

Pursuant to Article 41, paragraph 2 of the Law on Higher Education ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" No. 88/2017) and Article 25 of the Statute of the College of Applied Technical Sciences (02-966 from 30th December 2013, 02-666 of 30th December 2014, 02-611 dated 16th September 2015, 02-230 dated 20th March 2017), The Teaching-Expert council at the session held on 26th February 2018 brought the following

RULEBOOK

ON INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF STUDENTS AND TRANSFER OF ECTS CREDITS

Basic Provisions

Article 1.

The Rulebook on International Mobility of Students and Transfer of ECTS credits (hereinafter: the Rulebook) regulates the basic principles and procedures regarding international student mobility, which is being realized at the College of Applied Technical Studies in Niš, (hereinafter: VTŠ Niš), in the framework of studies that support and promote student mobility as an integral part of the process of internationalization of higher education, and in accordance with positive legal regulations and generally accepted European standards. Criteria and conditions for student mobility and transfer of ECTS credits are prescribed by the general act of an independent higher education institution or by a cooperation agreement between higher education institutions.

Basic terms

Article 2

Student mobility-study stay and professional practice that students realize at higher education institutions abroad.

Sending/Home institution- higher education institution sending the student on exchange. In terms of rights and obligations towards an outgoing student (according to this this Rulebook, unless otherwise stipulated), Home institution stands for an institution that sends the student on exchange, i.e. the institution where the student is studying;

Receiving/Host institution - higher education institution, or other institution in which the student is on mobility;

Outgoing student- a student who realizes his/her mobility (studies or professional practice) at a higher education institution abroad;

Incoming student - a foreign student who realizes his/her mobility (studies or professional practice) at VTŠ Niš;

Period of mobility - time period during which the student is on international mobility or professional practice.

Study Visit Plan - a document in which the student proposes, when applying for an exchange program, courses that he/she plans to take, or other academic activities (research, etc.) that he/she plans to realize in Host institution.

If a student is admitted to an exchange program on the basis of a study visit plan, a learning agreement has to be drawn up. The study visit plan must be signed by the student and the authorized person from Home institution.

Learning Agreement- is an agreement for the student of the first or second level of studies which stipulates the obligations and activities that he/she will realize in the receiving institution. Learning agreement is three-sided and is signed between Home institution, Host institution and the student participating in mobility.

Study and Research Plan is an agreement for a student of the second level of studies which stipulates obligations and activities that will be realized in Host institution. Agreement on Study and Research is three-sided and is signed by Home institution, Host institution and the student participating in mobility.

Training and Quality Commitment Agreement is an agreement for a particular student which stipulates the program of professional practice at an institution abroad.

Transcript of Records - a document in which a higher education institution provides detailed data on the results (grades, ECTS credits) that the student achieved.

Transcript of Work – a certificate in which the institution provides detailed information on the completed professional practice and the results that the student achieved.

ECTS Coordinator - a person who is authorized by the VTŠ Niš for signing mobility documents, conducting a procedure for recognition of the mobility period and passing a decision on recognition of the mobility period.

Recognition of the mobility period - the procedure for making decisions on recognition of successfully taken exams and ECTS credits and grades that the student obtained during exchange.

Harmonized grading – a grade for which, in the process of recognition of the mobility period, it is found to be equivalent to the grade the student obtained at Host institution.

ECTS Grading Table - European Commission recommendations for interpreting and understanding the results achieved by the student on exchange and the conversion of the results into ECTS credits and grades at Home institution.

ECTS Grading Scale - European Commission Recommendations for interpreting and understanding the results achieved by students on exchange and conversion of the results into ECTS credits and grades at Home institution. ECTS Grading Scale is a temporary solution used until the transition is made to the use of the ECTS Grading Table.

Course Catalogue – an overview of courses available at a higher education institution (code, syllabus, number of ECTS credits, expected learning outcomes after successful completion of pre-exam and exam obligations).

Student mobility

Article 3

Within this Rulebook, student mobility implies the study or professional practice during a given period of time at Host institution abroad, after which the student returns to Home institution and continues the initially enrolled study program. Student mobility includes a study stay or professional practice at the first and second level of studies. Student mobility is primarily realized within institutional exchange programs and on the basis of international agreements of VTŠ Niš.

