

Academic Credit System and Recognition of Credits of the College of Professional Studies – International Centre of Professional Studies, Belgrade

Types and Levels of Studies

Based on the descriptors of higher education qualifications (Qualifications Framework for the EHEA (Bologna Framework) and “Dublin Descriptors”), and the “Education and Training 2010 Work Programme” published in 2001 by the European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm, as well as with the valid Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Serbia, all study programmes at the International Center of Professional Studies (ICEPS) are conducted in accordance with Bologna principles that imply the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Each course belonging a study programme is assigned a number of ECTS credits, and the scope of studies is expressed by the total sum of ECTS credits that stand for an evaluation of student’s work in acquiring knowledge, abilities and skills and is fully applied to all study programmes and courses.

Study programmes at the College are designed based on the 3 + 2 principle, where Bachelor Professional Studies last 3 years and are awarded 180 ECTS credits, after which students are entitled to pursue Master Professional Studies that last 2 years and gain another 120 ECTS credits.

The Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Serbia distinguishes between two types of studies: academic and professional (applied) studies.

- **Academic studies** include academic study programmes which enable students to develop and apply their scientific, professional, and artistic achievements.
- **Professional (or applied) studies** include professional study programmes which enable students to apply their knowledge and skills required for their future employment.

ICEPS offers **professional study programmes** with the following allocation of ECTS credits at each level of study:

- **First Cycle: Bachelor Professional Studies – 180 ECTS credits in total, and**
- **Second Cycle: Master Professional Studies – 120 ECTS credits in total.**

The first (Bachelor) and second (Master) cycles are awarded 300 ECTS credits in total.

Bachelor Professional Studies last 3 years (6 semesters), and after the completion of the sixth semester and passing all exams, a final thesis (Bachelor thesis), prepared during the sixth semester, is defended.

Master Professional Studies last 2 years (4 semesters), and after the completion of the fourth semester and passing all exams, a final thesis (Master thesis), prepared during the fourth semester, is defended.

During the three years of Bachelor Professional Studies or two years of Master Professional Studies, students are awarded a minimum of 180, i.e. 120 ECTS credits, which include professional internship and final thesis credits.

ECTS credits may be transferred between different study programmes within the same cycle and type of studies.

Methodology for Allocating ECTS Credits to Individual Courses

The allocation of ECTS credits to individual courses was done in accordance with the document published by the European Commission, ECTS Users’ Guide: http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/ECTS_Guide/00/0/ects-users-guide-2015_614000.pdf.

The annual accumulation of ECTS credits is 60. Namely, the student acquires the total number of ECTS credits for each course based on the level of fulfilment of pre-examination and examination obligations. The sum of 60 ECTS credits corresponds to the average student workload of 40 contact hours per week during one study year.

The number of ECTS credits for individual courses was determined through an analysis of the total student workload required to achieve the learning outcome, including all activities (lectures, exercises, seminars, professional practice, individual work, etc.). A student workload of 40 contact hours per week is planned, of which approximately 20 contact hours are planned for active forms of teaching, and 20 for individual student work.

One study year lasts 12 months and is divided into 2 semesters. The teaching period of the year lasts from 1 October to 31 May of the following year (8 months). Classes in each course are held during one semester, in the duration of 15 weeks.

A year of 30 working weeks (i.e. semester of 15 working weeks), implies a 1200-hour annual workload (600-hour semester workload) and the student receives a minimum of 60 ECTS credits per year (30 ECTS credits per semester), i.e., 1 ECTS credit represents 20 contact hours of total student workload.

The total student workload for individual courses is determined as the sum of active teaching hours plus the time required for individual student work as assessed by course teachers and student surveys. The application of this concept explains how it is possible for courses with the same number of hours of active teaching to be allocated different amounts of ECTS credits (due to the difference in the number of hours required for individual student work).

In general, the volume of teaching materials for a specific course is determined in proportion to the number of ECTS credits, and the maximum load of teaching materials is usually considered to be 100 pages per 1 ECTS credit.

All courses, provided by the curriculum, are divided into compulsory and elective (6 elective blocks per study programme with 2-6 elective courses per block).

Courses catalogue for each study programme is available online and is being regularly updated:
<https://international.iceps.edu.rs/courses-catalogue/>.

The recommendations of the National Council of Higher Education in the Republic of Serbia also require a certain proportion of academic-educational (AE), professional (P), and professional-applied (PA) courses, which is fully supported by the College. The course distribution is different for different study programmes, according to the level of studies (Bachelor or Master Professional Studies) and scientific field (medical, social-humanistic, technical-technological, etc.). The College continuously reviews the system of ECTS credit allocation to courses through student surveys and statistical analyses of study achievements.

