

**ECTS Label
DS Label**

**GUIDELINES FOR
APPLICANTS**

1. Introduction

The **ECTS Label** is awarded to Higher Education Institutions who demonstrate excellence in applying the principles of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Applicants are encouraged to consult the ECTS Users Guide carefully when preparing their Label application, as it provides guidelines for the correct implementation of ECTS, including an explanation of ECTS key features.

The ECTS Users Guide is available on-line at http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

ECTS Label applications must provide evidence that excellence is achieved in two main areas:

1. Information Package/Course Catalogue published on the applicant's website in English;
2. Student files for both incoming and outgoing students.

Both of these components of the ECTS Label application must be deemed to be of high quality for the award of an ECTS Label.

The **Diploma Supplement (DS) Label** is awarded to Higher Education Institutions which deliver a Diploma Supplement, to all graduates in all first and second cycle programmes offered by that institution, in accordance with the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO.

DS Label applications must demonstrate that all the elements of the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO are included. This template must be respected throughout. Applicants are encouraged to consult the Diploma Supplement Explanatory Notes carefully when preparing their Label application (reproduced here as annex 2 of this application form).

More information is available on-line at:-

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1239_en.htm.

DS Label applications must provide evidence of best practice in two main areas:

1. Public information relating to the Diploma Supplement on the applicant's website (in English and in the home language)
2. Examples of actual Diploma Supplements issued to graduates from the applicant institution

2. Submission of applications

2.1 Period of validity of the ECTS/DS labels

Once approved, the ECTS and DS labels remain in principle valid from **2012 to 2015**.

2.2 Eligible countries

In order to be eligible, applicant institutions must be located within the EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Croatia or Turkey.

2.3 Eligible institutions

Applications for the ECTS/DS labels can be submitted by an institution which has been awarded a Standard or an Extended Erasmus University Charter (Standard Charter and Student placements).

2.4 Language of the application

To be eligible, the application for the ECTS/DS labels must be submitted to the National Agency concerned and prepared in one of the official languages of the European Union: Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Slovak, Slovene or Swedish.

2.5 Where to obtain the application forms

The National Agency of the applicant will provide the application forms. Please contact:

Webpage or postal address of National Agency (to be added by the NA concerned)

2.6 Deadline for submission

Preliminary applications should be sent by **1 June 2012** to the National Agency concerned. National Agencies will review all application and provide recommendations to applicants in order to ensure compliance with Label criteria. The deadline for submission of all (final) applications to the Executive Agency (EACEA) in Brussels is **1 October 2012** (as per postmark).

Please note that all applications (preliminary and final) must be submitted to the National Agency of the applicant. National Agencies will then forward **all applications** for assessment to Brussels:

postal address and email of National Agency (to be added by NA)

2.7 Application form and number of copies to be submitted

Applicants shall submit their (preliminary and final) application for the ECTS/DS labels by using the **official application form**, which is available from their National Agency.

When submitting the final application, applicants must send one **complete original version** of the application (and all annexes) **duly signed** by the legal representative of the applicant organisation and **two identical copies** (with annexes). Applicants are also required to send an electronic version of their (preliminary and final) application to their National Agency.

2.8 Acknowledgement of receipt and review of applications

After submitting their (preliminary) application, applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt from the National Agency via e-mail sent to the e-mail address provided in section 1.1 of the application form. The National Agency will then review the application with a view to providing advice and recommendations to applicants, enabling them to finalise their application for the evaluation panel of independent experts organised in Brussels.

3. Structure of the application forms

There are two different application forms, one for the ECTS label and one for the DS label. Both of those application forms consists of three sections. They also both contain annexes with important information for applicants, including a list of **common pitfalls** (i.e., reasons for which applications were considered unsuccessful in 2009, 2010 and 2011).

The three sections in the application form are as follows:

- a first section for the identification of the applicant institution and provision of contact details;
- a second section in which the applicant institution is asked to provide the documents/information which will be assessed for the award of the ECTS/DS labels;
- a third section which must be signed by the legal representative of the applicant institution.

These three sections are embedded in the following structure:

3.1 Structure of the ECTS label application form

Section 1 – Identification

1.1 Applicant institution – legal representative

1.2 Applicant institution – ECTS coordinator

The contact information provided in this section will be used in all subsequent correspondence. Please notify any changes in this information if necessary (e.g. change of rector, etc.)

