

## **ASSESSMENT & ECTS GRADING SYSTEM**

Under the Portuguese system grades are given on a scale from 0 to 20, the minimum passing grade being 10.

Exchange students take the same type of examination as Portuguese students, who are continuously assessed in a variety of different ways. These may include formal examinations at the end of each semester, participation and class attendance, group projects and the presentation of case studies or essays. You will also be asked to work with other students to illustrate your ability to work as part of a team. You will be actively involved, encouraged to ask questions, join in discussions, and argue with your teachers.

Even in some courses in Portuguese, exchange students will be allowed to do their reports and written examinations in English or other foreign language, but this will have to be agreed upon by teachers on a case-by-case basis at the beginning of classes.

The official Transcripts of Records (ToR) are issued and sent directly to the incoming students up to 1 month after the end of all exams at Iscte.

### **What are ECTS credits?**

As many different national grading scales co-exist in Europe, in order to facilitate the mobility of students and their grades between institutions a common ECTS grading system has been developed.

The grading scale is based on the combined use of keywords with short explanations and alphabetical definitions from A to F. The ECTS grading scale ranks the students on a statistical basis.

ECTS provides an instrument to create transparency, to build bridges between institutions and to widen the choices available to students. The system makes it easier for institutions to recognize the learning achievements of students through the use of commonly understood measurements – credits and grades - and it also provides a means to interpret national systems of higher education.

ECTS is based on three core elements: information (on study programmes and student achievement), mutual agreement (between the partner institutions and the student) and the use of ECTS credits (to indicate student workload).

ECTS credits are a numerical value (between 1 and 60) allocated to course units to describe the student workload required to complete them. They reflect the quantity of work each course unit requires in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a full year of academic study at the institution, that is, lectures, practical work, seminars, tutorials, fieldwork, private study - in the library or at home - and examinations or other assessment activities. ECTS is thus based on a full student workload and not limited to contact hours only.

ECTS credits are a relative rather than an absolute measure of student workload. They only specify how much of a year's workload a course unit represents at the institution or department allocating the credits.

In ECTS, 60 credits represent the workload of an academic year of study and normally 30 credits for a semester and 20 credits for a term.

ECTS credits ensure that the programme will be reasonable in terms of workload for the period of study abroad.

## ECTS grading scale

ECTS Scale	Definition	
A	EXCELLENT - outstanding performance with only minor errors	Best 10%
B	VERY GOOD - above the average standard but with some errors	Next 25%
C	GOOD - generally sound work with a number of notable errors	Next 30%
D	SATISFACTORY- fair but with significant shortcomings	Next 25%
E	SUFFICIENT - performance meets the minimum criteria	Next 10%
FX	FAIL - some more work required before the credit can be awarded	-
F	FAIL - considerable further work is required	-

## **How is the ECTS grade calculated?**

Iscte has implemented the rules of Portuguese law guiding the application of the European credit scale (ECTS) in Portuguese institutions.

According to this, attribution of the ECTS grade is done for each curricular unit based on the grades of the past three years and the total results of at least 100 students.

Our integrated academic information system, Fenix+, automatically calculates ECTS grades based on the latter information. Therefore, the students should not compare the grades just among the peers in one class nor the grades between the curricular units, since the percentages might be different among them.

For institutions outside of Europe, in order to sort the issue of comparability, we indeed advise the partners to use for the grade transfer the Portuguese grading scale (0 – minimum grade, 20 – maximum grade, 10 – minimum passing grade), as ECTS scale has been created specifically for the European institutions.

## **How are ECTS credits transferred?**

Home and host institutions prepare and exchange transcripts of records for each student participating in ECTS before and after the period of study abroad. Copies of these transcripts are given to the student for his/her personal file. The home institution recognises the amount of credit received by their students from partner institutions abroad so that the credits for the course unit passed replace the credits which would otherwise have been obtained from the home institution. The Learning Agreement gives the student a guarantee in advance that the credits for the approved programme of study will be transferred.