



European
Commission

ECTS and Diploma Supplement Label Holders 2011 & 2012

Internationalisation
in Europe's universities

Education and
training



European ECTS and Diploma Supplement label award ceremony, Copenhagen, 8th May 2012

The Label – boosting attractiveness within the European Higher Education Area

Higher education is at the heart of the Europe 2020 Strategy and of Europe's ambition to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. With 28 different Member States in the EU, and 47 countries in the European Higher Education Area, one part of countries' modernisation efforts in higher education is introducing and applying Europe-wide tools and instruments. Use of these tools inspires greater trust in each other's higher education systems and makes it easier for people to move to other countries to study and so to acquire the high-level skills needed in our rapidly evolving economies.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement (DS) play a key role in developing a high level of comparability, compatibility and exchange among Higher Education Institutions and systems in Europe, and their basic principles have long been agreed by Ministers within the European Higher Education Area. ECTS is a tool that allows students to accumulate the credits they earn within an education programme in a transparent and comparable way. It facilitates the transfer of learning experiences between different institutions, greater student mobility and more flexible pathways to a higher education degree. In parallel, the DS provides a standardised description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies completed by the holder of a higher education diploma. The European Commission awards Labels to Higher Education Institutions which show that they are implementing ECTS and/or the DS correctly.

**INSTITUTION**

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'It ensures our offer is clear'

Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Portugal

'Getting the ECTS Label means that everything we do both inside and outside Europe, we do in a transparent way and in line with good practice. It ensures that our academic offer is clear and that the credits are strictly comparable.'

Luís S. Pais is the Vice-President of the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB). He thinks that the use of the ECTS system *'has been very important throughout Europe, because it prevents misunderstandings'*. But the same goes for cooperation with partners outside Europe. *'Nowadays, every country in the world understands what our rules and our measurements are. I think that's a result of the Bologna Process and the ECTS system.'*

The ECTS Label also raises two issues, he says. *'One is to use, with all of our partners, the proper documentation that is proposed by the EU. The other is to acquire an IT platform that makes everything clear to everyone, and at the same time makes it easier for us to keep up to date within our institution.'*

The IPB has developed an ECTS catalogue and an additional webpage for its International Relations Office. *'There, we clearly explain to our partner institutions' staff and students how to communicate with us in order to do an international mobility in our institution.'*

A worthwhile effort, he feels, because *'the most important programmes for showing the world the unity of Europe are the Erasmus Programme and the Lifelong Learning Programme'*.

The IPB has 7 000 Bachelor's and Master's students. Some 11 % of them are non-Portuguese. It cooperates closely with Brazil and Portuguese-speaking Africa, and also offers some degrees in English. Its three research centres focus on applied science in food and agriculture, chemical engineering, and health and sport. It will soon be involved in a new science park in Bragança. IPB was awarded the ECTS label in 2011.