



A European Student Card to make it easier to be a mobile student ☒  
recognise your student status  
across Europe  
facilitate access to students services

#EuropeanStudentCard

**Erasmus+**  
Enriching lives, opening minds.

**Higher Education**

# European Student Card General Specifications

**Join the ESC now:**



<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/european-student-card-initiative/card>



<https://esci-sd.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portals>

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# 1. About this document

## 1.1 Purpose of the document

## 1.2 Glossary of terms

# 1

## About this document

### 1.1 Purpose of the document

The European Student Card (hereby ESC) **streamlines student mobility and fosters synergies between higher education institutions in the European Education Area**. The ESC establishes a common European identity for higher education students, who can use their ESC to verify their student status easily across Europe to access services when they are on mobility.



#### Objectives and content of this document

This document is part of a set of **guidance and specification materials** that have been developed to support card issuers in the implementation of the ESC. More information on the guidance materials can be found in [Annex I: Other documents of interest](#).

To support higher education institutions joining the ESC, this document explains what an ESC is, its main elements, the steps that a card issuer must follow to join the ESC and how to issue, manage and verify ESCs.

The first section of the document includes a **glossary of terms** which defines the most important concepts of the ESC. The second section **provides a detailed description of the ESC and outlines the roles of the different stakeholders involved** in its deployment, and information on the ESC logo. Additionally, we outline the features and benefits of the **ESC-Router**.

Lastly, the third section covers the main **business processes** of the ESC, detailing the steps to connect to the ESC-Router, issue and manage ESCs, including how to add the ESC logo to student cards and verify student status. It also outlines the different activities involved in implementing these processes.



#### Key information for ESC stakeholders

You can contact our support helpdesk to resolve your questions and technical problems on the ESC.



ESC support contact e-mail at: [ESC.support@emeal.nttdata.com](mailto:ESC.support@emeal.nttdata.com)



FAQs in the ESC website: [https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/es/european-student-card-initiative/help-support/faqs?facets\\_field\\_eac\\_themes=1928](https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/es/european-student-card-initiative/help-support/faqs?facets_field_eac_themes=1928)



**ESCI Helpdesk:** [European Student Card - Jira Service Management \(atlassian.net\)](#)

# 1

## About this document

### 1.2 Glossary of terms

#### **Application Programming Interface (API)**

Computing interface to a software component or a system that defines how other components or systems can use it. It defines the types of calls or requests that can be made, how to make them, the data formats that should be used, and the conventions to follow.

#### **Authorised representative**

A person officially designated to act on behalf of a higher education institution, public authority or third-party processors. The designation can take place in different ways, according to the rules and procedures of each organisation.

#### **Card Management System**

A company or service that offers software and tools to manage and operate the higher education institution's card-based identification and access system.

#### **Comma-Separated Values (CSV)**

A simple, text-based format used to store data such as numbers and text.

#### **European Education Area**

A unique initiative that structures collaboration among European Union Member States and stakeholders to build more resilient and inclusive national education and training systems.

#### **European Student Card (ESC)**

The ESC is one of the three building blocks of the European Student Card Initiative (ESCI). It aims to streamline student status verification across Europe, promoting mobility and fostering a shared European student identity among higher education students. The ESC consists of visual and technical elements that are integrated into existing student cards to facilitate their recognition and validation across Europe, allowing students to access student services when they are on mobility abroad.

#### **ESC Logo**

The integration of the ESC visual and technical elements (EU flag, text "European Student Card" and QR code) on a student card enabling the recognition and verification of the card at the European level.

#### **ESC QR Code**

Two-dimensional barcode printed on the cardholder's European Student Card that automatically verifies the data of the student's status. The QR code contains the European Student Card Number, which enables the validation of the student's status at the European level.

#### **ESC-Router**

Digital platform that enables higher education institutions and other card issuers to issue and manage European Student Cards. The ESC-Router stores the European Student Card Number (ESCN) and provides the mechanism to validate European Student Cards in real time.

#### **ESC Number (ESCN)**

Unique card identifier containing the higher education institution PIC code using a specific algorithm that guarantees its uniqueness. It serves to identify and link a specific card to the specific higher education institution that produced it. The ESCN is the only information that is displayed when the QR code is read.

#### **European Student Identifier (ESI)**

A digital identifier that enables students to uniquely identify themselves when accessing online services, especially during their mobility abroad. The ESI supports and eases international student mobility and transnational cooperation between higher education institutions.

# 1

## About this document

### 1.2 Glossary of terms

<b>EU Login</b>	European Commission's user authentication service that allows users to access a variety of online services offered by EU institutions using a single login.
<b>Graphical User Interface (GUI)</b>	Type of user interface that allows users to interact with electronic devices.
<b>Higher education institution</b>	An institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers recognised degrees or other recognised tertiary level qualifications, regardless of what such an establishment is called, or a comparable institution at tertiary level.
<b>Mobility student</b>	A mobility student can be defined as an individual who participates in an organised exchange abroad for a specific amount of time, usually as part of an exchange programme.
<b>MyAcademicID</b>	Identity and access management platform combining both eIDAS and eduGAIN for the authentication on e-services related to the Erasmus+ programme (ESC-R, , Erasmus+ App, Online Learning Agreement).
<b>Organisation</b>	Refers to a card issuer in the context of the business processes outlined in sections 3.1 to 3.4. There are three types of organisations that can issue European Student Cards: higher education institutions, public authorities and third-party service providers that issue cards on their behalf.
<b>Student services</b>	Services offered at local, regional, national or/and European level to individuals that can identify themselves as students. For instance, opportunities and promotions at museums, cinemas and other cultural institutions, telecommunication companies, accommodation, public and private transportation, festivals and other events, selected shops and restaurants, electronic wallet and payment services, etc.
<b>Student Service Provider</b>	Public or private organisations that offer services directly to students or provide services relevant to student needs. Examples include housing agencies, public transportation companies, libraries, cultural institutions, digital service platforms supporting student life and mobility, etc.
<b>Student Status Verification</b>	Refers to the means of confirming that a student is currently enrolled at a higher education institution.
<b>Third-party processors</b>	Entities authorised to process data on behalf of higher education institutions or public authorities.
<b>User</b>	An individual authorised to use the ESC-R on behalf of a higher education institution, a public authority or one of their third-party processors for the purpose of managing and issuing European Student Cards.



