

## FACTSHEET

Higher Education  
Estonia

### Grading and credit system

#### Organisation of course of study

The academic year at higher education institutions is divided into two semesters: the autumn and the spring semester. The academic year begins in September and ends in the first half of June. As a general rule, it comprises 40 weeks of lectures, seminars, practical training, independent study and research or other assignments, and an examination period. Normally, full-time studies consist of approximately 50% of contact hours (16...26 hours per week) and 50% of independent work, but it varies depending on the individual choice of courses per term.

Since 01.09.2009, European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is fully implemented as a national credit system. In the ECTS, the workload for one academic year is 60 ECTS credits. Until 31.08.2008 the University Act enabled parallel usage of both systems – the national system and the ECTS.

The national credit system was a cumulative calculation of credits (*ainepunkt, or AP*) based on a student's workload. One credit corresponds to 40 hours or one week (5 days a week x 8 hours a day = 40h) of studies performed by a student. A credit point is not related to lectures or any other workload of a member of the academic staff. The workload for one academic year (40 weeks of study from September to June) was 40 credits.

#### Grading

All courses taught at higher education institutions must end with an examination (*eksam*) or a pass/fail assessment (*arvestus*). There may be several independent examinations in separate parts of the course. At the end of each semester, during a 4-week examination session, there are usually oral and written examinations. The results of examinations or other forms of assessment may be given in numbers or expressed in words: pass (*arvestatud*) or fail (*mitte arvestatud*).

Until the 1999/2000 academic year there was no unified grading system used in higher education institutions of Estonia. The two most common grading scales were a 5-point scale and a 6-point scale. The 5-point scale was as follows:

5	-	<i>väga hea</i> / very good or excellent (pass)
4	-	<i>hea</i> / good (pass)
3	-	<i>rahuldav</i> / satisfactory (pass)
2	-	<i>puudulik</i> / unsatisfactory (fail)
1	-	<i>kasin</i> / poor (fail)

The 6-point scale was as follows:

5	-	<i>suurepärane</i> / excellent (pass)
4	-	<i>väga hea</i> / very good (pass)
3	-	<i>hea</i> / good (pass)
2	-	<i>rahuldav</i> / satisfactory (pass)
1	-	<i>kasin</i> / sufficient (pass)
0	-	<i>puudulik</i> / unsatisfactory (fail)

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The fail grade indicates that the student has not met the minimum requirements for the course. If the student fails, he/she is allowed two chances to retake the examination.

In accordance with the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Research, all higher education institutions started using a unified grading system in the 1999/2000 academic year. According to the regulation:

- a 6-point percentage-based grading system was established;
- the minimum passing level in examinations is 51%;
- the distribution of marks among the students who pass the examination is not calculated.

Grade	Description Estonian/English	Completion of required work
5 or A	<i>suurepärane</i> / excellent	91 – 100 %
4 or B	<i>väga hea</i> / very good	81 – 90 %
3 or C	<i>hea</i> / good	71 – 80 %
2 or D	<i>rahuldav</i> / satisfactory	61 – 70 %
1 or E	<i>kasin</i> / sufficient	51 – 60 %
0 or F	<i>puudulik</i> / insufficient	0 – 50 %

Some higher education institutions use letter grades A – F, others use numbers 5 – 0. Grades F or 0 are the fail grades.

Since September 2010, the same grading scale has been in use, but assessment is based on achievement of learning outcomes.