Students can realize mobility beyond institutional mobility stated in the previous paragraph (for example, based on interstate agreements, available exchange programs, international study opportunities, and also upon personal choice).

VTŠ Niš aims at two-way mobility of students which implies study stay/professional practice of students in the Host institution abroad, and simultaneous study stay/professional practice of foreign students at VTŠ Niš.

Duration of mobility period

Article 4

The provisions of this Rulebook are primarily applied to student mobility in duration of at least one semester, but this does not preclude the application of the same provisions in the event of a shorter duration of mobility period.

During studies, a student can participate in mobility programs on several occasions, but the total duration of the mobility period at the same level of studies cannot be longer than half of the total duration of the study program which the student enrolled.

Mobility documents

Article 5

Basic documents that student mobility is based on are:

1. Cooperation agreement between Higher Education Institutions,
2. Study Visit Plan,
3. Learning Agreement,
4. Study and Research Plan,
5. Training / Research / Teaching plan,
6. Training and Quality Commitment Agreement,
7. Transcript of Records
8. Transcript of Work,
9. Decision on the Academic Recognition of the Mobility Period.

The documents referred to in the preceding paragraph do not exclude the possibility of existence of other mobility documents within a specific exchange program.

Study Visit Plan

Article 6

Study Visit Plan is a document in which a student proposes the courses that he/she intends to take at Host institution (or other academic activities which he/she plans to realize during the mobility period) when applying for an exchange program. Study visit plan is not a compulsory document for mobility, but is made in cases when a particular exchange program requires it. Study visit plan has an informative character and its purpose is to inform the Host institution about the planned academic activities of the student applying for exchange.

Study visit plan is signed by the student and the competent ECTS coordinator of his/her Home institution and it is composed before the student submits the application documentation for a particular mobility program.

If a student is accepted for an exchange program, a learning agreement will be drawn up based on the Study visit plan.

Learning Agreement

Article 7

Under Learning agreement, the contracting parties (student, home institution and host institution) specify the courses that a student plans to take, or other academic activities (e.g. research), which a student plans to accomplish during his or her stay at Host institution.

Learning agreement is a mobility document for students of the first and second level of studies.

Learning agreement should basically be harmonized with the submitted Study visit plan (if the study visit plan was foreseen in the application documentation), but the necessary changes are permitted. By signing the learning agreement, Home institution gives approval to a student for outgoing mobility and for attendance of selected activities, and guarantees recognition of ECTS credits and grades obtained during exchange.

By signing the Learning Agreement, the receiving institution confirms that the contracted activities are part of the existing curriculum, expresses the consent to accept the students for exchange and, accordingly, approves the attendance and realization of the selected academic activities.

Learning agreement is drawn up in English and it states the following:

- course code- if applicable in Host institution

- listing of program contents;
- course title or title of activities that the student has chosen;
- number of ECTS credits for each course or activity at Host institution.

A student learning agreement is signed by a student, director (or assistant director) and the relevant ECTS coordinator.

Learning agreement for incoming students is signed by the student, the competent ECTS coordinator and assistant director for teaching and international cooperation, unless otherwise stipulated by the Learning agreement. The contracting parties, as a rule, sign the Learning agreement before the student mobility period, unless the Host institution decides otherwise. Learning agreement can be subsequently changed only with the consent of all signatories, and all changes must be made in writing.

Amendments to the Learning agreement as an integral part of the Learning agreement are filled in and signed only in case when the student proposes changes subsequently and only if all the contracting parties give assent to these changes.

Changes to the Learning Agreement contain the following information:

- course code - if applicable in the host institution
- listing of the course content
- course or activity titles
- a note whether the choice of the course is deleted (Deleted course unit) or whether a new course is added (Added course unit)
- number of ECTS credits

Study and Research Plan

Article 8

Under Study and research plan, the contracting parties (student, Home institution and Host institution) specify academic obligations and activities that the student will realize on exchange. The requirements of Article 7 of this Rulebook relating to the Learning agreement are analogously applied to the Study and Research Plan.

Training / Research / Teaching Plan

Article 9

Training / Research / Teaching Plan is a document in which a student proposes activities that he / she plans to realize during the period of exchange in the Host institution. The provisions of Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Rulebook are applied analogously to this document.