## **2. The European Student Card**

### **2.1 What is the ESC?**

### **2.2 The ESC-Router**

### **2.3 Key ESC stakeholders**

### **2.4 The ESC Logo**

### **2.5 Phase-out timeline of the previous ESC Hologram**

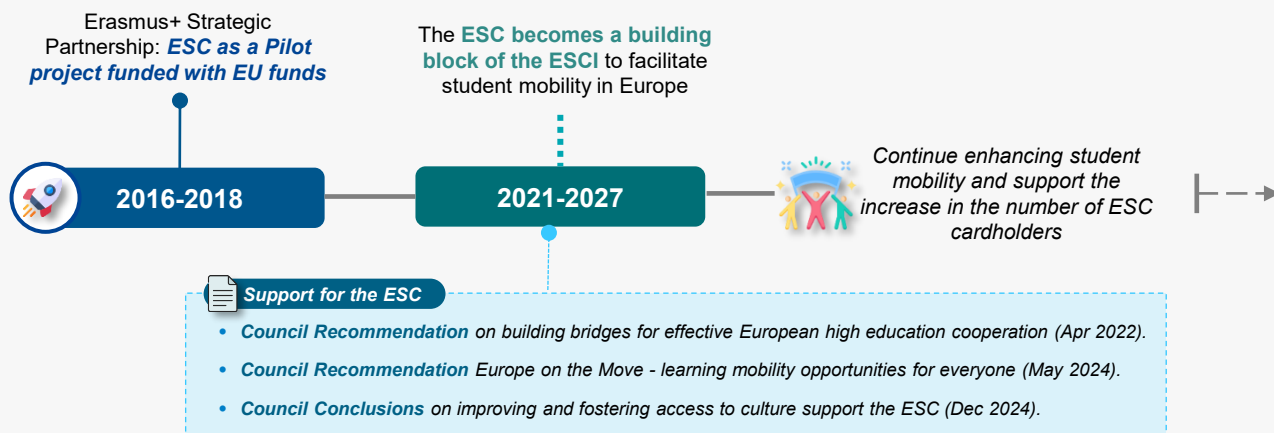
# 2

## The European Student Card

### 2.1 What is the ESC?

The **European Student Card (hereafter ESC)** was launched in 2016 as an EU-funded project and is one of the key building blocks of the European Student Card Initiative (ESCI) of the European Commission.

### A historical look at the ESC



The ESC **builds upon by adding the ESC elements into existing student cards issued by higher education institutions** to simplify student mobility in Europe.

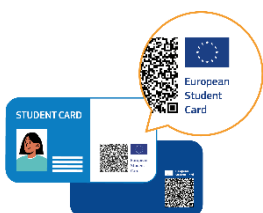
The ESC enables higher education institutions and student service providers to **seamlessly and reliably verify a student's status** at the European level.

Students travelling across Europe for their education on mobility will get easier access to student services and benefits. This means a **better, more connected mobility experience** and a sense of belonging to the European higher education community.

### Main benefits of the European Student Card



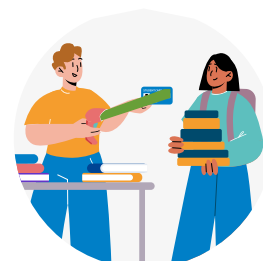
**Higher education students** can have their student status easily verified, facilitating their access to on- and off-campus student services during their mobility abroad.



**Higher education institutions** can reliably and securely validate the ESCs of incoming mobility students, ensuring they can access the same services as local students.



**Student service providers** can quickly and reliably validate a student's status when they request access to their services, giving service providers additional certainty and reach.



# 2

## The European Student Card

### 2.2 The ESC-Router

The ESC-Router (ESC-R) is the **digital platform that supports the implementation of the European Student Card**. An improved user interface for the ESC-R hosted on the European Commission's cloud was launched on 23 October 2024.

#### Benefits of the ESC-R



Allows organisations and their third-party processors to issue\* and manage ESCs



Enables service providers to list their services in the ESC Service Catalogue through the ESC Service Manager



Ensures easy and secure validation of student status across Europe

The following organisations (i.e. user categories) can join the ESC-Router (ESC-R) to issue European Student Cards (ESCs):



**Higher education institutions** (HEIs) or **public authorities** issuing student cards in any **EU/EEA\*\* Member State or European microstate**;



**ECHE holders in third countries** (other than EEA); **associated to the Erasmus+ programme\*\*\*** and **ECHE holders in the Western Balkans** countries (Region 1)\*\*\*\*;



**Third-party processors** issuing student cards on behalf of higher education institutions or public authorities registered to the ESC-Router.

Before registration, the **legal representative or authorised representative of the organisation** must review and accept the legal documentation on behalf of the organisation. The documentation to be accepted includes:



#### Terms and Conditions

- States the terms governing the use of the ESC-R and the issuance of ESCs.



#### Privacy Statement

- Explains what personal data is collected in the ESC-R, how it is handled, and the rights of the data subjects and how they can exercise them.



#### Joint Controllership Arrangement

- Defines the allocation of data protection responsibilities between the European Commission and HEIs/public authorities registered to the ESC-R for issuing ESCs.

The **ESC Service Manager** is an application for managing services available to ESC cardholders across Europe. It can be used by ESC-R users registered to the ESC-R issuing cards, as well as by service providers who register to the platform to list their services. Services added in the **ESC Service Manager** that will then be published in the public **ESC Service Catalogue**.

\* To "issue" ESCs means integrating the ESC elements into their existing student cards.

\*\* European Economic Area: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

\*\*\* North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye

\*\*\*\* Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro

# 2

## The European Student Card

### 2.3 Key ESC stakeholders

The ESC relies on different key stakeholders for its implementation:



#### ESC Cardholders

- A higher education student who is in possession of an active European Student Card.



#### Higher education institutions

- An educational institution which offers recognised degrees or other recognised higher educational level qualifications (i.e. universities, vocational training, higher education training centres, etc).



#### Public Authorities

- Public authorities play an important role in the implementation of the ESC. Depending on the country, they can be responsible for defining the requirements of student cards, issuing student cards or managing the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme (e.g., Erasmus+ National Agencies).



#### Third-Party Processors

- Entities authorised to process data on behalf of higher education institutions or public authorities. Third-party processors sometimes act as card issuers on behalf of higher education institutions.



#### Student Service Providers

- Public and private organisations that offer on- and off-campus student services. These may include higher education institutions themselves, clusters of institutions, student organisations, university libraries, public transport operators, central purchasing organisations, etc.



#### ESC Helpdesk

- ESC-R service support team responsible for checking the eligibility of an organisation, providing relevant documentation and support, and granting or removing access to the ESC-Router.

# 2

## The European Student Card

### 2.4 The ESC logo

The European Student Card (ESC) is managed through a **digital platform** called the **ESC-Router**, which enables the verification of student status across Europe and allows participating organisations to add the **ESC elements** to their students' cards:

#### European Student Identifier (ESI)

A format of identifier that enables to uniquely identify student across Europe.

#### European Student Card Number (ESCN)

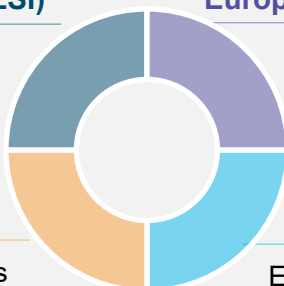
A unique card identifier that serves to identify student cards and validate them.

#### ESC QR code

A digital format code that includes the ESCN, enabling the validation of the card at European level.

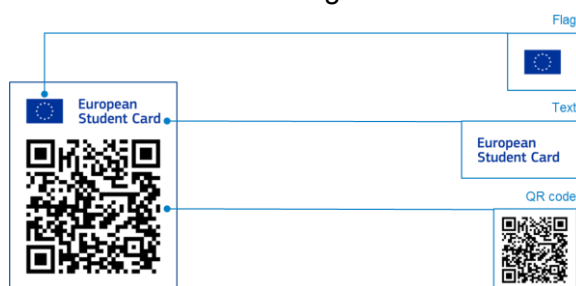
#### ESC visual elements

EU flag and the text "European Student Card" to facilitate the visual recognition of the card.

