

1. COMPTE RENDU INTERLANGUE (évaluation CC)

Textes 6-7

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Times Higher Education – October 17, 2013

Common Market for MOOCs

Chris Parr

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) provides a legal basis for the creation of an online marketplace for academic credit that could be exploited by massive open online course providers, conference speakers have argued.

Hannes Klöpfer, managing director of the new German MOOC platform iversity, also said he believed that Europe's burgeoning community of online providers was better-placed than American organizations to work with universities and offer academic credit to students.

Speaking at Making Sense of the MOOCs, a conference held in Brussels this month, Klöpfer unveiled a plan that he believed could lead to European platforms offering a large range of for-credit courses within two years.

As part of a pilot, Germany's University of Osnabrück and the Lübeck University of Applied Sciences have already agreed to offer ECTS points for their iversity MOOCs, provided that students can pass an "on-campus exam."

"Typically, when you are looking at startups, the Americans have a big advantage because they have a common market," he said. "This time, I think it's the other way around. Europe has a big advantage over the U.S. because in the U.S., credit transfer is a nuisance."

Decisions to accept credits from other institutions there were always ad hoc affairs, he added.

The ECTS was introduced in 1989 and is widely used across Europe to promote student mobility.

Under Klöpfer's plan, a corporate partner -- such as iversity -- would organize the teaching and assessment of MOOCs and would award ECTS points on behalf of partner universities.

Although details of how the system will generate revenue are as yet unclear, it could resemble the arrangements made by some American MOOC platforms, under which students pay fees to take invigilated exams and receive completion certificates.

Also speaking at the event was Rolf Hoffmann, executive director of the German-American Fulbright Commission, an international scholarship program that provides, among other things, teaching and research grants.

He told Times Higher Education that improving the quality of online tuition could be one way to make savings in countries such as Germany that have less private university funding. "We don't have tuition fees or any large private institutions -- but we still have the same drivers: the German government needs to save money, institutions need to save money."

He added that German universities should move towards a "blended" teaching model mixing online and campus undergraduate study to cut costs.

But he warned: "Going to a blended system is going to be a challenge for the instructors because German faculty do not necessarily adapt to new technologies quickly."

The conference took place at a key moment for European MOOCs, with several countries' course platforms at critical junctures in their development. The first iversity courses were launched this week, with about 100,000 students reported to be taking part.

FutureLearn, Britain's MOOC platform, is due to start teaching next week, while newly unveiled French provider France Université Numérique is set to announce details of its first courses at the end of the month.

Nb mots = 496

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/10/17/european-educators-consider-how-their-moocs-could-compete-those-us/>

University World News, Issue No: 288 – 21 September, 2013

Students to earn credits for MOOCs after passing exams

By Peta Lee

In what is seen as a breakthrough for students, Europe's MOOCs platform iversity is working with two universities in Germany to award academic credit to students who pass an on-campus exam after taking a massive open online course.

The University of Osnabrück and the Lübeck University of Applied Sciences, or FH Lübeck, will be the first to take the step, in a [collaboration](#) with iversity, awarding successful students ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – credits for MOOCs.

At the moment, Berlin-based [iversity](#) offers more than 20 MOOCs, taught by professors from Germany, Europe and worldwide, in disciplines ranging from medicine, computer science, business studies, physics and law to design and philosophy.

For those unfamiliar with ECTS credit points, the system was first introduced in Europe in 1989 within the exchange programme Erasmus. It formed part of the Bologna process and is now widely used throughout higher education to facilitate student mobility course recognition within Europe. Countries outside Europe are increasingly adopting the system.

The iversity platform, in cooperation with its partner universities, is the first MOOCs platform worldwide to offer ECTS credit points for university-level online courses.

A full-time student would need to complete 60 ECTS per academic year, which represents about 1,500 to 1,800 hours of study. The credits can be attached to study programmes, courses or even modules within a course.

“In the context of the Bologna process there has been a lot of discussion about student mobility,” said Marcus Riecke, iversity's CEO. “By providing ECTS credits for MOOCs, we are taking a huge step in making this vision come true.

“Now students don't have to switch between universities anymore. Instead, the universities come to them.”

The debut ECTS-certified MOOC will be available in mid-October when Professor Marc Opresnik from FH Lübeck launches an eight-week course on “[Fundamentals of Marketing](#)”.

And from April 2014, Professor Oliver Vornberger, an e-learning and computer science expert at the University of Osnabrück, will give a 16-week course on “[Algorithms and Data Structures](#)”.

Students who pass an on-campus exam after taking these online courses will receive credit points in accordance with the ECTS. Successful graduates of Vornberger's course will be awarded six ECTS points, while those from Opresnik's course will scoop five points.

The two courses are just the start: iversity is planning to grant ECTS credits for further online courses in cooperation with various professors and universities.

Said Opresnik: “FH Lübeck is one of Germany’s leading universities in the field of e-learning. By producing a MOOC, we live up to our educational mission and facilitate access to higher education for a broader audience, especially professionals and parents.”

“Certifying MOOCs with ECTS credits is a crucial step in seizing the potential of online teaching and integrating it into universities’ daily business,” said Vornberger.

“What we are seeing now is only the beginning of a revolution that offers previously unimagined possibilities to improve university education online.”

Nb mots = 483

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130920142014403>