Training and Quality Commitment Agreement

Article 10

Under Training and Quality Commitment Agreement, the student, Home institution and Host institution specify the content and quality of professional practice for students.

This document determines the outcomes of professional practice in terms of acquired knowledge, skills and competences, establishes a detailed program of professional practice, specifies student tasks, and presents a monitoring and evaluation plan.

By signing the Training and Quality Commitment Agreement, the Home institution is obliged to define the outcomes of professional practice, assist the student in selection of the Host institution, select students on the basis of clear and transparent criteria, provide logistic support to students in terms of travel, accommodation,

visas and insurance, perform academic recognition of the student mobility periods and make individual evaluations of each student's personal and professional development attained during the mobility period.

By signing the Training and Quality Commitment Agreement, the receiving institution undertakes to allow for the realization of professional practice in a manner determined by the agreement, make an agreement or other legal act that is relevant for student professional practice in accordance with the positive legal regulations of the country concerned, appoint a mentor for the student who is on professional practice, provide practical support to the student in terms of insurance and integration into a new environment.

By signing the Training and Quality Commitment Agreement, the student undertakes to successfully implement professional practice, respect the rules of the receiving institution, communicate to Home institution changes to the agreement and submit a report on the achieved professional practice.

The provisions of Article 7 of this Rulebook relating to accountability for signing the Learning Agreement shall also apply to signing of the Training and Quality Commitment Agreement.

Transcript of Records

Article 11

Transcript of Records is a certificate of successfully taken exams issued by Home institution in the form of a formal document.

Apart from the data referring to student, Transcript of records must contain information on exams, obtained grades and the number of ECTS credits per course, duration of the study program, and other additional information if considered relevant.

Transcript of records should also include an explanation of the method of the grading system and a distribution system (national credit distribution system). After the completion of the mobility period, VTŠ Niš is obliged to issue a copy of the Transcript of records in English to incoming students as evidence of their realized academic activities.

In order for students to apply for mobility programs, VTŠ Niš is obliged to issue a copy of the transcript of records to its students upon their request.

Transcript of Work

Article 12

Transcript of Work is a document in which the receiving institution provides information on the completed professional practice and the achieved results of a student.

Decision on the Academic Recognition of Mobility Period

Article 13

The decision on the academic recognition of mobility period is an individual legal act in which the competent ECTS coordinator determines the method of recognition of the successfully taken exams, i.e. ECTS credits and grades that the student obtained during the mobility period.

Obligatory elements of the Decision from the previous paragraph are:

- information about the student, receiving and sending institution
- courses that the student has taken in the receiving institution (with the obtained ECTS credits and grades)
- courses from Home institution that will be replaced by the courses the student has taken in the receiving institution

- courses that the student has taken during exchange, but which cannot be replaced, and will be listed as elective activities / courses in the Diploma Supplement
- the method of grade equivalence
- the remaining responsibilities that the student must meet in order to fulfill the obligations envisaged by the relevant semester or academic year (in cases when the student has not achieved enough ECTS credits during exchange)
- other data that the relevant academic ECTS coordinator considers essential in a particular case.

Student status during mobility period

Article 14

While on exchange/ professional practice in the receiving institution, the student retains the status of a student in the sending higher education institution.

During the period of mobility, the student does not interrupt the studies, but neither does his/her status remain in hibernation at the home institution, since it is assumed that the student has achieved his academic obligations in the receiving institution (unless this issue is otherwise regulated by the general legal act of VTŠ NIŠ, on which the student should be timely informed).

For students who opt for a period of mobility that is shorter than one semester, the principle referred to in the preceding paragraph shall apply, in proportion to the time period for exchange.

A student financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia does not lose his status for the duration of mobility period.

A student who belongs to the category of self-financing students, during the mobility period, continues to pay a fixed tuition fee to his/her home institution.

At the written request of a student, the Home institution grants him / her a hibernation status in accordance with the general legal act of the home institution.

Recognition of mobility period

Article 15

A student who was on exchange on the basis of the signed Learning agreement has the right to recognition of the results he/she has achieved in the receiving institution at his/her Home institution, after the end of the mobility period.