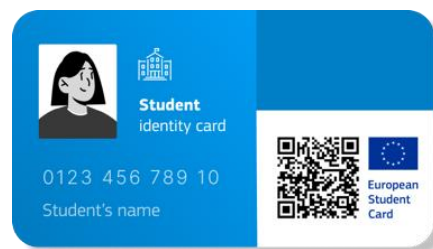


An ESC can be in a **physical or digital format** and can be included in student cards **with any type of technology** (e.g., chip technology, magnetic stripe, etc.). Only the minimal necessary data is stored in the ESC-Router.

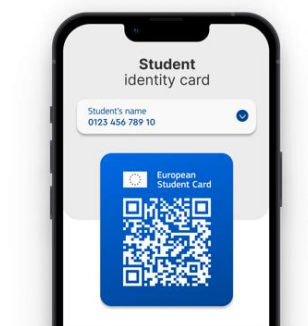
The **ESC logo** is composed of three elements: a **QR code\*** that allows for the verification of the student's status, the **EU flag** (indicating the European dimension) and the **text "European Student Card"** in English.



Technical information on the ESC-Router is included in the ESC technical specifications. For more information, go to [Annex 1: Other documents of interest.](#)



Physical version (horizontal format)



Digital version (vertical format)

\* The QR code on an ESC contains the European Student Card Number (ESCN) and the URL needed to validate the card.

### Benefits of the ESC logo:

- Easy to implement with **no external costs**.
- Flexible and secure** student status verification.
- Reinforced **European student dimension**.
- Takes up **less space**. The horizontal and vertical layout options ensure **increased compatibility** with student cards.
- Adaptable to **both digital and physical** cards.
- Enhanced **clarity and recognition**.

# 2

## The European Student Card

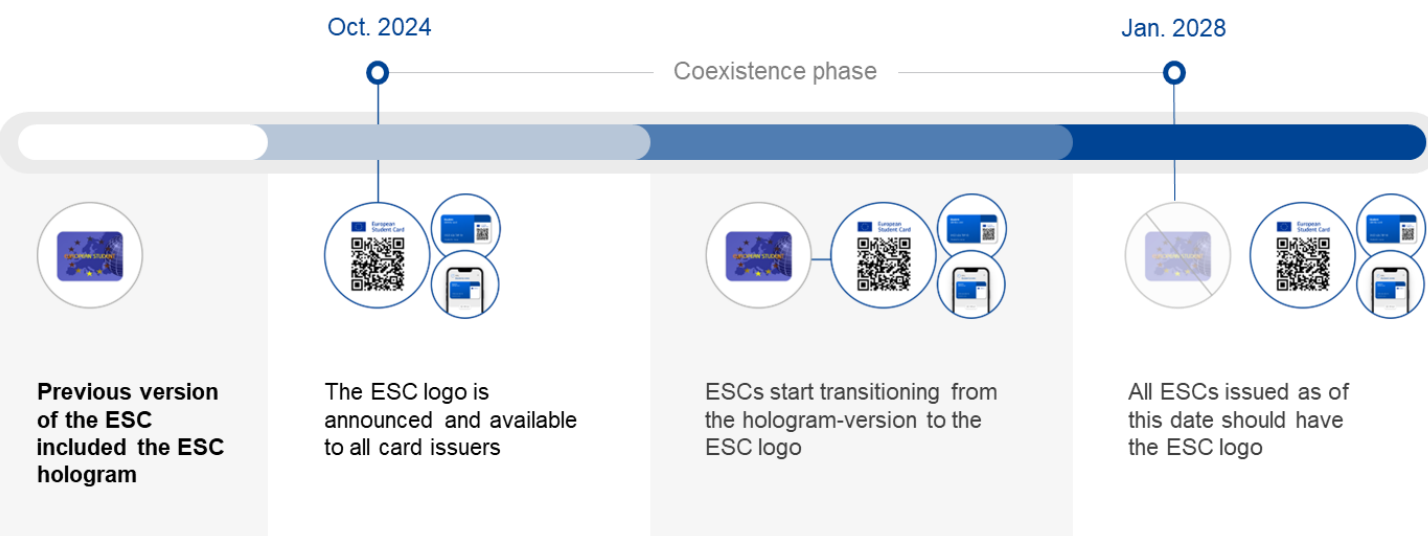
### 2.5 Phase-out timeline of the ESC hologram

The **previous version of the European Student Card** featured a QR code and a hologram on the front or back of the card.



A coexistence phase will run **until the end of December 2027**, where both the previous version of the ESC (ESC hologram) and the ESC logo can be issued. All European Student Cards issued as of **1 January 2028** must include the current official ESC logo.

**ESCs issued before 1 January 2028 with the hologram and QR code may still be in circulation and should be considered valid until their expiration date.**





