

# Charter and Code for Automatic Recognition of European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability EU-CONEXUS

## INTRODUCTION

Based on EU-CONEXUS Joint Vision and Mission (16 March 2022), the Alliance ‘promotes common European values and a strengthened European identity by bringing together a new generation of Europeans, who can cooperate and work within different European cultures, in different languages and across borders, sectors and academic disciplines. EU-CONEXUS is committed to creating a new institutional framework for higher education in Europe that allows for a truly European way of studying and carrying out research through institutional alignment and seamless mobility for all’.

By signing EU-CONEXUS Charter and Code for Automatic Recognition, the members of EU-CONEXUS undertake to:

- Act as role models by facilitating seamless mobility and by including in their curriculum mobility windows where learning outcomes and qualifications are automatically recognised and at all levels (Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels). This includes all forms of mobility (physical, virtual and blended), as well as short learning courses leading to micro-credentials.
- To work together on promoting and implementing automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods for further study purposes.

To realise the ambition to enhance mobility and facilitate cross border mobility of qualifications, members of EU-CONEXUS acknowledge that major role is played by the European Union Member States. Therefore, higher education institutions have to act in the scope of their competences and in accordance with national and Union legislation, available resources and national circumstances and in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.

## I. CURRENT TOOLS FOR AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION

EU-CONEXUS Charter and Code for Automatic Recognition is built on

- [European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference, 26-27 April 2012. Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area](#) (Bucharest Communiqué)

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- [Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018 on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad](#) (Council Recommendation).
- [Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region \(Lisbon Recognition Convention\)](#) and its subsidiary texts.
- [The Bologna tools](#) instruments that have been developed, adopted and implemented at the European, national, regional and institutional level: the ENIC and NARIC networks, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the Diploma Supplement (DS), the overarching and national qualifications frameworks (QFs), the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ESG), the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR), etc.
- [The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education](#) (ECHE).

and applied only in the areas of institutional jurisdiction.

## II. AUTOMATIC MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF A QUALIFICATION

*Automatic mutual recognition of a qualification is the right for holders of a qualification of a certain level that has been issued by one Member State to be considered for entry to a higher education programme in the next level in any other Member State, without having to go through any separate recognition procedure. This shall not prejudice the right of a higher education institution or the competent authorities to set specific evaluation and admission criteria for a specific programme. It does not prejudice the right to check, if the qualification is authentic and, in case of an upper secondary education and training qualification, if it really gives access to higher education in the Member State of issuance or, in duly justified cases, if the granted qualification meets the requirements for accessing a specific higher education programme in the receiving Member State (Council Recommendation, 2018).*

In this regard, EU-CONEXUS members undertake to:

- Recognise the right for holders of a qualification of a certain level that has been issued by one Member State and which is equivalent to a qualification in the receiving country to access the same higher cycle of studies as in the qualification issuing country.
- Evaluate learning outcomes and not the title of qualification, while evaluating if applicant meets specific requirements to enter the programme.
- To issue Diploma Supplements for all graduates automatically and free of charge in national language and in English and, where possible, in digital format.
- To provide Course Catalogue, with descriptions in English of degree programmes, single educational units, learning outcomes, and grade distribution tables under the request of any university from Member States for application and admission purposes, if the descriptions are not publicly available online.

- To apply transparent criteria for recognition that are applied throughout each higher education institution.
- To exchange best practices for recognition of qualifications and learning outcomes, especially for the qualifications that have been issued by non-European Union universities.
- To elaborate a mutual automatic recognition procedure of qualifications to enter joint EU-CONEXUS study programmes (single recognition).
- To open-up access to higher cycle studies for qualification holders who do not meet specific requirements to enter the programme by offering
  - alignment study units during the studies, when the differences are minor,
  - bridge year, when the differences are bigger than 18 ECTS.
- To develop transparent and agile recognition procedure of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.
- To gradually digitalise and make publicly accessible all related documents and procedures in native language, English and other widely spoken European languages.
- To collaborate with national ministries and quality assurance agencies to foster the implementation of automatic recognition of a qualification at national level to enter the programme of the next cycle.

### III. AUTOMATIC MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF THE OUTCOMES OF A LEARNING PERIOD ABROAD

*Automatic mutual recognition of the outcomes of a learning period abroad: at higher education level, the right to have the learning outcomes of a learning period recognised: as agreed beforehand in a learning agreement and confirmed in the Transcript of Records, in line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Concretely, it means applying the rule set out in the 2015 ECTS Users' Guide that states that: all credits gained during the period of study abroad or during the virtual mobility – as agreed in the Learning Agreement and confirmed by the Transcript of Records – should be transferred without delay and counted towards the students' degree without any additional work or assessment of the student' (Council Recommendation, 2018).*

In this regard, EU-CONEXUS members undertake to:

- Have Erasmus Charter for Higher Education and to respect in full the principles of it.
- To seek flexible comparison (75%) of learning outcomes of study units at Higher Education Institutions in any Member State to prepare a learning agreement.
- To provide Course Catalogus with descriptions in English of degree programmes, learning outcomes, single educational units and grade distribution tables, if possible, publicly available online, for transparent comparison of educational units and their learning outcomes.

- To prepare study units among study programmes/study fields between EU-CONEXUS member universities to facilitate awareness of students (draft of learning agreement), starting with the study programmes with highest mobility rates.
- Ensure full automatic recognition of all credits (based on the ECTS) gained from a learning period abroad at higher education level in any Member State, as agreed beforehand in a learning agreement and confirmed in the Transcript of Records.
- To include other study units (which were not included in a learning agreement and are not recognised towards degree ('exceeding credits') in the Diploma Supplement which were obtained and confirmed in the Transcript of Records.
- To join Erasmus Without Papers processes to facilitate the digitalisation of mobilities.
- To work towards opening-up, flexible and personalised study curricula to ensure seamless possibilities of students' choice for mobilities and learning outcomes.
- To exchange best practices of recognition of the outcomes of a learning period abroad, flexibilisation of curricula and other policies to facilitate seamless cross-border mobility of students.

#### **IV. AUTOMATIC MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF THE LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR FURTHER STUDIES (TRANSFER OF CREDITS)**

*Transfer (of credits) is the process of having credits awarded in one context (programme, institution) recognised in another formal context for the purpose of obtaining a qualification. Credits awarded to students in one programme may be transferred from an institution to be accumulated in another programme, offered by the same or another institution (ECTS User's Guide, 2015).*

In addition to recognition of a learning period during the studies based on prior learning agreements, EU-CONEXUS members undertake to:

- Recognise learning outcomes achieved at any Higher Education Institution in one Member State for purposes to continue studies in the same cycle of studies. The transfer of credits may lead to a degree in a similar or different programme.
- To develop transparent and agile recognition and transfer procedure of learning outcomes of study units, micro-credentials, etc. obtained autonomously at any recognised Higher Education Institution in any Member State.
- Evaluate learning outcomes and not the title of study programme, while evaluating if the applicants meets specific requirements to enter the programme.
- To provide conditions for students to continue their studies in the same/next year where he/she left the previous higher education institution by providing possibilities to obtain additional credits to compensate missing learning outcomes, if any.

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