ICES
Institut catholique
de Vendée

Description of the grading system

Grading practices:

The French grading system is an absolute grading system. Grades in France and at ICES are awarded on a scale from 0 to 20. 20 being the highest and 0 being the lowest. Grades from 10 to 20 are considered as « pass ». The passing grade that allows students to obtain credits for each subject is 10/20. Grades higher than 16 are rarely awarded.
A student is considered to have passed the year when the combined weighted average of all his or her grades for that year comes to at least 10.

This document helps to understand the French grading system, but institutions may develop their own conversion factors based on local practices.

The French 0-20 scale:

French grade	French appreciation term	English translation
16 - 20	Très bien	very good
14 - 15.9	bien	good
12 – 13.9	assez bien	amply sufficient
10 – 11.9	passable	almost sufficient
0 – 9.9	ajourné	insufficient

French institutions of higher education use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Each credit equals 25 to 30 hours of work (lectures and homework).

ECTS grading description:

The ECTS grading scale is based on a statistical distribution curve. For a given course, letter grades are distributed among students as follows:

ECTS grade	frequencies of repartition	appreciation
A	best 10%	outstanding
B	next 25%	very good
C	next 30%	good
D	next 25%	satisfactory
E	next 10%	sufficient

ICES reference:

To facilitate the comparison between ICES grading system and other systems, the frequencies of grades at ICES are:

frequencies of repartition	French grade (ICES reference)	ECTS grade
best 10%	17-20	A
next 25%	15-16,9	B
next 30%	12-14,9	C
next 25%	8-11,9	D
next 10%	0-7,9	E

ECTS credits:

1 full academic year = 60 ECTS
1 semester= 30 ECTS