning with the 3rd till the 6th year of study. State certification of students-graduates consists of standardized test – state exam – and practically orientated state exam. ECTS credits are a value allocated to course units to describe the student workload required to complete them.

In ECTS: the study plan is arranged into 6 years of study or 360 credits ECTS. One academic year lasts 40 weeks and includes 60 credits (1 week – 1,5 credit ECTS), 1 credit ECTS includes 30 academic hours. An academic year contains 1800 academic hours. The total amount of academic hours includes: the time for providing lectures, practical work, seminars, tutorials, consultations, practices, self-reliant and individual work and controlling steps. The schedule of study process from 1st till 6th year or till 5th year in dentistry or pharmaceutical faculty consists of two academic semesters. In the schedule is expected the additional time for completing the study of separate modules (their re-passing, increase of the rating, etc.) – 2 weeks after completion the spring semester on 1-5 years.

Standardized test – state exam – consists of two exams “Step 1” and “Step 2”. Exam “Step 1” is integrated and takes place after the third year. “Step 2” is a component of state board examinations.

Students of General Medicine faculty have to pass practically orientated state exam in 5 subjects: “Internal, Professional and Infectious diseases”, “Surgical Diseases with Pediatric Surgery”, “Obstetrics and Gynecology”, “Pediatric Diseases with Pediatric Infectious Diseases”, “Hygiene, Social Medicine, Economics and Organization of Public Health Care”. The aim of practically orientated state exam is to value the quality of solving the typical problems by graduates and demonstrating the corresponding skills and habits in conditions that are approximate to realistic. The exam takes place directly “at the bed of a sick man” and in specially equipped classes. It evaluates the skills of every graduate to prepare complaints and case history, to make the examination of sick, to make the plan after examining, to estimate the results of laboratory and instrumental research.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSESSMENT SCALE

In credit transfer system of the organization of academic work examination sessions are absent. Therefore assessment of the students’ academic performance is realized in the process of systematic current control at each practical class and by the results of final control scores received for every module.

Mark for the knowledge of a subject is determined as the mean mark for modules the subject is structurally divided into.

Mark for the module is determined as a sum of marks of the current academic activity and the mark of the final module control. It is expressed in the multiscore (200 scores) scale.

Maximum number of scores a student can receive for each module is 200, including 120 scores for current academic activity and 80 scores for the final module control.

Quality of performance is assessed for each theme in the module and expressed in the 4-score (traditional) scale converted into the scores according to the requirements of the syllabus. Knowledge of themes indicated only for self-study is assessed at the final module control.

Scores are given only provided that individual work has been carried out successfully and maintained.

Minimal scores a students has to receive for the module in order to be admitted to the final module control are calculated as follows: the scores equal to mark “3” are multiplied by the number of themes in the module. Final module control is carried on at the last class of the module after all the themes of the module have been studied. Students, who have attended all the classes required by the syllabus and received not less than minimal scores, are admitted to the final module control.

If a student missed classes for valid reasons, his individual study plan is to be corrected and he is allowed to make up for the missed classes within a certain period of time. Decision on the permission to make up for the classes missed for invalid reasons is taken individually in each case by the dean of department.

Maximum scores the student can receive for the final module control are 80. Final module control is considered passed if the student has received not less than 50 scores.

Only students who have passed all the modules would receive a mark for the subject. Scores for the subject are calculated as a mean of the scores for all the modules of the subject.

Conversion of scores for the subject into marks by the ECTS and four-grade (traditional in Ukraine) scale

Taking into account scores received for the subject, rating of the students trained in the same specialty is defined by the ECTS scale as follows:

ECTS grade	Statistical index
A	Most successful 10 % students
B	Next 25 % students
C	Next 30 % students
D	Next 25 % students
E	The rest 10 % students

Grades “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, “E” are awarded to the students of the same course and specialty who have successfully completed learning of a given subject.

Grades FX, F (“2”) are given to those students who haven’t passed at least one module of the subject after the study of the subject has been finished.

Grade FX is awarded to the students who have received a minimal number of scores for their current academic activity but haven’t passed the final module control. This category of students has the right to take the final module control again according to the fixed schedule at the time of winter holidays or summer holidays (through July 1 of the current year) within two weeks after the end of the academic year. Students are allowed to retake final module control not more than twice.

Grade F is awarded to the students who have attended all the classes of the module but haven’t received the maximum number of scores for their current academic activity and were not admitted to the final module control. This category of students may be given a chance to learn the module once again.

Conversion system of certain discipline’s points number into the 4-point scale:

ECTS grade	Score from 4-point scale	Definition
From 170 till 200 points	5	Excellent
From 140 till 169 points	4	Good
From 139 points till minimum number of points that a student should have	3	Satisfactory
The following minimum number of points that a student should have	2	Unsatisfactory

Evaluation of ECTS rate into the traditional scale is not converted because the ECTS scale and 4-point scale are independent.