

D1 — PROCEDURE FOR THE RECOGNITION OF EXTERNAL QUALIFICATIONS, PERIODS OF STUDY AND CREDITS

National Engineering Diploma in Civil Engineering

Item	Information
Institution	ESSAT Private Higher School of Applied Sciences and Technology of Gabès, Tunisia
Programme	National Engineering Diploma in Civil Engineering
Internal reference	D1
Approval authority	Mr Abdallah Zrelli, Director of ESSAT
Effective date	1 September 2024
Associated document	Appendix 18 — Application Form for Qualification Recognition
Status	Approved institutional procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure sets out the rules applied by ESSAT Gabès for the recognition of external academic qualifications, credits, periods of study, internships and other academic activities completed at another higher education institution in Tunisia or abroad.

It is intended to ensure that recognition applications are processed transparently, fairly, consistently and with full academic traceability, in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention).

Recognition is based primarily on an assessment of the level of the qualification, the learning outcomes and competences achieved, the content and workload of the studies completed, and the absence of substantial differences between the applicant's prior learning and the academic requirements of the relevant ESSAT programme.

2. Scope

This procedure applies equally to Tunisian and international students.

It covers the recognition of:

- Tunisian qualifications awarded by another higher education institution;
- foreign qualifications;
- credits earned at another recognised university or higher education institution;
- internships completed abroad;
- End-of-Studies Projects completed abroad;
- incoming mobility at ESSAT;
- outgoing mobility undertaken by ESSAT students.

The recognition of prior professional experience or prior experiential learning is not currently covered by this procedure.

Full-semester mobility is not currently implemented in the Civil Engineering programme. If such mobility is introduced, the recognition of the relevant periods of study and credits will be governed by this procedure.

3. General Principles

3.1. Equal treatment

The same academic requirements are applied to Tunisian and international students.

3.2. Transparency

The criteria, stages, responsibilities and outcomes of the recognition procedure are communicated to the applicant.

3.3. Learning-outcomes-based recognition

The assessment takes account of the learning outcomes and competences achieved and is not based solely on a literal comparison of module titles.

3.4. Absence of substantial differences

Recognition is granted when no substantial difference is identified that would prevent the applicant from continuing the programme successfully or achieving its intended learning outcomes.

3.5. Reasoned decisions

Any decision involving refusal or partial recognition is justified and communicated to the applicant.

3.6. Explanation of substantial differences

Where recognition is refused on the grounds of a substantial difference, ESSAT identifies and explains the substantial difference on which the refusal is based.

3.7. No fee

The recognition procedure is free of charge.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Directorate of Studies and Internships

The Directorate of Studies and Internships:

- receives, or supervises the receipt of, recognition applications;
- checks the administrative completeness of each application;
- reviews the submitted qualifications and academic documents;
- coordinates the academic assessment with the relevant department;
- retains the applications, assessments and decisions;
- validates the academic decision after receiving the opinion of the Head of Department.

4.2. Head of the Relevant Department

The Head of Department:

- assesses the academic relevance of the applicant's prior studies;
- compares the content, learning outcomes, competences, credits and prerequisites;
- may consult a subject specialist where necessary;
- issues the academic opinion on the recognition application.

4.3. Subject Specialist

Where specific disciplinary expertise is required, a subject specialist may be consulted to compare the content, learning outcomes, assessment methods, academic level and student workload of the prior studies with the corresponding ESSAT requirements.

4.4. Final Decision

The decision is based on the academic opinion of the Head of Department and is validated by the Directorate of Studies and Internships.

5. Documents to Be Submitted

The documents required depend on the nature of the application. The application file may include:

- the official recognition application form — Appendix 18;
- a certified or legalised copy of the diploma or certificate of achievement;
- official transcripts of records;
- detailed descriptions of the modules completed;
- information on contact hours, student workload and credits;
- the grading scale used by the awarding institution;
- evidence confirming the official recognition or accreditation status of the awarding institution;
- a copy of the passport or national identity document, where applicable;
- a Learning Agreement for a mobility period;
- a Transcript of Records following a mobility period;
- an internship certificate;
- an End-of-Studies Project certificate or agreement;
- any other evidence needed to assess the academic learning achieved.

The Directorate of Studies and Internships may request additional information or documents where the material initially submitted is insufficient for a reliable assessment.

Official documents must be legalised where required. Documents issued in French, English or Arabic are accepted without an additional translation. An official translation may be required for documents issued in any other language.

6. Assessment Criteria

Recognition applications are assessed using the following criteria:

1. level of the qualification;
2. official status and recognition of the awarding institution;
3. field and specialisation of the prior studies;
4. learning outcomes;
5. competences achieved;
6. module content;
7. contact hours;
8. student workload;
9. credits earned or an equivalent credit system;
10. academic results;
11. prerequisites required for progression in the programme;
12. compatibility with the learning outcomes of the Civil Engineering programme;
13. any substantial differences identified.

