

INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW CONCEPT OF THE UMAP CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM (UCTS) (May, 2013)

I. WHY IS A COMMON EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK (e.g., CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM) IN ASIA NEEDED?

We need a permeable framework, including a common credit transfer system, for higher education in the Asia-Pacific region if we want to mobilize a large number of students for educational exchanges as well as for academic degree-seeking programs within the region. The permeable framework is a set of various types of 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. As the number of participating universities and mobility students rapidly increases, it becomes difficult for universities to manage large-scale international mobility without a simple (transparent, compatible, and systematic) system to process the attendant paperwork. The newly introduced **UMAP Credit Transfer System (UCTS)** is a part of the permeable framework and a simple system that has adopted the concept of Asian Academic Credits (AACs)¹ developed under the study of HOTTA (2010). It has the potential to promote student mobility not only among higher education institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, but also with other parts of the world by providing a simple, systematic measurement tool to count academic credits in the Asia-Pacific region.

II. A NEW DEFINITION OF UCTS AND ITS COMPATIBILITY

The new definition of UCTS introduced since 2013 is as follows:

One (1) UCTS = 38-48 hours of student workload. This includes 13-16 academic hours of instruction.

In October 2012, the UMAP International Board officially adopted a new concept for the UCTS, which was developed based upon the concept of AACs in order to simplify the process of credit transfer among Asian higher education institutions and is completely different from the original UCTS model based on the European Credit Transfer System. This new UCTS accepts a range of different teaching hours and student workloads as equivalent when they are used to calculate credits from different nations and higher education institutions. Thus, it will create a “UMAP Academic Credit Zone” where UMAP participating institutions can transfer credits among themselves on a one-to-one basis, thereby promoting student mobility in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, this one UCTS = 38-48 hours of student workload will also make credit transfer among Asia-Pacific, the following countries’ and region’s higher education institutions much easier than ever before:

A Conversion table of this new UCTS with various nations’ and region’s credit systems

Nation /region	Asia	UCTS	USA	ECTS	UK
Credit Conversion	1credit	1 UCTS	(About) 1credit (Need a negotiation in each case)	(About) 1.5 ECTS	(About) 3 credits*
Student workload	38-48 hours	38-48 hours	(Around) 45 hours (in 2 semester system)	37.5-45 hours	Converted from ECTS
Teaching hours**	13-16 hours	13-16 hours	(Around) 15 hours (in 2 semester system)	-----	-----

* These 3 British credits are based upon the conversion principle of British credits with ECTS defined by the QAA (2008). This principle is effective among all higher education institutions, which use CATS (Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme) in UK

** This teaching hour is based upon the academic hour, which is defined by each nation and/or institution. The actual amount of time varies from institution to institution. For example, in the case of Japan, 1 academic hour often means 45 minutes of instruction; in the US, many institutions teach approximately 50 minutes; and in Asian institutions, one academic hour can be between 45 to 60 minutes of instruction. In this chart, one teaching hour will be counted as one academic hour, not based upon the exact length of teaching hours.

¹ Asian Academic Credits (AACs) is the concept, which can be used as a common credit transfer system for Asian higher education. It was developed from the results of research, namely HOTTA (2010), and is defined as “1 AACs = 38-48 hours of student workload which includes 13-16 academic hours of instruction.”

This duration, ranging from 38 to 48 hours of student workload and 13 to 16 hours of teaching is based on different governmental definitions and/or general tendencies of the credit systems in the higher education of ASEAN plus 3 nations (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam + China, South Korea and Japan). Moreover, it is now clear that this system can also accommodate other Asian nations such as Taiwan and India. Thus, this new UCTS concept is designed not to control or standardize any pre-existing rules and regulations at institutions. Rather, it is designed to provide more detailed information regarding the academic experiences of mobility students at host institutions using standardized indicators, while at the same time allowing institutions to retain their own pre-existing systems and regulations.

III. FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTIONS OF UMAP PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

The new UCTS concept does not have any function related to measuring the level of academic rigor 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 by the host institution. UMAP will promote the idea that all participating institutions provide two types of information—(1) the university brochure and homepage for student exchanges to explain the concept of this new UCTS, and (2) the UMAP Study Plan with the information of UCTS. UMAP will urge participating institutions to provide the following information and documents.

- (1) Since there is not much “credit conversation” required among many Asia-Pacific institutions with this new UCTS concept, the first and most important thing your institution needs to do is declare that, for example, “**(Name of) UNIVERSITY complies with the concept of UCTS (UMAP Credit Transfer System) for student mobility.**” A statement such as this should appear on your institution’s homepage, along with a link to your exchange program brochure and other forms of public announcements so that partner institutions and potential partner institutions will understand the manner in which you intend to handle credit transfer for student mobility. Moreover, your institution needs to add further explanation about UCTS by stating the following definition of UCTS, as well.