## **3. ESC business processes**

**3.1 Registering to the ESC-Router**

**3.2 Issuing European Student Cards**

**3.3 Adding the ESC Logo**

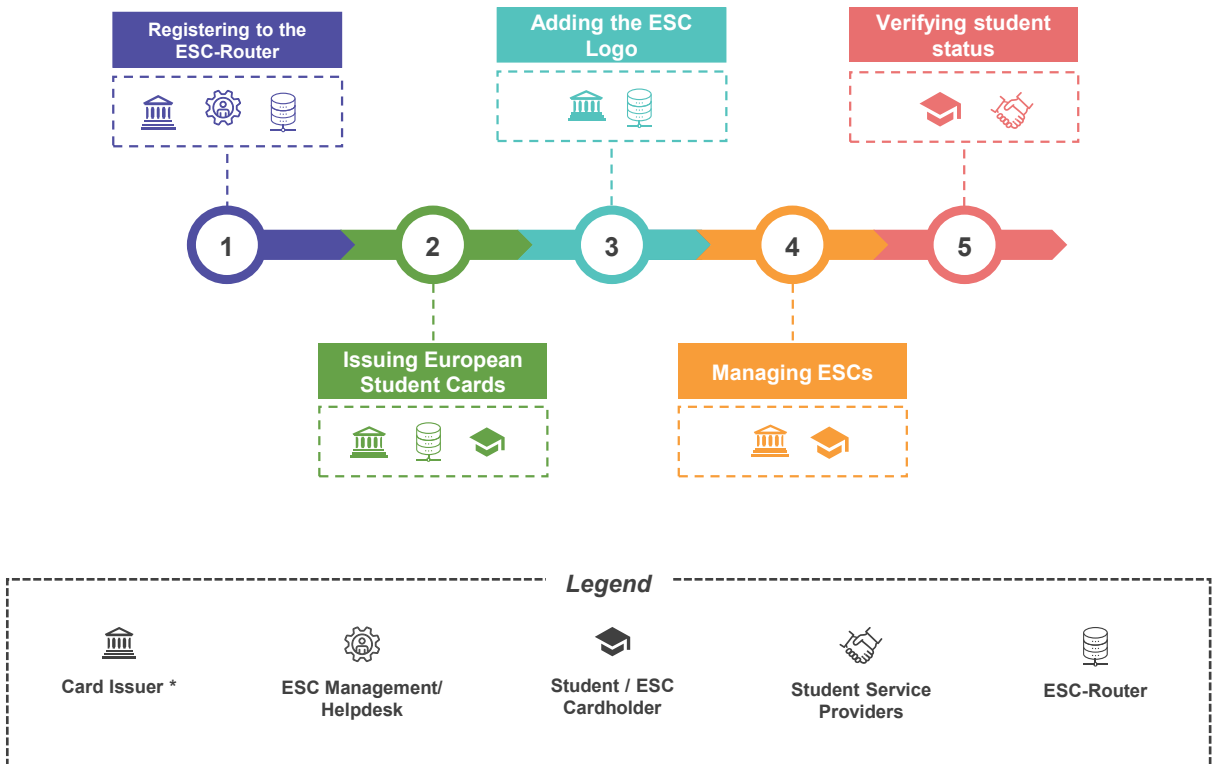
**3.4 Managing European Student Cards**

**3.5 Verifying student status**

# 3

## ESC business processes

The adoption of an ESC starts with card issuers and includes five different processes involving different stakeholders, as depicted in the figure below.



**Registering to the ESC-Router**, by which card issuers register to and access the ESC-Router.

**Issuing European Student Cards**, by which card issuers provide an ESC to cardholders.

**Adding the ESC Logo**, by which card issuers include the ESC logo on their students' cards to enable the recognition and validation of a cardholder's student status when accessing services.

**Managing European Student Cards**, by which card issuers can update and/or delete ESC information and data in the ESC-Router.

**Verifying student status**, by which cardholders have their student status verified by student service providers to access student services with their ESC.

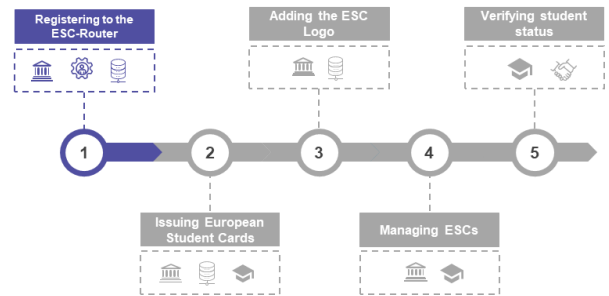
\* Includes higher education institutions, public authorities, and third-party processors.

# 3

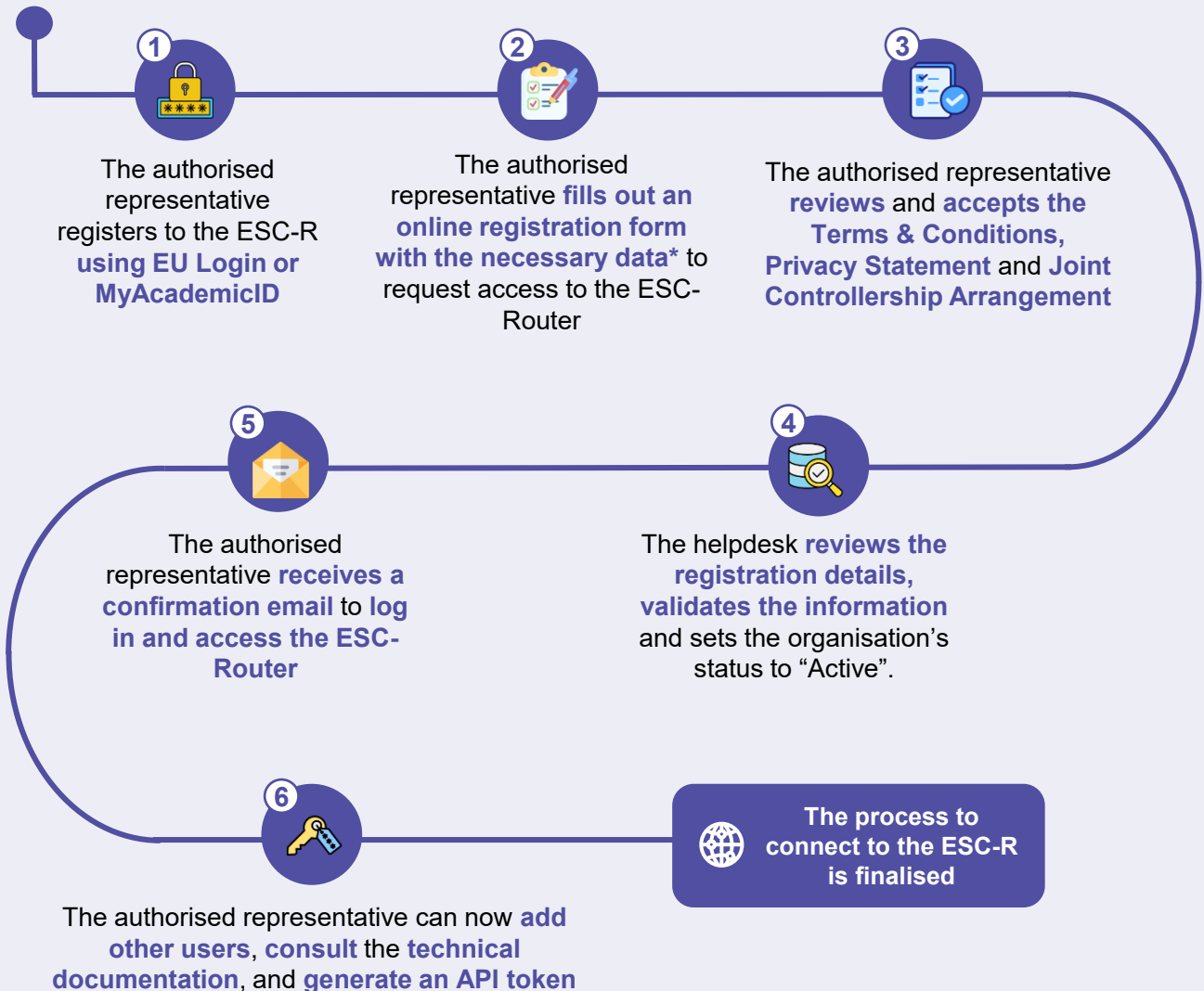
## ESC business processes

### 3.1 Registering to the ESC-Router

This process starts when a new user submits a **request to create an organisation account to be able to access the ESC-Router and accepts the legal documents**. Once the legal documents are accepted and the registration form is reviewed and validated by the ESC management/helpdesk, the organisation can access the ESC-Router and issue and manage ESCs.



#### Higher education institutions or public authorities registering to the ESC-R



\* **Data to be filled out in the ESC-R:** organisation type, organisation identifier, PIC Code for higher education institutions or public authorities, VAT for third-party processors, Country, City and the authorised representatives' e-mail and full name (first name, last name).

