

Guidelines for the Recognition of Studies Completed Abroad by Outgoings

TU Dortmund University supports and promotes the international mobility of students during their studies. This also includes a reliable and extensive recognition of studies completed abroad with benevolent consideration of a wide range of disciplines.

In principle, the recognition of studies completed abroad focuses on an international orientation and objective, taking into account the individual studies of each student. In order to be able to use the advantages of a stay abroad during the studies also for the continuation of the studies at TU Dortmund University and in this way support the students in their decision, as many as possible of the courses completed abroad should be recognized.

The procedure for the recognition of studies completed abroad is regulated by the [Recognition Regulations of TU Dortmund University of 10 December 2021](#) for all Bachelor's and Master's degree programs. In order to make the recognition process transparent and goal-oriented for all the involved parties, the Rectorate has decided on and published the following principles for the recognition itself and for the design of the recognition process.

If you have any special questions that are not covered by the Recognition Regulations of TU Dortmund University or these Guidelines for the Recognition of Studies Completed Abroad, please do not hesitate to contact the [International Office](#).

1. Particularities of the recognition of studies completed abroad

The signed Erasmus Charter obligates TU Dortmund University to adhere to the principles of the Charter and to promote and recognize activities abroad accordingly. Comparable requirements exist on the part of the DAAD for non-European partnerships. In this context, particularly the following key points have to be taken into account:

Learning Agreement:

- Within the Erasmus program, it is mandatory to conclude a Learning Agreement in accordance with the Recognition Regulations before the student's departure. Outside of the Erasmus program, this is also recommended and takes place in accordance with the Recognition Regulations at the request of the student.
- After returning from abroad, students are required to provide proof of their studies completed abroad / academic achievements in accordance with the Recognition Regulations.

Extracurricular academic achievements which were obtained during the studies abroad and which are not recognized can, in principle, be noted in the Diploma Supplement as an additional qualification on application to the corresponding examination board.

The departments are free to introduce a (possibly ungraded) module for semesters abroad with a fixed number of credit points in their curricula and to embed it in the study structure of the degree program. In this case, recognition of credit points earned abroad is granted if all courses taken abroad have been successfully passed as agreed upon in the Learning Agreement; therefore, it is no longer necessary here to credit individual achievements made abroad to other modules of the degree program.

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2. Principles of the Lisbon Convention

The central concern of the Lisbon Convention is to enable and facilitate recognition, not to prevent it. In consideration of the convention, the following principles apply to credit points earned abroad that are to be recognized at TU Dortmund University according to the Learning Agreement:

- **Reversal of the burden of proof:** TU Dortmund University - and here in particular the respective departments – is and are responsible for pointing out a significant difference between the attained performance and the performance to be recognized and for giving reasons in writing why a performance cannot be recognized in the individual case. Students are obliged to provide the information required for the recognition in accordance with the Recognition Regulations both on the acquired achievements/qualifications and those to be recognized.
- **Concept of "substantial difference":** The recognition of examination results obtained abroad can only be refused if a "substantial difference" is determined with regard to the acquired competences. For this purpose, an overall comparison of all essential elements of the required examination performance with the rendered performance is necessary. An exclusively schematic comparison (e.g. credit points (CPs), type/form of examination) must not take place. If there is a substantial difference, it has to be checked whether a partial recognition of the examination performance is possible. An examination of equivalence no longer takes place.
A "substantial difference" in the acquired competencies to the qualifications and competencies required at TU Dortmund University principally exists when problem-free further studying at TU Dortmund University is not possible because there is a link to further study content and thus the recognition would compromise the intended degree at TU Dortmund University.
- **Reasons for rejection and right of appeal:** In the event of a rejection of the recognition, the examination board, with the involvement of representatives of the subject/department, must provide the applicant with written reasons. Prerequisites for a possible later recognition as well as instructions on legal remedies should be included.
- **Prohibition of discrimination:** The evaluation of a qualification is independent of the ethnic origin, gender, religion or world view, disability, age or sexual identity of the applicant.
- **Transparency requirement:** It must be ensured that the procedures and criteria for the evaluation are "transparent, consistent and reliable."
- **Existence of appropriate deadlines:** Both sides must comply with the deadlines stipulated in the Recognition Regulations of TU Dortmund University.

Individual evaluation standards to be applied at TU Dortmund University: According to the recommendations published by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee, non-recognition should generally only be considered at TU Dortmund University in the case of significant differences in the following areas:

- strongly deviating quality of the university or the study program (must be proven by the department or the respective subject representatives in order to meet the reversal of the burden of proof).
- level of acquired competences
- highly divergent learning outcomes

The enumerated explanations only give indications of possibly differing competences, but do not alone justify a significant difference.

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3. Recognition processes of the departments

In order to ensure the smoothest possible application and decision-making process, the respective departments or subject areas should provide students with comprehensive information on the recognition process. An overview of processes and contact persons of the different departments can be found [here](#).

[Request to the departments: Please keep the process descriptions and list of contact persons up to date for your department].

4. FAQs

Can students get recognition for a course they have successfully completed but which is not included in the Learning Agreement?

The purpose of a Learning Agreement is to regulate the recognition before or at the beginning of the stay abroad, in order to avoid exactly this case that a possible recognition has to be discussed afterwards. If students take courses that they have not included in their Learning Agreement, recognition after the stay abroad could lead to difficulties. Of course the recognition is not impossible, but it is not guaranteed. Students should therefore always discuss all courses and also course changes with the contact person(s) who are responsible for the recognition of credit points earned abroad in good time in order to be on the safe side when it comes to recognition after the stay. Students should contact the responsible person(s) in their department for all questions regarding recognition. Since changes in the module handbooks are common, certain flexibility on the part of the responsible contact person(s) is required. However, deviations in the Learning Agreement should be addressed by the students at an early stage.

Are Learning Agreements signed by responsible parties as part of the recognition process binding or can they be changed subsequently?

The signed Learning Agreements are binding and can only be changed or adjusted at the request of the student, for example if a course abroad could not be taken as planned. Courses registered in the signed Learning Agreement which were successfully completed abroad have to be recognized as agreed.

The study performance to be recognized has a different CP value than the performance here.

In principle, differences in CP values or the workload are not an obstacle to recognition, since there must be no purely schematic comparison of performance. The focus is on the acquired competencies. If students bring fewer points than necessary, the local points can still be credited in full if necessary. However, the difference in CPs should not be too high. The background to this is that the basis/principles used for calculating and converting the workload to credit points can differ between countries.

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The study performance to be recognized is ungraded, but grading is provided for at TU Dortmund University:

This is no obstacle for recognition either. Here, the possibility of recognition of ungraded study performances exists under the condition that still more than 50% of the study performances of the entire degree program are graded. Ungraded examination performances are then recognized with the remark "passed". Legally questionable is the recognition with the worst grade (4.0). This represents a clear disadvantage compared to other students and should therefore not be used.

How are exams handled which were failed abroad?

The study performance failed abroad will not be taken into account at TU Dortmund University. Failed attempts from abroad are not registered at TU Dortmund University, as recognition only takes place upon application by the student. An exception is made for joint degrees or university cooperations with compulsory modules to be taken abroad. In this case, failed attempts are credited to the examination procedures at TU Dortmund University.

A Learning Agreement has been concluded, but the student does not wish to have a successfully completed course/study performance recognized due to a poor grade.

The recognition procedure is only implemented upon request by the students. There is no obligation to apply for recognition. The Learning Agreement assures students of recognition prior to a stay abroad. As a rule, however, it does not constitute a formal application for the recognition of the study performances actually rendered.