

Guidelines for allocating ECTS credits to assessed activities taken outside of term-time in which students can accrue additional ECTSs

- 1.1. These guidelines have been developed to provide departments with mechanisms in which students can gain formal recognition (ECTS credits) for academic work which is not part of the curriculum. Such credits could be accrued for research-based or curriculum-related work undertaken in vacations (for example UROP or structured internships) or for extracurricular courses (run for example by the Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication or the Business School) during term time. The Credits will be listed on student transcripts but will not contribute towards degree classification.
- 1.2. According to current College guidelines for compatibility with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the following ECTS structures apply across the College:
 - 3 year Bachelors degree: 180 ECTS
 - 4 year Bachelors degree (including year abroad or in industry): 240 ECTS
 - 4 year (academic year) Integrated Master's degree: 240 ECTS (60 ECTS must be at M-Level and will normally be undertaken in the 4th year of study, though some M-Level work could be undertaken in the 3rd year.)
 - 4 year (academic year plus 30 ECTS additional assessed work outside academic terms) Integrated Master's degree: 270 ECTS (60 ECTS must be at M-Level and will normally be undertaken in the 4th year of study, though some M-Level work could be undertaken in the 3rd year. The assessed work undertaken outside academic terms will be at undergraduate level only.)
 - A free standing Master's degree: 90 ECTS
- 1.3. It is also recognised that some Departments offer 5 year integrated Master's degrees in which students accrue 300 ECTS credits.
- 1.4. Integrated Master's (academic year) (240 ECTS Credits) students can also use the methods described in these guidelines to accrue an additional 30 ECTS Credits which would enable them to obtain a total of 270 ECTS Credits (240 plus 30), the European standard for a first cycle Bachelor's plus 2nd cycle Master's degree. To achieve this, students would be required to undertake the equivalent of two additional full time 10 week learning activities, with demonstrably different learning outcomes.

- 1.5. These guidelines should be considered together with the *Guidelines for allocating ECTS credit* and the *Good Practice Guidelines for External Curriculum-Based Placements*, available to download at the following links:
- <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/registry/academic-governance/public/academic-policy/academic-credit-and-ects/Guidelines-for-allocating-ECTS-credit.pdf>
- <https://workspace.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschools/Public/QA/QAAC%20-%20Good%20Practice%20Guidelines%20for%20External%20Curriculum-based%20Placements%2005%2011%2010.pdf>
- 1.6. Departments / Faculties are not obliged to make provision for students to accrue additional ECTS credits and for those that wish to it is recognised that such activities would, almost certainly, not be available to all students.
- 1.7. The College has developed a “skeleton” model (attached at **Annex A** of this document) for approved activities, based on the list given in **Table one**. Each Department is free to adapt the “skeleton” to suit the needs of their Department but the general principles outlined in the College’s “skeleton” model must be followed. Departments must seek approval for their models from the relevant Studies Committee(s). Once approved, Departments can adapt their own model to suit the needs of individual students, but the details of each individual activity must be approved by the Departmental Teaching Committee, which is responsible for ensuring that the general criteria agreed by the Studies Committee(s) are addressed. An overview of approved activities (number and types of placements) will be requested by the Studies Committees as part of the annual monitoring process. Retrospective ECTS credits cannot be applied to activities.
- 1.8. Each Studies Committee will appoint a Faculty Representative whose role will be to ensure consistency in adaption of the “skeleton” models across Departments, to disseminate good practice and to ensure that the criteria set out in Departmental models are followed. As students will be given credit for these activities, Departments / Faculties should ensure that the Registry is kept informed of any new approved activities so that the ECTS credit for these can be added to student transcripts.
- 1.9. It is emphasised that Departments should consult the [*Good Practice Guidelines for External Curriculum-Based Placements*](#) when developing proposals for new activities and records of these activities should be kept in line with the recommendations of the good practice guide.
- 1.10. **Key principles** are listed below and **Table One** lists those academic activities which are suitable for students to accrue additional ECTS credits.

Key Principles:

1. Additional ECTS credits would be included on student transcripts but would not contribute towards degree classification or yearly progression.

2. Departments / Faculties should be transparent in identifying how many ECTS credits will be assigned to each additional assessed activity, including for UROP placements.
3. A maximum of 1.5 ECTS credits can be assigned to a full working week. It is recognised that UROP placements vary in length however, as an example, a 10-week full-time UROP placement or internship should be assigned 15 ECTS credits. Students would thus need to undertake two such placements (each on different topics, although the learning outcomes will be similar) in order to accrue an additional 30 ECTS credits; these would normally be undertaken during vacations at the end of the second and third years of study although, in some cases, students may undertake a UROP placement at the end of their first year. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness) it might be possible for students to take the UROP placement after the final academic year has finished but this would not normally be until after the meeting of the final exam board [this possibility is under further review]. All placements to be undertaken for credit after the final academic year require separate approval by the relevant Studies Committee(s).
4. Activities must be primarily academic in nature, with clearly defined learning outcomes and criteria for assessment which could, in some cases be “light touch” in nature. Students would however be required to pass the assessment in order to accrue the ECTS credits. Credits will not be awarded for attendance.
5. The following is a list of activities agreed as being appropriate for students to accrue additional ECTS (see Table One for further information):
 - UROP or other research experience activities;
 - Curriculum related activities external to the College, for example, industrial and other work-placed internships and placements.
6. Academic Departments in the College (e.g. Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication, Business School) may also offer extra-curricular programmes which run within term-time (e.g. as evening classes) for which additional ECTS credits which do not contribute to degree classification may be accrued.
7. In the longer term, it may be feasible to consider some student-led projects and expeditions which facilitate transferable / professional skills, provided appropriate measurable learning outcomes and criteria for assessment are defined. Any decisions to include student-led projects would need to be taken by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and the Senate.
8. Studies Committees will take responsibility for the approval of all Departmental models for activities. Secretaries to the Studies Committees must report approval of the Departmental models to the Senate, to ensure a College overview is taken. QAAC will undertake this role for modules