Recognition of the mobility period is a procedure by which the competent ECTS coordinator determines the results achieved by student on exchange and makes a decision on the manner of recognition of the taken exams (ECTS credits and grades), which is determined by the Decision on the recognition of the period of mobility after the completed procedure.

The student is obliged to submit to the competent ECTS coordinator in due time all relevant documents related to the achieved mobility (written request, learning agreement/ study and research agreement / training and quality commitment agreement, transcript of records, transcript of work, document on the grading system in the receiving institution (if this information is not an integral part of the Transcript of Records), as well as copies of these documents.

The competent ECTS coordinator is obliged to, within 7 days prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student continues the program at his/her Home institution, adopt the Decision on the recognition of period of mobility and submit it to the student and the Student service in order to regulate all the necessary administrative details regarding the achieved mobility.

If the administrative procedure referred to in the previous paragraph has not been completed in due time, Home institution is obliged to enable the student to continue studies without registering the mentioned data, and complete the said procedure in the shortest possible time.

Provisions on recognition of mobility periods

Article 16

Recognition of results and ECTS credits obtained during mobility period is based on the principles of transparency, flexibility and justice in accordance with the criteria and conditions for transfer of ECTS credits prescribed by the general act of the higher education institution, that is, the cooperation agreement between higher education institutions.

Transparency principle implies that the rules for academic recognition of mobility period are publically available (on the web page and the notice board).

Flexibility principle implies a realistic approach to recognition of the results obtained during exchange.

Full content harmonization of the study programs of the sending institution and the receiving institution in which the student is on exchange is impossible. For this reason, the basic method of academic recognition of the mobility period is focused on similarities and learning outcomes, rather than differences between the study programs that are being compared. The emphasis is on knowledge that the student acquires from a certain field on exchange, which does not have to be identical, but related to the knowledge that he would acquire from a particular course at Home institution.

The competent ECTS coordinator in charge of recognition of the mobility period is guided by the principle of justice, as a generally accepted legal principle.

Article 17

The essence of mobility is to enable the student to realize academic activities in the receiving institution and to recognize his/her period of mobility as if it was achieved in the sending institution.

A student who did not pass all the exams stipulated in the Learning agreement at the receiving institution or did not obtain the necessary 30 ECTS credits per semester, or attended the appropriate classes, has the right to take the exam from the semester during which he was on exchange in his Home institution, without additional pre-exam obligations.

Comparison and assessment of study program similarities

Article 18

Comparison and assessment of the similarity of courses between home institution and host institution is performed by the competent ECTS coordinator of the home institution, i.e. its organizational units (departments), guided by the principle of flexibility. The role of the coordinator is carried out by the head of a specific study program. ECTS Coordinator is exclusively competent to sign basic mobility documents (referred to in Article 5 of this Rulebook) and their possible modifications. ECTS Coordinator is independent in his assessment of similarity of the courses proposed by the student within the appropriate mobility document in the receiving institution, and, if necessary, he or she advises the director, the vice-director and / or the teacher in charge of a particular course before the student mobility period.

It is recommended to fully recognize the courses that the student has taken in the receiving institution, if they are replaceable by the courses that the student would normally take in his/her Home institution.

Interchangeability stands for similarity of scientific fields, acquired knowledge as well as the outcomes of mastered study material (outcomes of the learning process).

Full recognition from the previous paragraph implies that after returning from mobility, the student has no additional academic obligations (such as writing a seminar paper, taking a colloquium / part of the exam, etc.) from the course which has been replaced by the course he has taken in the receiving institution, based on the Decision on Recognition of the period of mobility.

Transfer and Recognition of Obtained ECTS Credits and Grades

Article 19

The basic criterion for transfer and recognition of ECTS credits and grades obtained during the mobility period is the outcome of the learning process, in accordance with the following recommendations:

1. Recognition of a course that the student has attended and passed in the receiving institution, and which is related, i.e. similar to the course at Home institution, is done in such a way that it will be interpreted that the student has passed the course envisaged by the study program of his/her Home institution. The student is recognized the course title, ECTS credits and the number of classes of the related course he/she has at Home institution, regardless of the fact whether the course that the student attended on exchange had more or less ECTS credits.
2. Possibility of "replacing" the course of Home institution applies both to obligatory and elective courses. In the diploma supplement, section 6.1 (additional student information) it will be indicated that the particular course was taken on exchange at the relevant higher education institution abroad and the exact course title (in the original language), original grade, ECTS credits, and the grading system of the receiving institution, will be provided exactly as these data are listed in the Transcript of Records.
3. If the content of the attended and taken course on exchange in relation to the outcome of the learning process significantly deviates from the related course at Home institution, or if the course that the student has taken on exchange does not exist at all at Home institution, then the data on the taken course and the achieved results in the receiving institution, will be registered in the Diploma Supplement, in the original language and in its original form (in the column: "Taken courses / activities not envisaged in the study program for obtaining a diploma"). In Section 6.1 of the Diploma Supplement ("additional student information"), it is highlighted that this specific course was taken on exchange and the name of the higher education institution and the grading system, are provided in the exact way these data are listed in the Transcript of Records.
4. Student grades obtained at the receiving institution should be recognized after the mobility period. If the grading system in the receiving institution is not identical to the one in the sending institution, grades are converted into the grades of the sending institution in accordance with the ECTS Grading Table of the European Commission, that is the ESP grading scale in accordance with Article 20 of this Rulebook.
5. Harmonized grades from the course that the student has taken during exchange, are recognized as being taken at Home institution, and are calculated into the average grade at Home institution. Student's grades for courses that are not "replaced" by related courses of Home institution, but are indicated in the original form in accordance with paragraph 1, item 3 of this Article, are not calculated into the average grade.
6. ECTS credits and grades referred to in paragraph 1, item 1 and 2 of this Article shall be treated like any other course that the student has taken at Home institution (ECTS credits are counted into the ECTS credits obtained under the study program).
7. ECTS credits of the course referred to in paragraph 1, item 3 of this Article shall not be included in the number of ECTS credits within the study program, but in the total number of ECTS credits obtained.
8. Instead of the method of replacing courses as described in paragraphs 1-7 of this paragraph, recognition of the mobility period for a student who has achieved at least 30 ECTS per semester on exchange can be carried out by the method of replacing semester for semester. By this method, students are recognized ECTS credits obtained on exchange and the exams successfully taken on exchange, in their original form and title, without replacing the course with the similar course of the Home institution and without converting the grade into the appropriate grade of the Home institution. The ECTS points obtained by the student on exchange are counted in the number of ECTS credits within the study program. The grades student obtained on exchange are not taken into account when calculating the average grade achieved during studies.

The names of the courses the student has taken on exchange, the ECTS points and the grades that the student obtained on exchange are entered into the Student booklet and the Diploma Supplement in their original form. By applying the method of replacing semester for semester, it is assumed that the student has fulfilled all obligations anticipated at Home institution for the period he spent on exchange and, upon return from exchange, student will not have any additional academic obligations in the Home institution related to his period of mobility.

9. The method described in Section 8 may also be applied in the case when the student has successfully taken elective courses on exchange.

Interpretation and conversion of student grades obtained during the period of mobility in the receiving institution

Article 20

A student is recognized the grade that he/she has obtained on exchange from the course that can be replaced by the course from a Home institution in such a way that, if the grading systems in the receiving institution and the sending institution are not the same, the grade that the student obtained on exchange will be converted into a grade that would match this grade at Home institution (the so-called "harmonized grade").

The grade harmonization process is carried out in line with the ECTS User's Guide issued by the European Commission, whose instructions govern this Rulebook.

VTŠ Niš carries out harmonization of grades in accordance with the ECTS Grading Table.

Decision on the recognition of the mobility period

Article 21

Upon return of the student from exchange and submission of the necessary documentation in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 3 of this Rulebook, the competent ECTS Coordinator shall issue without delay a Decision on the recognition of the period of mobility, and at the latest within the deadline provided for in Article 15, paragraph 4 of this Rulebook.

Transitional and final provisions

Article 23

For mobility of students in the form of professional practice, provisions of this Rulebook related to mobility in the form of a study stay apply analogously. The annexes to this Rulebook are models of basic documents based on which student mobility and the transfer of ECTS credits is carried out, and they form an integral part of this Rulebook.

This Rulebook shall enter into force on the eighth day of its publication on the website of VTŠ Niš.

Chair of the Teaching-Expert Council

PhD, professor Aleksandra Boričić