

*Panel Session on “Promoting tools for balanced mobility”*

**The Importance of “Permeable” Framework in Asian  
Higher Education: Introduction of  
ACC<sup>1</sup> (Asian common credit) and three new challenges**

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All opinions in this presentation are solely my own view and do not represent any policy of the Japanese government

## Why need a Permeable Framework for Mobility?

1. Globalization = More Mobility of people in the world
2. However, many differences among nations which are good, but also problematic in some cases
3. Unfair/wrong judgment about student's credentials acquired from different system/nation
4. This is largely due to the lack of readable, comparable and compatible information (Permeability) on education among different institutions
5. Thus, a permeable framework of higher education is needed for Europe and Asia to promote balanced mobility

# Development of common educational frameworks

- 1 ERASMUS<sup>2</sup>→Bologna Process in Europe:**  
Promotion of student mobility in the region with ECTS<sup>3</sup>, learning outcomes, 2 cycle system, diploma supplement etc.
- 2 Development of UMAP<sup>4</sup> since 2000 with UCTS<sup>5</sup>**  
-the USCO<sup>6</sup> Exchange program in Asia and Pacific
- 3 Development of AUN<sup>7</sup> & M-I-T<sup>8</sup> Project with ACTS<sup>9</sup>**  
-Two exchange programs among the ASEAN nations
- 4 Development of ACTS<sup>10</sup> under ACD<sup>11</sup> since 2008**  
-Regional in East, Southeast, South, Central and Middle East nations
- 5 Development of “Campus Asia”<sup>12</sup> in East Asia**  
-China, Korea and Japan’s student exchanges with QA

## Background of recent researches & Presentation

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. Initial findings of this research was presented at the “ASEM Seminar on Credits and Learning Outcomes”, Berlin, in 2010
3. “A Comparative Table of 13 Asian Countries” & 7 country reports were posted at;  
<http://ir.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/00030722> in early 2011
4. Four proposals for further discussion in Asian region were presented at the “International Symposium on Exchange among Universities with Quality Assurance in East Asian Region”, Tokyo, in September 2011
5. Now, applying a grant for the research of 25 Asian nations’ comparative study

# Common Tendencies in Asia (Part 1)

1

## 1 credit = 13-17 hours of teaching

The number of teaching hours is more commonly used for counting credits than the amount of student workload.

2

## 4 year bachelor's programs

Except Malaysia and Laos. Medicine and engineering require 5-6 years

3

## 120 to 150 credits for a (4 years) bachelor's degree.

4

## Estimated student workload is 40-50 hours/credit

(Based on # of hours/credit in internship, lab work and field work)

China ( 40-45 ), Japan (45), Cambodia (45), Indonesia (46), Malaysia (40), the Philippines (51), NTU in Singapore (39), Thailand (45)

## Common Tendencies in Asia (Part 2)

5

**Two semester system and 13-17 weeks of instruction per semester.**

However, the majority are between 14-16 weeks to teach per semester

6

**More use of absolute grading than relative grading**

However, grading policies vary from institution to institution and even from department to department

7

**Two general patterns of academic calendar**

However, academic calendar greatly varies from institution to institution and from nation to nation (See next chart)

- ① Brunei Darussalam, China, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Laos, Singapore and Vietnam
- ② Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand

# A comparative chart of academic calendars in Asia

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Japan				/					-			
South Korea	-		/						-			
China			/						-			
Indonesia		/							-			
Laos		/							-			
Vietnam		/							-			
Brunei-Darussalam	/							-				
Singapore	/							-				
Thailand	/					-					/	
The Philippines	/					-					/	
Cambodia	/				-					/		
Myanmar	/					-						/
Malaysia	/					-						/

# Possible Future Challenges for Asian Institutions

1

Credit Transfer: *Utilization of ECTS, UCTS, or AUN-ACTS? Or the Development of ACC (Asian Common Credit) [1ACC  $\doteq$  1.6 ECTS]*

2

Quality of Education: *Indication of learning outcomes in course catalogue, syllabus and transcript*