Professional Titles and Qualifications

Students who complete professional studies acquire the knowledge and skills in general educational and professional courses. Achieving the study programme goal, i.e. higher education of professional personnel in relevant fields, enables a higher level of knowledge and development of the profession in the chosen field.

Upon the completion of studies, ICEPS students acquire a title that is in accordance with the *List of Professional, Academic and Scientific Titles* (Official Gazette of RS 53/2017, 114/2017, 52/2018, 21/2019, 34/2019, 6/2020, 24/2020, 152/2020, 10/2021 and 48/2021) adopted by the National Council of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

Learning outcomes are based on the European Parliament Directive 2005/36/EU on the recognition of professional qualifications: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32005L0036>.

A person who completes Bachelor Professional Studies acquires the professional title of Bachelor (appl.) signifying the completion of the first cycle of professional studies in the corresponding field.

A person who completes Master Professional Studies acquires the professional title of Master (appl.) signifying the completion of the second cycle of professional studies in the corresponding field.

ECTS Credits Recognition Procedure and Methodology

ICEPS ensures full academic recognition for outgoing students on a mobility guarantying that study period abroad (including examinations or other forms of assessment) replaces a comparable period of study at the home institution. Depending on the study programme, students will have the possibility of replacing an existing course or including the course units abroad as elective courses. ECTS credits and grades for the courses taken at the receiving institution are recognised in accordance with the study programme at the home institution.

Recognition of results and ECTS credits acquired during the mobility period abroad or blended mobility is based on principles of transparency, flexibility, and fairness. A flexible approach when recognising results achieved during the mobility period implies that a focus is set on the similarity of study programmes, acquired knowledge, and learning outcomes, rather than the differences in study programs that are being compared. The principle of transparency implies that the rules on recognising the results achieved during the mobility will be publicly available, while the Academic ECTS Coordinator will be guided by the principle of fairness when recognising the results achieved during the mobility period.

Measures to ensure the full automatic recognition of credits are in accordance with the EU Recommendation on Automatic Mutual Recognition: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1568891859235&uri=CELEX:32018H1210\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1568891859235&uri=CELEX:32018H1210(01))

If there is a discrepancy between the grading systems used at a home and a host institution, grades are converted into the grades of the home institution by comparing the distribution of grades in accordance with ECTS Grading Table issued by the European Commission. ECTS Grading Table will be used for interpretation and conversion of grades between different countries and institutions for foreign students available in the ECTS Users' Guide, Annex 2: http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/ECTS_Guide/00/0/ects-users-guide-2015_614000.pdf.

ICEPS has a system of recognition of credits and conversion of grades for institutions that use a different grading system. ICEPS Grading System is available on this link: <https://international.iceps.edu.rs/mobility-information/>

When selected courses are compatible with the study programmes of the home institution, they are automatically recognised in the Learning Agreement. If the courses are not equivalent, the home institution must report the data on the exams passed and the ECTS credits earned in the Diploma Supplement. If grades cannot fit into the home institution's grading system, they are entered in the original form and are not included in the average grade calculated at the end of the studies.

The main contact point regarding the recognition procedure is Academic ECTS Coordinator whose main task is to make institution's recognition procedure student-friendly dealing with the academic and administrative aspects of ECTS. Learning Agreements with selected courses include ECTS points and must be signed before the mobility period. Academic ECTS Coordinator is responsible for signing Learning and Mobility Agreements and also for recognising mobility outcomes through the Transcript of Records.

Participation in the learning mobility is always recorded in the student's Diploma Supplement.

Recognised courses, credits, grades and traineeship are also recorded in a student's document issued by the home institution. If a student has attended a course but has not passed the exam at the receiving institution, the home institution will allow the student to sit an exam in a related subject upon their return, without the obligation to re-attend lectures and to repeat exams.

Incoming mobility

For incoming students Transcript of Records issued by ICEPS which shows students' learning achievements in a way which is comprehensive and contains student data, successfully completed courses (exams passed), obtained local grades, number of ECTS credits, duration of the study program and other relevant information such as evaluation and scoring system

(national grading system). The document is issued in English by the Student Service and signed by the school Director. Incoming students will receive Transcript of Records within 7 days after completing the last exam.

Students on a Traineeship are being issued a Transcript of Work which is a document by which the receiving institution/business entity provides detailed information on the learning traineeship performed and the achieved results of a student.

ICEPS has the appeal procedure where students can deliver official complaint after their mobility period ends.

The recognition and appeal procedures are described in the ICEPS Rulebook on the International Mobility for Students, Teaching and Administrative Staff available on the official website of ICEPS: <https://international.iceps.edu.rs/mobility-information/>.