A minor difference in programme content or organisation does not, in itself, constitute grounds for refusal.

7. Recognition of Credits and Mobility Periods

For outgoing mobility, the academic activities to be completed at the host institution should, wherever possible, be approved before the student's departure.

Where applicable, a Learning Agreement specifies the planned activities, the corresponding modules or learning components, the credits concerned and the arrangements for recognition.

After the mobility period, the student submits a Transcript of Records or another official document confirming the activities completed and the results achieved. The Directorate of Studies and the relevant department then complete the academic recognition process.

Where the agreed academic requirements have been met, the recognition of credits earned abroad should prevent an unjustified extension of the standard period of study.

8. Internships Completed Abroad

An internship completed abroad may be recognised when it:

- corresponds to the educational objectives of the programme;
- has been authorised or approved in advance by ESSAT;
- is completed in an appropriate host organisation;
- is properly supervised;
- meets the programme requirements regarding duration and content;
- is supported by the documents and assessments required by the programme.

Recognition is completed after verification of the internship certificate and, where required, the internship report, the host supervisor's assessment and the oral defence.

9. End-of-Studies Project Completed Abroad

An End-of-Studies Project completed abroad may be recognised provided that:

- the topic has been approved in advance by ESSAT;
- academic supervision is provided by ESSAT;
- a supervisor is appointed within the host organisation;
- the project addresses the intended learning outcomes of the End-of-Studies Project;
- the project meets the academic and methodological requirements of EQF Level 7;
- the student submits the required written report;
- the assessment and oral defence are conducted in accordance with ESSAT regulations.

Completing the End-of-Studies Project abroad does not alter the academic requirements applicable to students completing the project in Tunisia.

10. Possible Decisions

10.1. Full Recognition

The qualification, credits or academic activity are recognised in full.

10.2. Partial Recognition

Only part of the credits, modules or competences is recognised.

10.3. Conditional Recognition

Recognition is granted subject to additional academic requirements, such as completing a supplementary module, validating a prerequisite, submitting additional evidence or completing an additional academic activity.

10.4. Additional Assessment

Where clarification is required, the applicant may be asked to submit additional documents, attend an academic interview or provide further work or evidence.

10.5. Refusal

Recognition may be refused where a substantial difference has been established. Any refusal must be reasoned in writing and must identify the substantial difference on which it is based.

11. Procedure

Step 1 — Submission

The applicant submits the recognition request to the Directorate of Studies and Internships or the Student Affairs Office before enrolment or before the relevant mobility activity.

Step 2 — Administrative Check

The application is checked to confirm that all required documents have been submitted. An incomplete application may be returned to the applicant for completion.

Step 3 — Academic Assessment

The Directorate of Studies and Internships forwards the application to the Head of the relevant Department, who assesses the file and may consult a subject specialist.

Step 4 — Comparison

The assessment considers the level, learning outcomes, content, workload, credits, prerequisites, competences and academic results.

Step 5 — Academic Opinion

The Head of Department issues a formal academic opinion.

Step 6 — Validation

The Directorate of Studies and Internships validates the recognition decision.

Step 7 — Notification

The decision is communicated to the applicant by the Student Affairs Office and/or by email.

12. Processing Time

A complete application is processed within an indicative maximum period of 15 working days from receipt of all required documents.

Where additional information is requested, the processing period is suspended until the requested information has been received.

13. Appeal

An applicant may submit a written appeal against a recognition decision.

The appeal must be addressed to the Director of ESSAT within 10 working days of notification of the decision.

The Director of ESSAT reviews the appeal after consulting the Directorate of Studies and Internships, the Head of the relevant Department and, where necessary, a subject specialist.

A reasoned response is communicated to the applicant within a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the complete appeal.

14. Records and Traceability

Recognition records include, as applicable, the application form, supporting documents, the assessment, the decision, any supplementary correspondence and any appeal.

The Directorate of Studies retains these records throughout the student's period of study and for an additional period of five years after the completion of the studies.

15. Publication and Accessibility

This procedure is made accessible to students, applicants and other interested parties. ESSAT publishes or otherwise makes it available through its institutional communication channels, including its website.

The current official contact details of ESSAT are those published on the institutional website.

16. Associated Document

This procedure is used in conjunction with Appendix 18 — Application Form for Qualification Recognition.

The form is the operational document through which an applicant submits a recognition request under this procedure.

17. Review of the Procedure

This procedure may be reviewed when:

- regulatory requirements change;
- international mobility arrangements are modified;
- new academic cooperation agreements are concluded;
- non-conformities or implementation difficulties are identified;
- quality assurance results indicate that an amendment is necessary.

Any significant amendment is subject to approval by the ESSAT Directorate.

18. Approval

Approved by	Mr Abdallah Zrelli — Director of ESSAT Gabès
Effective date	1 September 2024
Period of application	Continuous application until revised or withdrawn
Signature	Signed by the Director
Institutional stamp	