

**ASEM Dialogue on Quality Assurance and Recognition (August 25-26, 2014)**

**Interactive Round Table 3(August 26, 2014)**

**TOWARDS INTER-REGIONAL CREDIT TRANSFER:  
CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM IN ASIA AND EUROPE  
(Introduction of Asian Academic Credits [AACs<sup>1</sup>])**

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# OUTLINE OF THIS PRESENTATION

- I. Needs of Inter-regional Credit Transfer System in Asia**
- II. Lessons from European Experiences**
- III. Recent Developments in Credit Transfer Systems in Asia**
- IV. Issues of Current Credit Transfer Systems in Asia**
- V. The Concept of “Asian Academic Credits” (AACs)**
- V. Effectiveness of AACs and Future Challenges**
- VI. Next Steps in ASEM Dialogue for Student Mobility**

## I-(1). Needs of Inter-regional Credit Transfer System in Asia

Positive outcomes from the development of an Inter-regional credit transfer system:

1. Realization of “Student Centered” higher education in Asia
2. Establishment of “One Asian Higher Education Area”
3. Provision of truly internationalized workers in the Asian region
4. Cross-cultural understanding and mutual trust among Asian people for sustainable regional peace
5. More globally competitive regional economy in the world

## I-(2). Need of Permeable Framework for Mutual Trust

1. Globalization = More Mobility of people in the world. More participation of many good, but not famous institutions
2. However, many differences sometimes cause misinformed judgments about a student's credentials acquired from different systems/nations
3. This is largely due to the lack of readable, comparable and compatible information (permeability) on education among different institutions
4. Thus, a permeable framework of higher education is needed for Asian universities to promote trusted and attractive student mobility in the Asian Higher Education Zone.
5. The **ECTS** is a good example of a permeable framework



## II-(1). Lessons from Student Mobility (ERASMUS<sup>3</sup>) in Europe

1. **Compatibility**: More compatibility of educational frameworks and their contents by promoting the use of a two Cycle System, ECTS<sup>2</sup>, Diploma Supplement, and European Qualification Framework throughout Europe
2. **Institutional Accountability**: More institutional accountability of a university by establishing one educational framework for an entire campus.
3. **Transparency for Regional Lifelong Learning**: More mobility of people in Europe using an aligned credit transfer system based upon the student workload
4. **Teacher Mobility**: Built up more trust among teachers through the ERASMUS program for student exchanges

## II-(2). European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

1. Europe has succeeded in developing and utilizing ECTS for the last 3 decades. It has allowed the rapid expansion of student mobility
2. 1 (one) ECTS=25-30 hours of student workload [25-30 hours/ECTS = 1500~1800 h / 60 points] (an average workload of a typical European worker) .
3. ECTS is a very systematic and permeable credit transfer system: 60 ECTS/ year (consists of the largest numbers of common measures, i.e., 1,2,3,4,5,6,10,12, 15, 20, 30, 60 ) for the world

## III-(1) Development of Credit Transfer Systems in Asia

- 1 Development of UMAP<sup>4</sup> since 2000 with UCTS<sup>5</sup>  
-the USCO<sup>6</sup> Exchange program in Asia and the Pacific
- 2 Development of AUN<sup>7</sup> with ACTS<sup>8</sup> since 2009 & AIMS<sup>9</sup>  
Project since 2010 (Formally M-I-T programme)  
-Two exchange programs among the ASEAN nations
- 3 Development of ACTS<sup>10</sup> under ACD<sup>11</sup> since 2008  
-Regional in East, Southeast, South, Central and Middle East nations
- 4 Development of “Campus Asia”<sup>12</sup> in East Asia in 2012  
-China, Korea and Japan’s student exchanges with QA

### III-(2) Recent Development of Two ACTSs and Old-UCTS

1. **AUN-ACTS**: : (1) Modeled ECTS, (2) One academic year =60 AUN-ACTS, (3) One AUN-ACTS=25-30 hours of student workload (15-18 teaching hours?), (4) Used by AUN member universities in ASEAN nations
2. **ACD-ACTS**: (1) Uses a Malaysian concept (?), (2) One academic year =30 ACD-ACTS, (3) One ACD-ACTS =40 hours of student workload, (4) Can be used for all member states of ACD in the East, Southeast, South, Central Asia and Middle East
3. **Old-UCTS until 2012** : (1) Modeled ECTS, (2) One academic year =60 UCTS, (3) No Definition of Student Workload (4) Used by all UMAP participating states and universities in Asian and Pacific Region



## IV-(1) Issues of Current Credit Transfer Systems in Asia

- 1 The Old-UCTS & AUN-ACTS have modeled ECTS in Europe. But ACD-ACTS (1 credit=40 h of SW)
- 2 ECTS is a very systematic and permeable credit transfer system. However, student workload for ECTS does not reflect an Asian workload (1500-1800 hrs./year in Europe vs. 1800-2100+(?) hrs./year in Asia)
- 3 Asia already has a similar tendency (One credit  $\doteq$  40-50 hours in their regional credit systems)

## IV-(2) Importance of “Permeable Framework”

The permeable framework is a set of various tools that measure the amount and magnitude of educational values in each institution. These standardized measures illustrate specific differences among institutions regarding their educational contents, thereby enabling institutions to improve their level of mutual understanding and trust. As a result, use of the framework helps promote student mobility among participating institutions.

