

**ECTS Label
DS Label**

**GUIDELINES FOR
APPLICANTS**

1. Introduction

1.1 Period of validity of the ECTS/DS labels

Once approved, the ECTS and DS labels remain **in principle valid** from 2009 to 2013.

1.2 Eligible countries

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

NB: The possibility of obtaining the ECTS and DS labels in a given country depends on the question if it is included in the National Agency's application for the "Bologna Experts" exercise 2008 – 2009.

The following countries have decided not to apply for the labels: Iceland and France.

1.3 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) until the end of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

1.4 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.

1.5 Where to obtain the application forms

The National Agency of the applicant will provide the application forms:

Tempus Public Foundation
H-1438 Budapest 70, POB. 508
www.tka.hu

2. Submission of applications

2.1 Deadline for submission

Applications must be sent by **15 January 2009 (as per postmark)**. Applications bearing a postmark after this date will not be considered.

It is strongly recommended sending applications by such means that allow a **proof of dispatch** (registered post, express courier, etc.).

2.2 Application Form

Applicants shall submit their application for the ECTS/DS labels by using the **official application form** provided by the National Agency concerned.

The applicant must send one **complete original version** of the application **duly signed** by the legal representative of the applicant organisation and **two identical copies**.

Applicants are also required to send an electronic version of their application to their National Agency by 15 January 2009.

Please note that applications sent by email or fax only will not be accepted.

2.3 Sending of the application

Applications must be sent by the deadline (by post/special carrier) to the following address of the National Agency of the applicant:

Tempus Public Foundation
H-1438 Budapest 70, POB. 508
gabor.dobos@tpf.hu

2.4 Acknowledgement of receipt

Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt from the National Agency concerned.

3. Structure of the application forms

There are two different application forms, one for the ECTS label and one for the DS label. Each of those two application forms consists of the following three sections:

- a first section for the identification of the applicant institution;
- 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;
- and a third section which must be signed by the legal representative of the applicant institution.

These three sections are imbedded in the following structure:

3.1 Structure of the ECTS label application form

Section 1 – Identification

1.1 Languages

1.2 Applicant institution

Section 2 – Documents required

2.1 Information package/Course catalogue

2.2 Complete ECTS dossiers concerning three outgoing students

2.3 Three complete ECTS dossiers concerning three incoming students

Section 3 - Declaration

3.2 Structure of the DS label application form

Section 1 – Identification

1.1 Languages

1.2 Applicant institution

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. Assessment procedure

The assessment procedure for applications will involve a decentralised approach combined with a supplementary centralised evaluation at European level.

4.1 The two-step evaluation procedure

1. Decentralised pre-selection coordinated by National Agencies

- Those Higher Education Institutions showing interest in obtaining the ECTS label and/or the DS label should fill in the official application form and submit it to the National Agency of the country where it is located.
- The National Agency will organise an evaluation with the assistance of independent experts, bearing in mind possible conflicts of interest.
- If the National Agency considers that a Higher Education Institution meets the criteria for the award of the ECTS/DS Labels, the National Agency will forward the application to the Executive Agency for a definitive evaluation and decision.

2. *A final selection by the Executive Agency, in consultation with the European Commission, assisted by a jury of independent experts*

- The Executive Agency will nominate an ECTS / DS jury of independent experts, who will examine all the applications for the ECTS/DS label put forward by the National Agencies. The Executive Agency in consultation with the Commission then takes the final decision about the award of the label. The Executive Agency may also organise an annual award ceremony.
- The ECTS and DS labels will be honorary distinctions, and will be awarded for a four-year period (2009 – 2013).
- Higher Education Institutions who held the ECTS and/or DS labels in the past are invited to apply again, given that these labels will all expire in 2009.

4.2 Information on approved applications

The final results will be published on the Executive Agency's website in May 2009 at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/erasmus/erasmus_en.htm

The EACEA will inform all institutions individually by letter about the evaluation results.

Subsequently, the accepted institutions will receive the ECTS/DS labels signed by the European Commission.

5. Assessment criteria

5.1 Nature of the assessment for the ECTS label

5.1.1 Quality criteria for the ECTS label

Broadly the same quality criteria will apply as for the period 2003 – 2006.