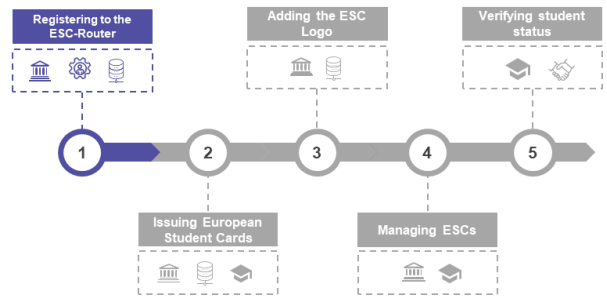
# 3

## ESC business processes

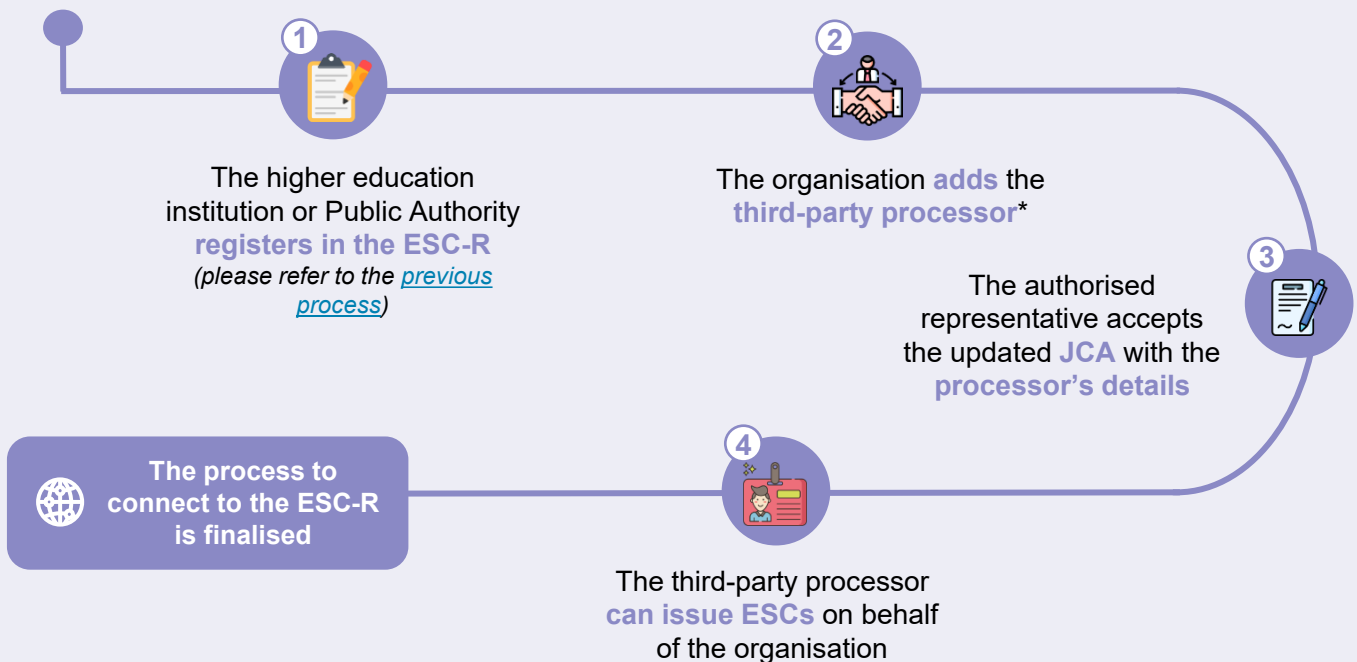
### 3.1 Registering to the ESC-Router

This process is specific for **higher education institutions or public authorities** that are issuing ESCs **through a third-party processor**.

When **registering to the ESC-Router** for the first time, the **authorised representative must accept the legal documentation on behalf of the organisation** they represent to be able to issue and manage ESCs.



Higher education institutions or Public Authorities registering to the ESC-R issuing cards with a third-party processor



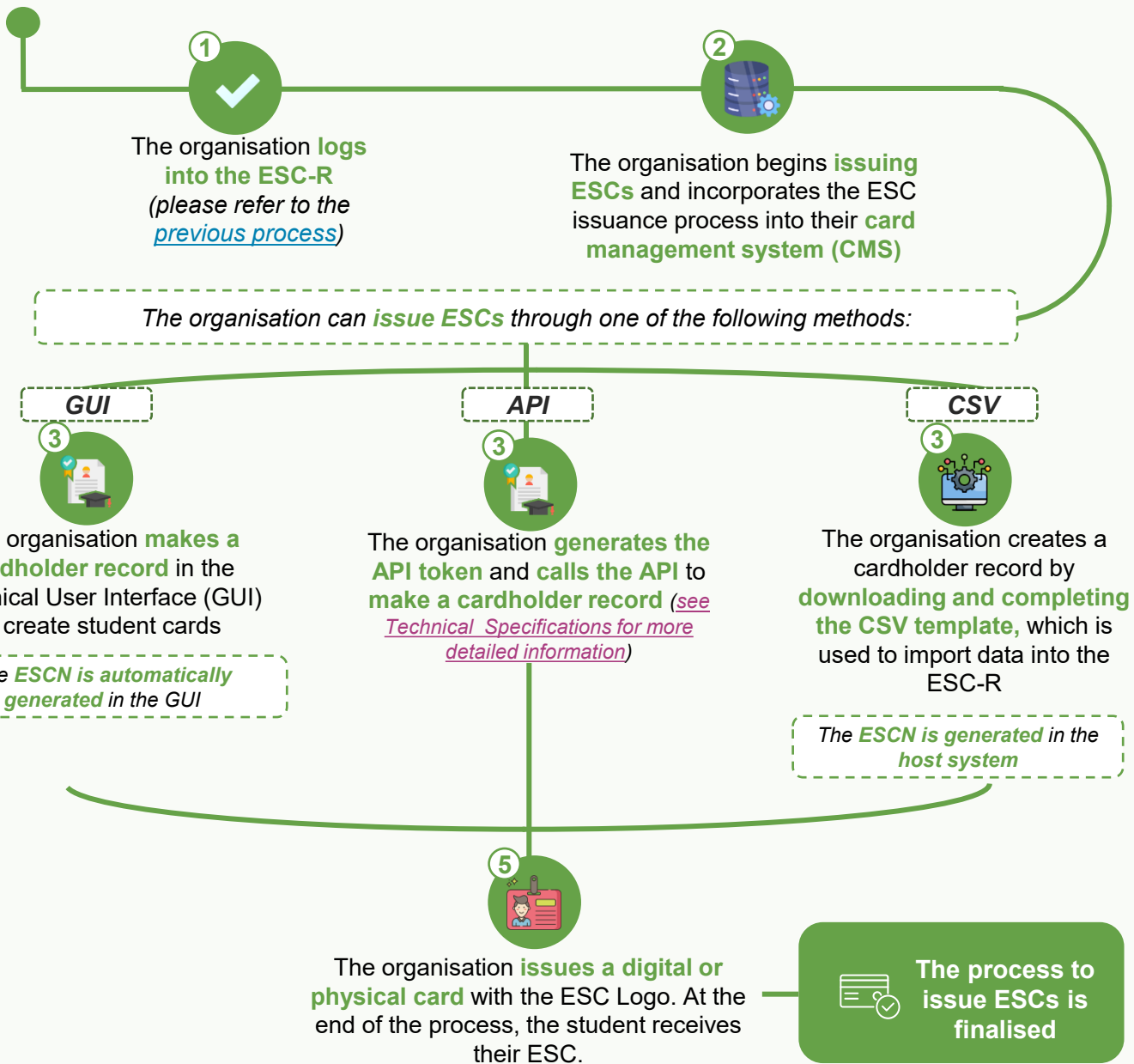
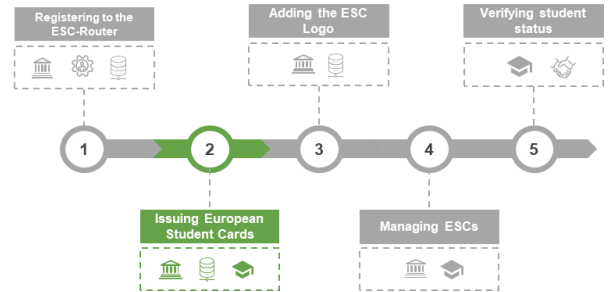
\* Third-party processors will not have to accept the Joint Controllershship Arrangement (JCA) as they are not joint controllers of the data.