One (1) UCTS = 38-48 hours of student workload. This includes 13-16 academic hours of instruction.

- (2) The second important activity is to exchange a UMAP study plan (Standard UMAP Application Form) containing information about courses, numbers of credits, and other information regarding an exchange student, including one’s home and host institution. This form can be used very effectively for screening incoming students to accept or offer scholarships to them, and it will be useful for outgoing students to clarify their own objective and study plan prior to their study abroad by completing the form with the consultation of their academic advisors and registrars. Finally, use of the UMAP study plan will help both students and institutions to transfer credits much more easily in the end because of mutual agreement prior to study abroad.

Although the use of UCTS and the three types of information and documents are dependent upon the decision of each institution, the UMAP community strongly believes that this new UCTS concept in conjunction with the two types of information to improve transparency of institutions’ education will greatly promote “mutually trusted” student exchanges and other forms of mobility among higher education institutions in the Asia-Pacific region.

REFERENCE:

- (1) Quality Assurance Agency (2008) Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Guidance on Academic Credit Arrangements in Higher Education in England, (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 23 pp. (retrieved from <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/creditframework.pdf> on April 21, 2013)
- (2) Hotta, Taiji. et al (2010) 「ACTS と各国の単位互換に関する研究」 (Study on the ASEAN Credit Transfer System and Credit Transfer Systems in Asian Nations) [The Report of Mission Research by the Promotion Fund of Leading University Reform, The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan (MEXT), 2009], Hiroshima University, 403 pp.

[THIS IS STILL A DRAFT, May 2013]

UMAP standard application form and study plan using UCTS

1. STUDENT'S PERSONAL DATA

(NOTE: To be completed by the student. The information provided in this form will be treated in confidence by the home and host institutions.
Data from the form may be used for UMAP/ UCTS statistical purpose, but only in an aggregated and non-identifiable manner.)

Student's Name: _____		Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> M/ <input type="checkbox"/> F	Student ID Number: _____	
Student's Home Address: _____			Student e-mail: _____	
Home Institution: _____	Home Country: _____		Univ. Year: : <input type="checkbox"/> 1/ <input type="checkbox"/> 2/ <input type="checkbox"/> 3/ <input type="checkbox"/> 4	*DEGREE: <input type="checkbox"/> B/ <input type="checkbox"/> M/ <input type="checkbox"/> D
Host Institution: _____	Host Country: _____		Major: _____	
Foreign Language Proficiency: (name of Language(s)) _____		(Level) _____	Health Insurance: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have / <input type="checkbox"/> No, I don't have If yes, name _____	

* In the section of DEGREE, B = Bachelor, M=Master's and D=Doctoral Degree

2. BASIC INFORMATION OF HOME & HOST INSTITUTION'S CREDIT TRANSFER

=====DEFINITION OF UCTS=====

One (1) UCTS = 38-48 hours of student workload. This includes 13-16 academic hours of instruction.

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2-(1) Use of UCTS at Home and Host Institution for credit transfer

UCTS at HOME institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, my HOME institution complies with UCTS / <input type="checkbox"/> No, my HOME institution does not complies with UCTS
UCTS at HOST institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, HOST institution complies with UCTS / <input type="checkbox"/> No, HOST institution does not complies with UCTS

2-(2) If "NO" to both or either institution(s) regarding the use of UCTS in question A above, please provide detailed information below.

*Home Institution	ONE CREDIT at Home institution = _____ hours of Student Workload	And/or, = _____ hours of Teaching Hour
*Host Institution	ONE CREDIT at Host Institution = _____ hours of Student Workload	And/or, = _____ hours of Teaching Hour

*NOTE: Even if your home or host university does not use UCTS, the definition of credit in that institution can be counted as One Credit = One UCTS, if that definition satisfies the definition of UCTS explained above. [If it does not match the UCTS concept, please ask your home institution for its own way of calculation.]

3-(1) DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED UMAP STUDY PLAN - Which SEMESTER and YEAR? (Spring / Fall / Other term [] in Year [])

List of course numbers and titles of courses you'd like to register at host institution and transfer to home institution				Credits		
Host Institution		(your) Home Institution		HOST		HOME
Course #	Title	Course #	Title	Credits	UCTS	Credits

3-(2) Which SEMESTER and YEAR? (Spring / Fall / Other term [] in Year [])

List of course numbers and titles of courses you'd like to register at host institution and transfer to home institution				Credits		
Host Institution		(your) Home Institution		HOST		HOME
Course #	Title	Course #	Title	Credits	UCTS	Credits

NOTE: If necessary, continue the list on a separate sheet, including any changes to the approved program.

4. CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT ON STUDY PLAN BY ALL THREE PARTIES

This form must be signed by student and also counter-signed by the academic advisor/ staff members for both institutions' approval.

Student	Home institution's academic advisor/ staff member	Host University's academic advisor/ staff member
Signature: _____	Signature: _____	Signature: _____
	Title: _____	Title: _____
Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____

[THIS IS STILL A DRAFT, May 2013]

(SAMPLE) UMAP standard application form and study plan using UCTS

1. STUDENT'S PERSONAL DATA

(NOTE: To be completed by the student. The information provided in this form will be treated in confidence by the home and host institutions.
Data from the form may be used for UMAP/ UCTS statistical purpose, but only in an aggregated and non-identifiable manner.)

Student's Name: <u>AAAAAA BBBB BBBB</u>		Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> M/ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> F	Student ID Number: <u>#####</u>
Student's Home Address: <u>2-2 AAAA street, BBBB City, CCCC, Asian or Pacific nation</u>			Student e-mail: <u>DDDD@EEE-univ. UMAP</u>
Home Institution: <u>UMAP home University</u>	Home Country: <u>Asian Nation A</u>	Univ. Year: <input type="checkbox"/> 1/ <input type="checkbox"/> 2/ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3/ <input type="checkbox"/> 4	*DEGREE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B/ <input type="checkbox"/> M/ <input type="checkbox"/> D
Host Institution: <u>UMAP host University</u>	Host Country: <u>Pacific Nation B</u>	Major: <u>Asian & Pacific Study</u>	
Foreign Language Proficiency: (name of Language(s)) <u>e.g.) English</u>		(Level) <u>e.g.) Advanced, or TOEFL 80</u>	Health Insurance: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have / <input type="checkbox"/> No, I don't have If yes, name _____

* In the section of DEGREE, B = Bachelors, M=Master's and D=Doctoral Degree

2. BASIC INFORMATION OF HOME & HOST INSTITUTION'S CREDIT TRANSFER

=====DEFINITION OF UCTS=====

One (1) UCTS = 38-48 hours of student workload. This includes 13-16 academic hours of instruction.

=====

2-(1) Use of UCTS at Home and Host Institution for credit transfer

UCTS at HOME institution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, my HOME institution complies with UCTS / <input type="checkbox"/> No, my HOME institution does not complies with UCTS
UCTS at HOST institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, HOST institution complies with UCTS / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, HOST institution does not complies with UCTS

2-(2) If "NO" to both or either institution(s) regarding the use of UCTS in question A above, please provide detailed information below.

*Home Institution	ONE CREDIT at Home institution = _____hours of Student Workload	And/or, = _____hours of Teaching Hour
*Host Institution	ONE CREDIT at Host Institution = _____hours of Student Workload	And/or, = <u>15</u> hours of Teaching Hour

*NOTE: **Even if your home or host university does not use UCTS, the definition of credit in that institution can be counted as One Credit = One UCTS, if that definition satisfies the definition of UCTS explained above.** [If it does not match the UCTS concept, please ask your home institution for its own way of calculation.]

3-(1) DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED UMAP STUDY PLAN - Which SEMESTER and YEAR? (Spring / Fall / Other term [] in Year [2013**])**

List of course numbers and titles of courses you'd like to register at host institution and transfer to home institution				Credits		
Host Institution		(your) Home Institution		HOST		HOME
Course #	Title	Course #	Title	Credits	UCTS	Credits
100	Asian Business	aaa	Asian Business Management	5	5	3
		bbb	Short Internship			2
200	Asian Technology	ccc	Technology and Development	3	3	2
	Science A	ddd	Introduction of Asian Technology	3	3	2
		eee	Science Theory B			2
300	Seminar in Asian Study	fff	Seminar in UMAP Study	2	2	2

3-(2) Which SEMESTER and YEAR? (Spring / Fall / Other term [] in Year [])

List of course numbers and titles of courses you'd like to register at host institution and transfer to home institution				Credits		
Host Institution		(your) Home Institution		HOST		HOME
Course #	Title	Course #	Title	Credits	UCTS	Credits

NOTE: If necessary, continue the list on a separate sheet, including any changes to the approved program.

4. CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT ON STUDY PLAN BY ALL THREE PARTIES

This form must be signed by student and also counter-signed by the academic advisor/ staff members for both institutions' approval.

Student	Home institution's academic advisor/ staff member	Host University's academic advisor/ staff member
Signature: _____	Signature: _____	Signature: _____
	Title: <u>Academic Adviser, Professor in Asian Study</u>	Title: <u>Registrar, Office of Academic Affairs</u>
Date: <u>MONTH / DAY / YEAR</u>	Date : <u>MONTH / DAY / YEAR</u>	Date : <u>MONTH / DAY / YEAR</u>