

Explanatory note for the use of the standard ECTS-forms developed by AEC

PLEASE READ THIS NOTE CAREFULLY BEFORE STARTING TO USE THE FORMS!

1. The AEC has developed the following ECTS standard forms, which have been adapted to the needs of institutions for professional music training in higher education:
 - Student application form
 - Learning Agreement
 - Transcript of records (following an exchange period)
 - Bilateral Agreement
2. These forms, except the bilateral agreement, have been based on both the standard ECTS forms developed by the European Commission and on feedback received and discussions held by international relations coordinators during the past few years. As a consequence, this is the current result of a long period of development and consultation. However, it is not the intention to see these forms as an absolute definitive version, as it is foreseen that the current versions will be evaluated within a few years.
3. These forms have been sent to the European Commission for feedback during September 2005. During October 2005, these forms have been presented and discussed at a meeting of ECTS Counselors in Istanbul. Based on the discussions at this meeting, the European Commission was able to inform the AEC that these forms could be used by professional music training institutions and that the forms would also fulfill the requirements of an ECTS label procedure. Institutions wishing to apply for an ECTS label are therefore strongly advised to use these forms or the original generic ECTS forms developed by the European Commission. Institutions confronted in the framework of an ECTS label procedure or an ECTS visit with ECTS Counselors that are not informed about the status of these forms should contact the AEC Office immediately.
4. The forms can be downloaded in WORD-format. Institutions are invited to print their own logo onto the form, if so required. In addition, if institutions find they need to adapt the forms to their own needs, they can do so by adding or deleting certain sections. However, in case of individual changes (other than formatting, adding institutional logos, etc), conformity with the ECTS guidelines cannot be assured (see 3.). Any individual adaptations should therefore be made with the utmost consideration. In case of doubt, institutions should contact an ECTS expert in their ERASMUS National Agency for further guidance.
5. In relation to the Transcript of Records, it is important to know that the AEC is currently studying the use of the ECTS grading scale, which is creating challenges for use in professional music training institutions. Traditionally, institutions of higher music education only accept small amounts of students that fulfill the highest artistic standards. As a result, it is possible that certain subject areas have very small classes or no student is admitted at all. A calculation of grades related to the percentage of successful students would therefore not be realistic. The AEC will study and present solutions to this issue during the second half of 2006.
6. In relation to the Bilateral Agreement, another issue that is connected to the individual nature of professional music training is important. Some institutions prefer to include a statement in the agreement, drawing attention to the fact that the admission of ERASMUS students is depending on the availability of places within certain classes. As professional music training in certain musical genres is based on one-to-one teaching, the acceptance of an ERASMUS student could have substantial financial implications for institutions. The admission of an ERASMUS student can therefore never be automatically based on the bilateral agreement. At this moment, it is difficult to say whether or not it is advisable to add such a sentence on the bilateral agreement itself, as it is not clear if this formulation on the agreement would be within the principles of ERASMUS mobility. Institutions are therefore advised to consider drafting a 'side letter' that is attached to the bilateral agreement and that is signed by both partners, with a statement excluding any legal obligation to the agreed number of exchange students/teachers whenever staff or financial resources do hinder the acceptance of an exchange student by the host institution. Whenever evidence for a properly set up student and staff exchange would have to be provided to a National Agency or the European Commission, only the bilateral agreement itself could be shown.