# 3

## ESC business processes

### 3.2 Issuing European Student Cards

The issuance process starts with the organisation **creating an ESC** through either the **graphic user interface (GUI)**, **API** or **CSV**. First, the organisation creates the **cardholder record** and **card information** to issue an ESC and then **adds the ESC logo**. At the end of the process, the cardholder receives the student card.



\* It is possible to generate the ESCN in the host system or leave the ESCN empty to be automatically generated by the ESC-R.

For further technical details, please refer to the [ESC-R Technical Specifications](#).

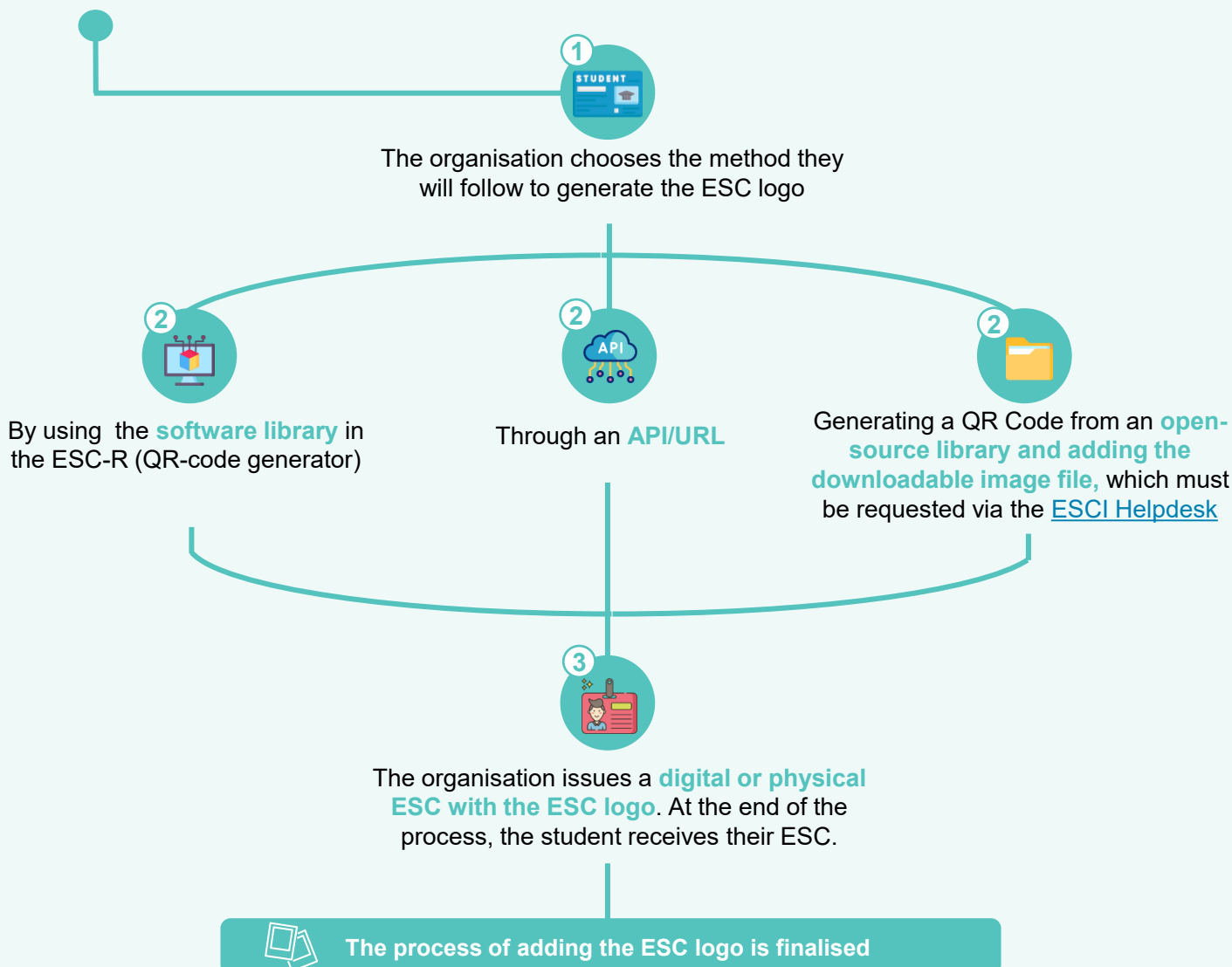
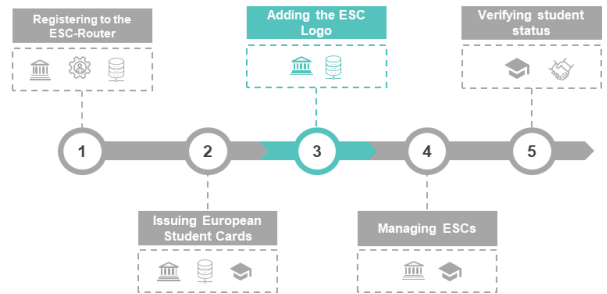
# 3

## ESC business processes

### 3.3 Adding the ESC Logo

This step involves **adding the ESC logo to enable the recognition and validation of ESCs**. It is composed of a QR code, the EU flag and the text "European Student Card" in English.

All ESCs issued after 1 January 2028 must include the current official version of the ESC logo to be considered valid. However, ESCs issued before 1 January 2028 with the previous ESC logo may remain in circulation until they expire.



\* The ESC logo includes the QR code, the "European Student Card" text in English and the EU flag.