## V-(1) Recent Researches on Student Mobility in Asia

1. **“A study on ACTS and credit transfer systems of ASEAN+3 nations”** (a mission research of the Ministry of Education, Japan) was conducted during **February-March, 2010**
2. **“A Comparative Table of 13 Asian Countries”** & 7 country reports were posted at; <http://ir.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/00030722> in early 2011
3. **A further study, funded by the Japanese government research grant (KAKENHI-#24402045), was conducted between 2012-2014** and investigated the general framework and conditions of higher education system related to the promotion of student mobility in **24 Asian nations and regions**
4. Those 24 nations and regions are: **Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei-Darussalam, Cambodia, China, East-Timor, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Macao, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, South-Korea, Sri-Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, The Philippines, Vietnam**

## V-(2) The Concept of Asian Academic Credits (AACs)

1

This proposal is based upon the results of those two comparative studies; one for ASEAN+3 nations in 2010 and the other for 24 nations in Asia between 2012-14

2

A proposed framework of credit system is;

**One AACs  $\doteq$  38-48 hours of Student workload,**

**(including 13-16 hours of teaching (academic) hours)**

\*Student workload is +3 the total amount of hours students spend for study, including not only lectures, but also homework, lab, writing term papers, etc.



## V-(3) Latest Developments of AACs and Its Usage

1

AACs will allows many Asian institutions to **transfer most of their credits on a one-to-one basis** among themselves.

That means **One Credit Transfer Zone in Asia**

2

One Credit at a  
host Institution

=

One Credit at  
home university

## V-(4) the Conversion of AACs with Other Systems

The proposal continues to an even more developed (possible) conversion table below with Asian and other regions

| <b>Nations &amp; Systems</b> | <b>AACs</b><br>(Asia) | <b>USA</b><br>(2/3) | <b>ECTS</b><br>(Europe) | <b>CLAR</b> <sup>13</sup><br>(Latin America) | <b>UK</b> <sup>14</sup><br>(CATS)      |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Credit Conversion</b>     | <b>1 AACs</b>         | <b>≒1credit</b>     | <b>≒1.5 ECTS</b>        | <b>≒1.5 CLAR</b>                             | <b>≒3 credits</b>                      |
| <b>Student workload</b>      | <b>38-48 hours</b>    | <b>≒45 hours</b>    | <b>37.5-45 hours</b>    | <b>37.5-45 hours</b>                         | <b>Converted from ECTS (30 hours*)</b> |
| <b>Teaching hours*</b>       | <b>13-16 hours</b>    | <b>≒15~16 hours</b> | -----                   | -----  | -----                                  |

\*This chart requires more detailed explanations regarding each indicator

## VI-(1) Effectiveness of AACs and future challenges

### The Efficiency of Credit Transfer

1

Simple conversion of credits not only with other Asian and Pacific universities, but also universities in the world

2

**NEVERTHELESS! The AACs concept, like all other credit transfer systems, DOES NOT have any function related to measuring the level of difficulty or the equivalency of content in courses through comparison with courses at the home institution.** Thus, each institution has to make their own measurements based upon data provided from the host institution.

## VI-(2) New Developments in AACs

**1** **UMAP (An international group for student mobility in the Asia and Pacific region) has adopted the concept of AACs as a new concept of UCTS from 2013**

**2** **The SEAMEO-RIHED<sup>15</sup> is now reviewing a possible use of the concept of AACs as a part of their new credit transfer scheme, temporarily called, “ACTFA<sup>16</sup>” for two different types of student mobility projects among ASEAN nations**



## VII-(1) Next Steps to Promote Student Mobility in Asia and EU

1. European and Asian nations should establish a mutual agreement on a general policy of student mobility in EU-ASIA higher education networks with an aligned system of credit and quality transfer.
2. European and Asian nations should also implement a large-scale student exchange programme, particularly using the above aligned system and the scheme of joint teaching to develop mutual trust

## VII-(2) Development of CTS with Student Mobility (1)

1. **Count credits using student's workload concept,** and promote how to convert teaching hours into students' workload
2. **Consideration of an "Asian Common Credit" (ACC) concept:**  
**One AACs= 38-48 hours of student's workload,** so that many institutions can transfer credit on a one to one basis in Asia and by 1 AACs= 1.5 or 1.6 ECTS with Europe
3. **Joint Study:** Teach some courses with **foreign professors jointly** and also try to accept the credit transfer of **core subjects**

## VII-(3) Development of CTS with Student Mobility (2)

4. Improve the **transparency** of education by providing (1) **syllabuses**, (2) **course catalogues**, and (3) **transcripts** with detailed information, like diploma supplements

5. **Measure the Quality**: Use **learning outcomes** to improve the quality of education

6. **Use of a Study plan** (Learning agreement):  
Require students to fill in a study plan form with approval from both the home and host institution.

**THANK YOU**

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# Glossary

1. **AACs:** Asian Academic Credits
2. **ECTS:** European Credit Transfer System
3. **ERASMUS:** European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
4. **UMAP:** University Mobility in Asia and Pacific
5. **UCTS:** UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme
6. **USCO:** UMAP Student Connection Online
7. **AUN:** ASEAN University Network
8. **AUN's ACTS:** ASEAN Credit Transfer System
9. **AIMS:** ASEAN International Mobility for Student Programs (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam), [formerly M-I-T project]
10. **ACD's ACTS:** Asian Credit Transfer System
11. **ACD :** Asian Cooperation Dialogue
12. **CAMPUS-ASIA:** the Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students in Asia
13. **CLAR :** Latin American Reference Credit
14. **CATS:** Credit for Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (in UK):
15. **SEAMEO-RIHED:** Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization-Regional Center for Higher Education
16. **ACTFA:** Academic Credit Transfer for ASEAN

# Some References

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