Line 3
ECTS as an Accumulation System
Two perspectives on a credit accumulation (and transfer) system:

• Macro: the principles
• Micro: in practice (structures, learning outcomes, workload)
An effective pan-European credit accumulation and transfer system requires a set of common principles and approaches to credits.

The more details that are provided about the nature, context and level of credits, the more useful they become as a common currency for educational recognition, and as a vital element in the creation of the European Higher Education Area.
THE MICRO PERSPECTIVE:

- Educational Structures
- Learning outcomes / competences
- A European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System
- Workload
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EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES

Objective: Comparison in Higher Education

• Requires comparability in:
  – systems
  – structures
  – content of studies

• Tools to accommodate the objective:
  – definition of learning outcomes / competences
  – a credit transfer and accumulation system
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PARTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

National Authorities:
Higher Educational Systems

Universities: Higher Educational Structures

Quality Assur. and Assessm.

Accreditation

TUNING

Faculties/Departments: Content of Studies
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EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES

Objective: Comparison in Higher Education
• Possible obstacles:
  – differences in the regular teaching and learning periods (including examination periods) per academic year in Europe
  – differences in structures and recognised degrees / qualification in a European setting
  – differences in the length of higher education studies to be unbridgeable or incomparable:
    • first cycle degree: 180 to 240 credits (range 3:4)
    • second cycle degree: 60 to 120 credits (range 1:2)
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LEARNING OUTCOMES / COMPETENCIES

• Comparability and competitiveness requires transparent learning outcomes / competences (besides a credit system)

• Credits as such are an insufficient indication for the (level of) learning achievements

• The definition of learning outcomes / competences is a responsibility of the academic staff

• On the basis of defined learning outcomes, credits are an important tool for designing curricula

• Different pathways can lead to comparable learning outcomes, which allows the diversity in Europe to be fully maintained

• Credit accumulation and transfer is facilitated by clearly defined learning outcomes
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A EUROPEAN CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER SYSTEM

• European higher education requires one credit system: ECTS
• A Europe-wide accumulation and transfer system is an essential tool for more flexible kinds of higher education: part-time studies, lifelong learning
• As part of ECTS it is required to develop a system of level indicators and course type descriptors
• In an officially accepted transfer and accumulation system credits no longer have relative value but they have absolute value
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A EUROPEAN CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER SYSTEM

CREDITS

- 60 ECTS credits measures the **workload of a typical student** during one academic year (nine months).
- A **full calendar year programme** (12 months programme of teaching, learning and examinations) can have a **maximum load of 75 credits** (which equals 46-50 weeks).
- Credits allow **calculation of the necessary workload** and impose a **realistic limit** on what is possible in a programme or course.
- Credits are **not interchangeable automatically** from one context to another.
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**ECTS AND WORKLOAD**

- **Calculation of workload** in terms of credits is to a large extent discipline related, and is determined always by academic staff.
- Workload and **notional learning time** are closely related.
- The notional learning time of a student is influenced by many elements, such as:
  - diversity of traditions
  - curriculum design and context
  - coherence of curriculum
  - teaching and learning methods
  - methods of assessment and performance
  - organisation of teaching
  - ability and diligence of the student
  - financial support by public and private funds