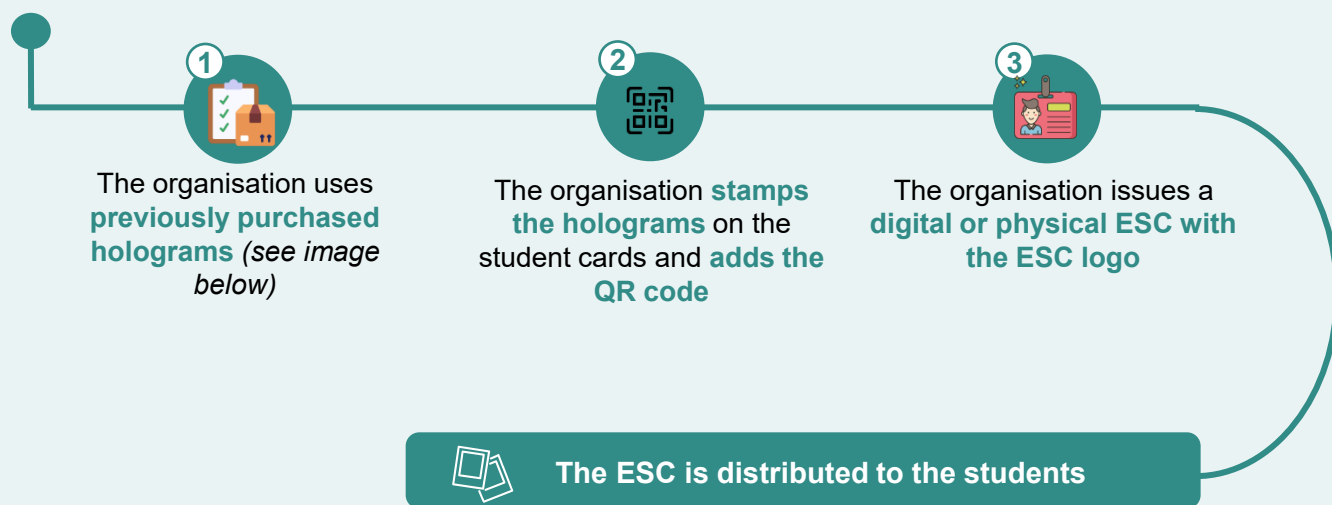
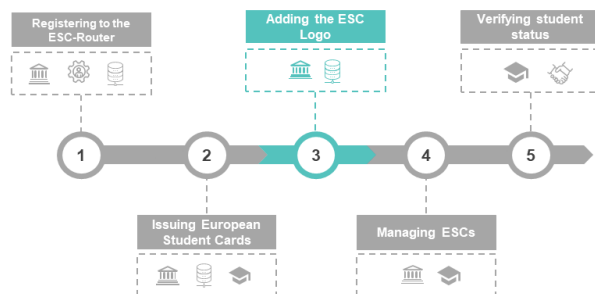
# 3

## ESC business processes

### 3.3.1 Adding the previous ESC Hologram

**Important note:** this process is only relevant for organisations still using the old ESC hologram (e.g., using up their previously purchased hologram stocks).

ESCs with a hologram and QR code can be issued until the end of December 2027. As of 1 January 2028, all ESCs must be issued with the ESC Hologram.



## Phase-out timeline of the previous ESC Hologram

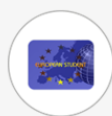
Card issuers can use their existing stock of holograms previously purchased from SELP, but **they are encouraged to implement the ESC logo as soon as possible**. All ESCs issued as of 1 January 2028 must have the ESC logo (and not the hologram).

ESCs with a hologram issued *before* 1 January 2028 will be considered valid until their expiration date.

Oct. 2024

Jan. 2028

Coexistence phase



Previous version of the ESC included the ESC hologram



The ESC logo is announced and available to all card issuers



ESCs start transitioning from the hologram-version to the ESC logo



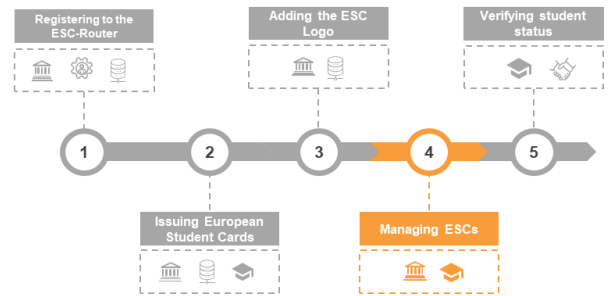
All ESCs issued as of this date should have the ESC logo

# 3

## ESC business processes

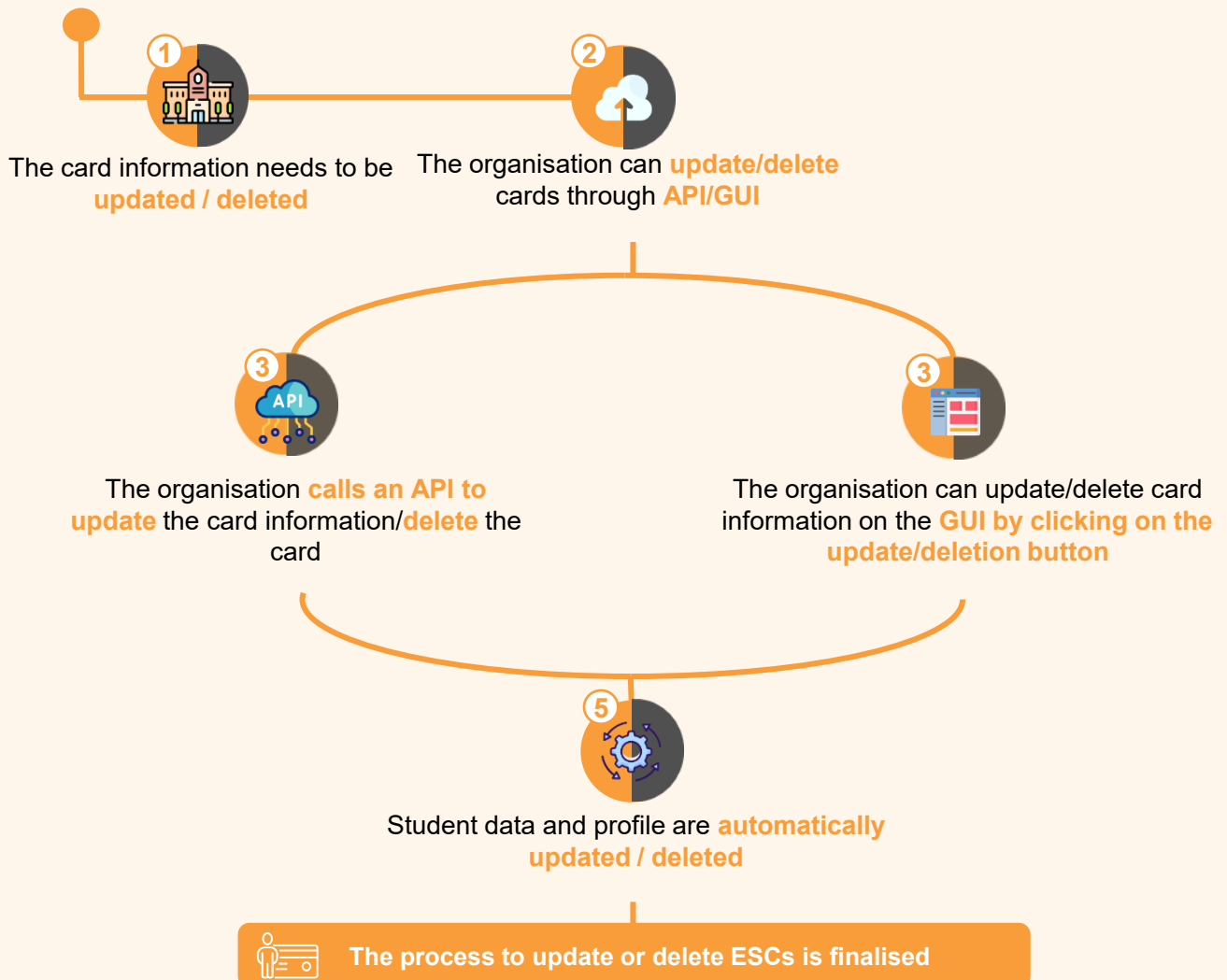
### 3.4 Managing European Student Cards

This process includes **managing ESCs**, either by **updating or deleting them in the graphic user interface (GUI) or via the API**.