Section 2 – Documents required

2.1 Information package/Course catalogue

2.2 Complete ECTS student files (for three outgoing students and three incoming students)

Section 3 - Declaration

3.2 Structure of the DS label application form

Section 1 – Identification

1.1 Applicant institution – legal representative

1.2 Applicant institution – DS coordinator

Section 2 – Documents required

2.1 Examples of Diploma Supplement issued

2.2 Confirmation

2.3 Public information on the Diploma Supplement

Section 3 - Declaration

4. Selection procedure

The selection procedure for applications will consist of the following stages:

- 1) Receipt of preliminary applications at national level by National Agencies in the applicant's country on 1 June 2012.
- 2) Submission of all finalised applications by National Agencies to Brussels no later than 1 October 2012 (as per postmark). An assessment of all finalised applications by a panel of external experts at European level will take place followed by the selection decision by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the European Commission before the end of the year.
- 3) After the date of receipt of the notification letter by email, applicants will have 30 days to submit a motivated appeal.

4 Information on approved applications

The final results will be published on the Executive Agency's website at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/selection_results_en.php

The EACEA will also inform all applicants individually by letter providing detailed feedback on the assessment results.

Subsequently, successful applicants will receive the ECTS/DS labels signed by the Executive Agency and the European Commission.

5. Assessment criteria

These guidelines refer to “**certified files/copies**”. Certification is to be given by means of one official stamp, signature of the authorised person of the institution and date of the applicant institution (once for each ECTS student file/DS copy provided). Applications that are not correctly certified will be considered ineligible.

5.1 Quality criteria for the ECTS label

The criteria for the award of the ECTS label are:

- An Information Package/Course Catalogue in English which covers the items in the checklist for the Information Package/Course Catalogue and is readily accessible on the applicant's website;
- Correct use of ECTS documents for mobile students (each ECTS student file must be certified);
- A description of the procedure for recognition of credits gained by outgoing students during their mobility period, together with the transcript, proof of recognition or any other document used to show that credits have been fully recognised.

To be eligible for the award of an ECTS label, an institution must be able to demonstrate that all departments within the institution use the ECTS mechanisms. Even in the case of departments where there are no mobile students, the Information Package/Course Catalogue must provide the information requested.

The ECTS label assessment is based on written evidence that an institution is applying ECTS mechanisms correctly in all first and second cycle degree programmes (and/or for all the one-tier programmes, if these are still on offer). Institutions must make their entire Information package/Course catalogue accessible online in English. Institutions must also demonstrate that all ECTS documents for mobile students have been correctly issued in line with ECTS principles¹. Learning Agreements, including any changes thereto, must be signed and dated in due time and must be fully consistent with the Transcript of Records issued to students after their mobility period.

The assessment procedure will be as follows:

- The assessors will review the Information Package/Course Catalogue of the institution as published in English on the applicant's website.
- They will evaluate degree programmes in different faculties and course units within these degree programmes.
- They will examine the ECTS files of three outgoing and three incoming students and evaluate whether the documents required for each file show correct application of ECTS principles.

Assessment sheets will be prepared by EACEA and published on their website. |

5.2 Quality criteria for the Diploma Supplement Label

The criteria for the award of the DS label are:

- Issuing of the Diploma Supplement to all graduates in first and second cycle programmes offered by the institution (including for all the one-tier programmes, if these are still on offer), and, if so desired, in third cycle programmes, free of charge and in a widely spoken European language;

¹ ECTS principles can be found in the "ECTS Key Features", as well as Annex 2 of the User's Guide, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

- Use of the standard DS template developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO. The content of each section of the Diploma Supplement must be consistent with the guidelines offered in the explanatory notes provided in annex 2 of the application form.
- Section 4.2 of the Diploma Supplement must offer information that is specific to the programme (e.g. in the form of key learning outcomes or otherwise).
- If there is no information in sections 2.1, 2.4, 5.2 and/or 6.1, 'not applicable' should be indicated (these sections should not be left blank).
- Applicants are recommended to follow the guidelines in Annex 3 of the ECTS Users Guide in relation to the ECTS grading table to present information on the use and distribution of grades in section 4.4
- Section 4.5 should contain information in the original language. In order to help all readers understand the meaning of this information, it is recommended to add an explanation of this classification.
- Public information (online) about the availability of the DS for all graduates, plus a filled-in example.

Four samples of **certified copies** of original Diploma Supplements actually issued to students should be provided.

The DS label assessment is based on written evidence that an institution is issuing the Diploma Supplement in line with the Diploma Supplement template and explanatory notes and on a written public statement that the DS is being issued automatically, in a widely spoken European language and free of charge to every student upon graduation.

The assessment procedure will be as follows:

- The assessors will examine the four certified copies of completed and signed Diploma Supplements, issued to graduates of the applicant institution.
- They will examine the public information about the DS made available on the applicant's webpage.

Assessment sheets will be prepared by EACEA and published on their website.