



Bridging ECTS & ECVET - The role of learning outcomes

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Educational systems – the shift to learning outcomes

- In the European education and training systems the focus is shifting from input factors, such as duration, location and particular pedagogical method, to outcomes of learning referring to what a learner knows and is able to do at the end of a learning process.
- The learning outcomes approach is understood as an opportunity to
 - tailor education and training to individual needs
 - improve links to the labour market
 - improve the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired learning outcomes
 - foster transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of qualifications between different countries and at different levels

ECTS and ECVET:

The common aims of the credit systems

- Both ECVET and ECTS aim at
 - facilitating the accumulation and transfer of assessed learning outcomes
 - enabling recognized mobility in Europe
 - fostering lifelong learning
 - fostering transparency of the European educational systems
- However...

better compatibility, comparability and greater permeability between vocational education and training and higher education, and the credit systems, are still needed.

ECTS

- A learner-centered system for credit accumulation and transfer based on transparency of the learning outcomes and the learning process.
- Originally designed in 1989 as a pilot scheme of the Erasmus programme with the aim of facilitating international student mobility
- Has undergone many changes, most notably because of the Bologna process
- Has been implemented by the majority of higher education institutions in Europe.
- Implementation practices vary: in some countries the system is based on student workload and learning outcomes, in others only on student workload.
- At the moment there is a transition from the traditional approach which allocates the credits based on workload towards the output-based system which takes the learning outcomes into account when allocating credits.

ECVET

- ECVET is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and, where appropriate, accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification.
- ECVET aims for better compatibility between the different European VET systems and their qualifications.
- The development of ECVET began in 2002 after the Copenhagen Process emphasized the need for a credit transfer system for VET. It was adopted as the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council in 2009.
- It has been tested in pilot projects.
- By 2012 the member states are expected to have created the necessary conditions and measures for its gradual implementation. The first stage of the implementation will be reviewed by the European Parliament and the Council in 2014.
- In ECVET, qualifications are described based on units of learning outcomes. A unit of learning outcomes is "a component of a qualification consisting in a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences that can be assessed and validated" (Recommendation 2009/C 155/02). An assessed unit of learning outcomes leads to obtaining a credit of learning outcomes.
- Learner can collect credits for learning outcomes achieved through formal, informal and non-formal learning settings. This creates the basis for assessment, validation and accumulation of prior learning

ECTS and ECVET: consistencies and inconsistencies

	ECTS	ECVET
Credit	<p>Credit (ECTS): Quantifying means of expressing the volume of learning <u>based on the workload</u> students need in order to achieve <u>the expected learning outcomes</u> of a learning process at a specified level.</p>	<p>“Credit for learning outcomes” (credit) means a set of learning outcomes of an individual which <u>have been assessed and which can be accumulated</u> towards a qualification or transferred to other learning programmes or qualifications.</p> <p>“ECVET points” mean a numerical representation of <u>the overall weight</u> of learning outcomes in a qualification and of <u>the relative weight of units</u> in relation to the qualification.</p>
Qualification	<p>Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority <u>attesting the successful completion</u> of a recognised programme of study.</p>	<p>A formal outcome of <u>an assessment and validation process</u> which is obtained when a competent institution determines that an <u>individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards</u>.</p>

ECTS and ECVET: consistencies and inconsistencies

	ECTS	ECVET
Learning outcomes	<p>Are statements* of what a learner <u>is expected to</u> know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning.</p> <p>* may be either threshold statements (minimum requirements) or reference points (level of achievement of successful learners).</p>	<p>The set of <u>knowledge, skills and/or competences</u> an individual <u>has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate</u> after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal or informal</p>
Lifelong learning	<p><u>Was designed for formal, higher education.</u> Informal as well as non-formal settings can also be considered and incorporated.</p> <p>Takes into account <u>a typical ability of an average student</u> in the design of the programme</p>	<p><u>A learner can achieve a qualification by accumulating the required units,</u> achieved in different countries or contexts (formal, non-formal and informal), while respecting national legislation.</p> <p>Takes into account the <u>diversity of the learners.</u></p>

ECTS and ECVET: consistencies and inconsistencies

	ECTS	ECVET
Future potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload \neq learning outcomes • <u>A shift from an input reference oriented system to an output/learning outcomes based system.</u> • The ECTS specifies the relative weight of the learning activity within the degree programme. • Learning outcomes methodology will enable ECTS to serve assessment and validation of results of <u>prior learning (formal, informal, non-formal).</u> • Formalisation of non-formal and/or informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning outcomes \neq learning process (output reference oriented system) • Designed with the potential to serve assessment and validation of results of prior learning (formal, informal, non-formal) • Formalisation of non-formal and/or informal learning

Learning outcomes – the information carriers between ECTS & ECVET

- Learning outcomes should be (a recommendation by the Be-TWIN project, 2010)
 - intelligible and specific
 - written thoroughly and accompanied with a clear explanation of the context in which they are acquired
 - Be expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competences and fit within the frame of the descriptors of the particular level in the EQF and overarching qualification framework of EHEA (QF-EHEA)
 - Refer and relate to quality assurance/accreditation methodology at national as well as institutional level
 - Refer and relate to learning assessment methods
 - Communicate to contextual (i.e. within the same programme) learning outcomes in order to express progression and pathways, and to describe structure
 - Be able to stand alone and communicate to the world outside the programme and society at large, i.e. they have to contain autonomous meaning outside their immediate context

The Be-Matrix:

A suggested articulation between **ECTS** and **ECVET** (1/2)

- A tool for transparency and translation of qualifications
- Does not rely on workload or its relative significance nor the packaging (courses, modules) of learning
- Relies on learning outcomes, national and institutional quality assurance and adequate assessment methods
- Is used with already existing qualifications
- Details the learning outcomes, the learning activities and their crossing in a qualification
- Three main potential usages:
 - HE: making learning more transparent by connecting the offered learning activities with the defined learning outcomes (clarity and easier recognition of prior learning)
 - VET: Examining the contribution of the proposed qualification to the identified job profile (making changes to the proposed learning activities)
 - VET degrees in HE level: converting the training offered to both ECVET and ECTS

The Be-Matrix:

A suggested articulation between **ECTS** and **ECVET** (2/2)

	LEARNING ACTIVITIES							ECVET Credit points
		L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	Ln	
UNITS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES	U1*							
	LO1		X		X			
	LO2	X	X	X				
	LO3				X	X		
	U2							
	LO4	X						
	LO5			X	X			
	LO6		X	X		X		
	Un							
	ECTS credit points							TOTAL

X = overlapping of the learning pathway (sequence of learning activities) and the learning outcomes (outputs of the qualification)

* Grouping can be based on
 1) key occupational activities,
 2) competence areas of an occupational field,
 3) product or service

Sources

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