#### Managing European Student Cards through API

#### Managing European Student Cards through GUI



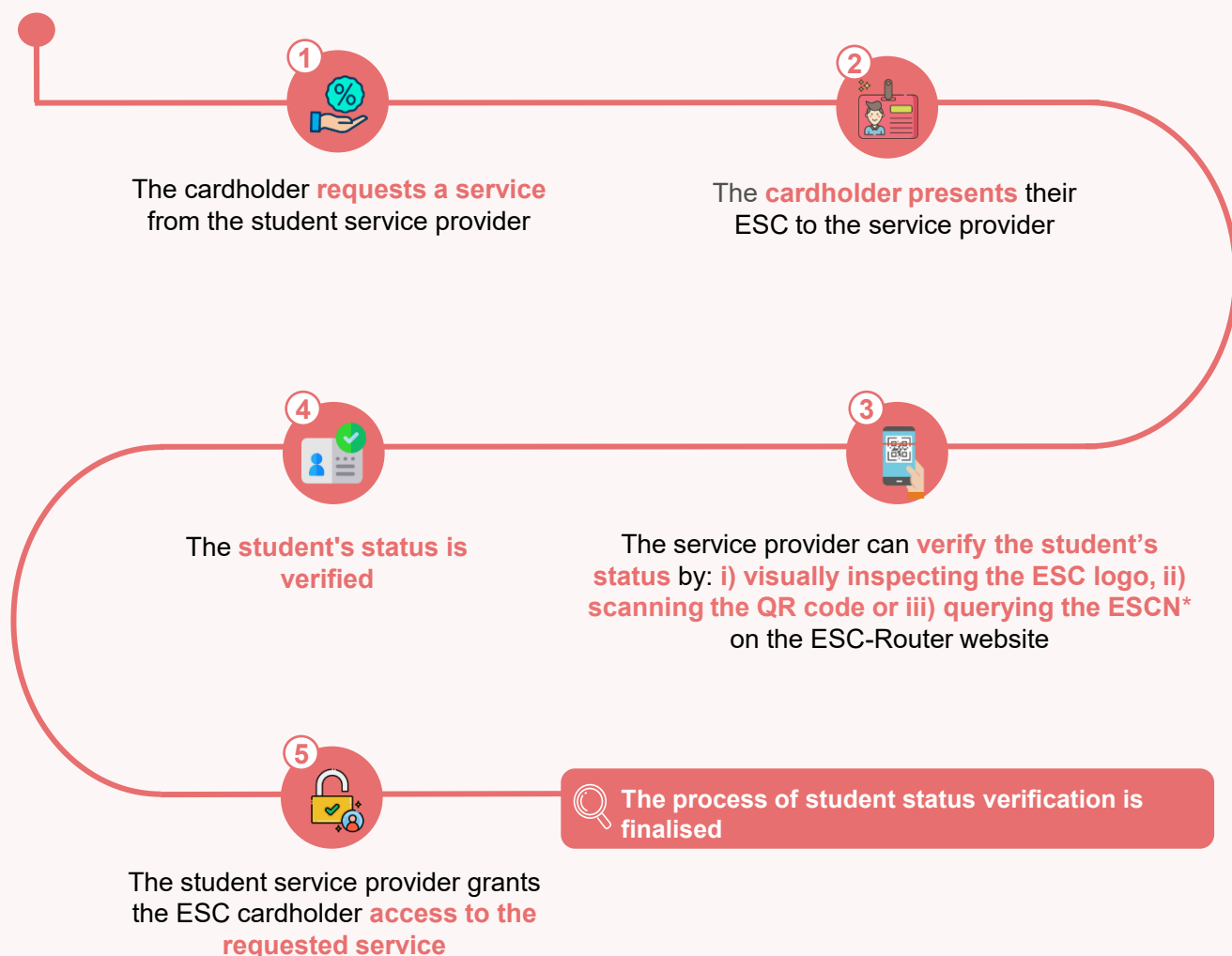
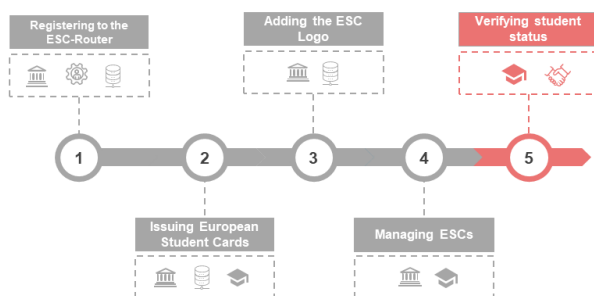
# 3

## ESC business processes

### 3.5 Verifying student status

Process by which ESC cardholders (students) request **services from a student service provider**.

The verification of a student's status can be done visually by **checking the ESC logo**, by **scanning the QR code** or by querying the **ESCN** on the ESC-Router website.



\* The Student Service Provider (SSP) must log into the ESC-R and enter the ESCN into the platform, which connects to the ESC-R database and enables real-time verification of the student's status.



## 4. Annexes

### Annex 1: Other documents of interest

# 4

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Other documents of interest

A set of **guidance and specification materials** has been developed to provide targeted support to the main stakeholders in the implementation of the ESC. All guidance materials are listed below and are available on the [ESCI webpage in the Erasmus+ Portal](#), easily accessible to all who wish to participate in this initiative and adopt the ESC.

#### How to join the European Student Card



This document is a quick guide on the main steps card issuers must follow to join the ESC and start issuing student cards to their students. It also includes important links for Registering to the ESC-Router.

The document is available on this [page](#).

#### Technical specifications of the European Student Card



This document provides the technical specifications of the ESC. It describes the technical architecture of the ESC-Router, how to obtain the API key and the different ways in which card issuers can interact with the ESC-Router for card issuance and management.

The document is available on this [page](#).

#### Graphic Charter of the ESC Logo



This document outlines the rules and guidelines for using the ESC Logo. The Graphic Charter supports card holders to ensure that the ESC logo is consistently and correctly implemented, thus contributing to the increased visibility and recognition of the ESC.

The document is available on this [page](#).

#### “How to Use European Student Card Service Manager”



This document provides guidance for student service providers and already registered ESC-R users on how to add and manage services in the digital European Student Card Service Catalogue.

The document is available on this [page](#).

# The European Student Card

#EuropeanStudentCard

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**Join the ESC now:**

 [\*\*https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/european-student-card-initiative/card\*\*](https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/european-student-card-initiative/card)

 [\*\*https://esci-sd.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portals\*\*](https://esci-sd.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portals)

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