The criteria for the award of the ECTS label are (see section 2 of the ECTS application form):

- An Information Package/Course Catalogue in English (obligatory) and in the regional/national language (optional) which covers all the items in the checklist for the Information Package/Course Catalogues (see Annex 2 of the Application Form for the ECTS label);
- Correct use of ECTS for mobile students (including samples of Learning Agreements, Transcripts of Records).
- Proof of academic recognition.

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/course catalogue must provide the requested information.

The ECTS label assessment is based on written evidence that an institution is applying ECTS mechanisms in all first and second cycle degree programmes (and/or for all the one-tier programmes, if these are still on offer). Institutions have to make their entire Information package/Course catalogue accessible online.

The assessment procedure will be as follows:

- The Assessors will review the Information/Course Catalogue of the institution to confirm that it covers all the items on the ECTS checklist (see Annex 2 of the Application Form for the ECTS label).
- They will evaluate three degree programmes normally in three different faculties and three of the course units within these degree programmes to ensure that they provide the information specified in the checklist.
- They will examine the ECTS dossiers of three outgoing and three incoming students.

5.1.2 Frequent comments from assessors concerning previous applications

Please find below a non-exhaustive list of comments made by assessors on incorrect and/or incomplete applications submitted in the past for your information.

- *Transcript of Records*
 - The copies (i.e. not the originals) of the Transcript of Records for incoming students are not certified
 - The institution stamp is missing
 - An explanation of the local grading system is missing
 - Student(s) are awarded ECTS credits although they didn't always pass the exam(s)
 - Local grades and/or ECTS credits are missing
- *Learning agreement*
 - The dates and signatures on the Learning Agreement(s) of the student and/or the coordinators are missing.
 - There is an inconsistency between the Learning Agreement(s) and the proof of recognition.
 - The Learning Agreements do not follow the official model and crucial information is missing.
 - The Learning Agreements were not in place before the start of the exchange programme.
- *Proof of recognition*
 - Missing or incomplete description of the recognition procedures, now listed explicitly in the checklist for the Information Package/Course Catalogue.
- *Information package/Course Catalogue*

- The Information Package/Course Catalogue is not complete either in one or two languages.
- Information is missing in degree programme descriptions.
- The web version of the Information Pack/Course Catalogue is difficult to reach.
- ECTS is not applied correctly in all first and second cycle degree programmes.
- ECTS is used in several departments, however not in every department.
- ECTS is not applied to all incoming, outgoing and non-mobile students.
- Credits do not equal 60 ECTS per academic year for fulltime studies.

5.2 Nature of the assessment for the Diploma Supplement Label

5.2.1 The quality criteria for the DS label

Broadly the same quality criteria will apply as for the period 2003 – 2006.

The criteria for the award of the DS label are (see section 2 of the DS application form):

- Issuing of the Diploma Supplement to all graduates in all first and second cycle degree programmes, free of charge and in a widely spoken European language;
- Use of the standard DS model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO;
- Public information (online) about the availability of the DS for all graduates, plus a filled-in example.

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

The DS label assessment is based on written evidence that an institution is capable to issue the Diploma Supplement and on written public statement that the DS is being issued in a widely spoken European language and free of charge to every student upon graduation.

The assessment will be done by examining the four copies of completed, signed and certified Diploma Supplements, issued to graduates of the applicant institution.

5.2.2 The DS Label and key documents

A Diploma Supplement label will be awarded to institutions which deliver a Diploma Supplement, to all graduates in all first and second cycle degree programmes, in accordance with the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO.

The DS is composed of eight sections. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why. Institutions have to apply to the DS the same authentication procedures as for the diploma itself. Also a description of the national higher education system within which the individual named on the original qualification graduated has to be attached to the DS.

The Diploma Supplement should start with the preamble published either on the European Commission, Council of Europe or UNESCO/CEPES websites.

5.2.3 Frequent comments from assessors concerning previous applications

Please find below a non-exhaustive list of comments made by assessors on incorrect and/or incomplete applications submitted in the past for your information.

- The Diploma Supplement does not follow the official model and crucial information is missing.
- Transcripts are not included in the Diploma Supplement.
- The number of dossiers supplied is not sufficient.
- The institution offers first degree and second degree programmes. However, not both cycles are represented in the dossiers.
- There is no clear indication on the institution website that the Diploma Supplement is issued automatically, free of charge to all students.
- Drafts instead of copies of the actual Diploma Supplement have been sent in.
- The information of the Diploma Supplement is not published in an official bulletin or on the website of the applicant institution.
- The courses taken abroad do not appear with their original titles in the DS.