3

Grade Transfer: *Development of a grading system by utilizing both absolute & relative grading methods to select a group of excellent students*

4

Academic Calendar: *Creation of a half-semester courses by teaching 7-8 weeks courses instead of 13-17weeks.*



# Future Choice of Credit Transfer Scheme in Asia

1 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: 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

3 However, student workload for ECTS does not reflect to Asian workload (1500-1800 h/year in Europe vs. 1800-2100+(???) h/year in Asia)

4 Asia already has a similar tendency (One credit  $\doteq$  40-50 hours in their regional credit systems)

# 1. Development of Asian Common Credit

A common framework of credit system among 13 Asian nations is;

**One “Asian Common Credit”(ACC)**

**1**  $\cong$  40-50 hours of student workload  
 $\cong$  1.6 ECTS/UCTS/AUN-ACTS

1 ACC in Asia  $\cong$  1 US credit  $\cong$  1.6 ECTS

**2** If we agree upon the concept of ACC,  
**we DO NOT NEED credit conversion  
scheme among Asian universities.**

1 Asian credit = 1 another Asian credit

# Possible way of understanding two credit systems

## General Trends in Asia and Europe

	ASIA	EUROPE
Total # of years for an undergraduate program	4 years	3 years
Total # of credits towards graduation	120-140	180 ECTS
Average # of credits per year	30-35	60 ECTS
Hours of student workload per credit	40-50 hours	25-30 hours
Total hours of workload per year	1200-1750 h	1500-1800 h
Total hours of workload necessary for graduation	4800-7000 h	4500-5400 h
<b>Proposed transfer scheme</b>	<b>1 ACC</b>	<b>1.6 ECTS</b>
<b>Proposed workload concept</b>	<b>40-50 hours</b>	<b>40-48 hours</b>

This chart has been developed based upon research done by Hotta (2010).  
 The proposed numbers do not represent the opinion of the Japanese government.

## 2. Indication of Learning Outcomes

1

Promote the creation of syllabus, course catalogue & a “Diploma Supplement” type of detailed transcript with ACC and learning outcomes

2

Use the concept of the TUNING<sup>13</sup> project in Europe, especially how to define *generic* and *subject-specific competences* for each class and degree program

\*\*Generic Competences : Interpersonal skills, analytical skills, work autonomously, etc

\*\*Subject-specific Competences : specifically required skills in each field of study

### 3. Development of a grading policy to select the top

1

Rationale: A relative grading type of model may be more useful than an absolute grading model for Asian mobility to select “excellent” students from all institutions despite knowing the actual quality of education in each institution.

2

Roughly ranged and pre-decided proportions of students’ grading to mainly select excellent students for mobility

\*\* For example, the top 5~10% for “A” and the next 20~25% for “B” and the rest in somewhere between C and F (Fail). This will select at least the top 25 ~ 35% of students from all institutions.

## 4. Development of 4 terms in one academic year

1

Allow institutions to offer a half semester courses (**7-8 week sessions**) **with credits** and create 4 divisions in one academic year (See next chart)

2

This creation of 4 divisions in one academic year will create more flexibility for students to study in different educational institutions among Asian and European nations.



## Conclusion (for a balanced mobility in Asia and Europe)

1

Develop a **permeable framework** for mobility between Asian and European higher education

2

Discuss the possible implementation of **ACC**, **learning outcomes**, a grading system to **screen a top group**, and **4 divisions of the academic year** in Asian region

3

Develop a **joint study curricula** by each group of Asian & European partner universities

4

These promotions will bring more **“mutual trust”** and better conditions for quality assurance among Asian and European higher education institutions



**THANK YOU**

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# Glossary

1. **ACC: Asian Common Credit**
2. **ERASMUS: European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students**
3. **ECTS: European Credit Transfer System**
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. **M-I-T: Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand**
9. **AUN's ACTS: ASEAN Credit Transfer System**
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. **TUNING project: Tuning Educational Structures in Europe**