offered by the Business School, Department of Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication and School of Professional Development

9. Once approved by the relevant Studies Committee(s) Departments can adapt their particular “skeleton” model to suit individual student needs, provided that the criteria set out in the “skeleton” are adhered to. The detail of each activity will be the responsibility of Departmental Teaching Committees. Records of activities approved by the Departmental Teaching Committees should be kept in line with the recommendations of the Good Practice Guidelines for External Curriculum-Based Placements.
10. Each Faculty will have a named person who will be responsible for ensuring consistency of approved activities between Departments and will also be responsible for disseminating examples of good practice within the Faculty as well as ensuring that the criteria stipulated within the College’s “skeleton” models are followed.
11. Examination Boards should consider the assessment of each additional activity undertaken to ensure that students have reached the required standard for the award of additional ECTS credits; the credits can then be recorded on transcripts.
12. Departments are free to choose which vacation assessed activities can take place, this may include Easter and Christmas but most likely the summer vacations, but all activities would normally take place before the final meeting of the Exam Board.
13. An assessed activity should last a minimum of 6 weeks full-time (225 hours) (or the part-time equivalent) and should also be available to exchange students.

Approved by Senate
December 2010

Document title:	Guidelines for allocating ECTS credits to assessed activities taken outside of term-time in which students can accrue additional ECTSs.		
Version:	1	Date:	December 2010
Location and filename:	R:\7.Quality Assurance\3. Policy Framework\1. Programme Design & Modification\Guidelines for Allocating ECTS to Activities Outside Term		
Approved:	Senate December 2010		
Effective from:	December 2010		
Originator:	Registry Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team		
Contact for queries:	Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement)		
Cross References:			
Notes and latest changes:	Terminology updated and formatting changes made on 16 March 2016		

Table One: List of possible Academic Activities in which students can accrue additional ECTS credits (to be taken outside of term-time).

Activity	Time and ECTS allocation ¹	Mechanism	Learning Outcomes	Reporting and Accountability
UROP placement or other research experience	Time may vary but for example, a 10 week (minimum 375 hour) UROP placement will result in 15 ECTS Credits i.e. 1.5 ECTS credits per week.	Students must apply to prospective academic supervisors and the UROP Office.	Gains experience of a “professional” research environment and work practices; develops CV; interview presentation and communication skills. Ability to present, explain and defend research	Supervisor certifies period of work and whether student has passed assessment. This must be certified by one other member of academic staff and will include, as a minimum, a report and oral presentation.
Curriculum related activities external to the College, i.e. industrial and other work-placed internships and placements	Time may vary but for example, a 10 week (minimum 375 hour) placement will result in 15 ECTS Credits i.e. 1.5 ECTS credits per week.	Students must apply to external organisations and gain placement in an appropriate subject-based work environment, preferably under the supervision of a professional in the relevant subject area.	Gains experience of a “professional” research environment and work practices; develops CV; interview presentation and communication skills. Ability to present, explain and defend research	Supervisor certifies period of work and whether student has passed assessment. This must be certified by one other member of academic staff and will include, as a minimum, a report and oral presentation.

¹ To include time allocated for assessment

Annex A

College Skeleton Model for UROP Placement (or other assessed “Research Experience”) and curriculum related activities external to the College.

Key Principles for Structure of Activity:

- Each placement (including time allocated for assessment) must be a minimum of 6 weeks (225 hours) full-time (or part-time equivalent);
- 1.5 ECTS credits will be awarded for each full-time working week (this assumes a
- 37.5 hour full-time week, or part-time equivalent);
- Each activity must be primarily academic in nature.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Knowledge and understanding:

The student will gain knowledge and understanding of:

- a “Professional” research environment (if applicable);
- work practices / ethics.

2. Skills and other attributes

Intellectual Skills: the student will learn how to:

- present, explain and defend research;
- perhaps learn a new language;
- some technical skills relevant to the placement.

Practical Skills: the student will learn how to:

- [To be determined according to placement type]

3. Transferable skills

The student will develop:

- their CV;
- their interview and communication techniques;
- their ability to work within teams
- independent learning.

Assessment Criteria:

- Students must, as a minimum, write a report or reflective journal of their experience and present their findings. The criteria for passing the assessment should be transparent and clarified prior to start of the placement.

The supervisor will be required to certify that the student has undertaken a fixed number of hours per week. The supervisor will be required to assess the student together with another member of staff.