



THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
香港理工大學

Curriculum Revision for the Triennium 2005-08

Guidelines for Curriculum Revision

2005-08

Prepared by:

**The Working Group on Curriculum Revision
under the Chairmanship of VP(AD)**

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Frequently Asked Questions

On the 10 and 11 of March 2004, EDC organised two meetings with DLTC Chairs to identify areas concerning the curriculum revision that need clarification. While one of the major purposes of this document is to give clarifications, here is a selected list of the questions raised in those DLTC meetings and where they are being addressed in this document for your easy referencing.

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The appendices are essential parts of these Guidelines. They are accessible via the Curriculum Revision Website at <http://www.polyu.edu.hk/cr>.

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* Subject to Senate approval.

1 Introduction

1.1 The University is taking a major, strategic initiative to revise the curricula of its academic programmes for the triennium 2005-08. Revised programmes are expected to be implemented in September 2005. As a result, departments are required to take necessary action to review their academic programmes at their earliest convenience and to submit revised programmes for endorsement in early 2005.

1.2 To steer the implementation of this curriculum revision, VP(AD) has set up a Working Group on Curriculum Revision under his leadership and with the following membership:

Chairman:	Prof. Philip Yeung	VP(AD)
Faculty representatives:	Prof. Franklin Shin	(FAST / AP)
	Prof. Edward Snape	(FB / MM)
	Prof. Geoffrey Shen	(FCLU / BRE)
	Dr. Martin Warren	(FCOM / ENGL)
	Prof. Danny Sutanto	(FENG / EE)
	Dr. Jan McKay	(FHSS / OR)
AS representative:	Mrs. Nancy Tong	(AS)
EDC representatives:	Dr. Angela Ho	(EDC)
	Dr. Patrick Lai	(EDC)

1.3 This document (referred to as the ‘Guidelines’) is prepared by the Working Group to provide programme teams with the essential guidelines for the required curriculum revision. In conjunction with this, the Working Group will also disseminate these guidelines in faculty forums.

1.4 The ‘Guidelines’ specifies the changes required for this curriculum revision, elaborates on the PolyU policies pertaining to these changes, and addresses the questions raised by DLTC Chairs in the two meetings organised by EDC on 10 and 11 March 2004. To facilitate an easy search for answers to the questions raised by colleagues, frequently asked questions are inserted under relevant section headings.

1.5 To assist colleagues in this curriculum revision exercise, EDC will provide a range of supportive resources and activities, including:

- Curriculum Revision Resource Book*: This resourceful booklet will provide tips, ideas and examples to assist programme teams in the completion of the document required for endorsement.
- Sharing Forums / Workshops / Consultation Sessions*
- Curriculum Revision Website* (<http://www.polyu.edu.hk/cr>): This will provide easy access to these ‘Guidelines’ and other relevant official documents, as well as the Curriculum Revision Resource Book and useful links and references.

Colleagues are welcome to contact the following EDC colleagues for further information or support:

Dr. Angela Ho	Ext.: 6282	Groupwise: etangela
Dr. Patrick Lai	Ext.: 6294	Groupwise: etklai

2 Curriculum Revision – Why and What?

2.1 Background

PolyU has instigated this curriculum revision in response to the recent directives from UGC and in accordance with our mission to achieve excellence in professional education.

Two recent messages from UGC have implications on our curriculum design:

- a) UGC will adopt a new funding model of Funding Credit Units starting in the Triennium 2005-08 which suggests a need to reduce the credit requirement of full-time undergraduate programmes to a 90-credit model.
- b) While the final report of the Second Round TLQPR on PolyU has been very positive and favourable, the Review Panel has also made recommendations on some areas where we could further develop. One important recommendation is that a stronger alignment should be developed between methods of student assessment and intended learning outcomes.

Consequently, two changes are called upon for all our programmes, one in terms of adjusting programme components to fit a reduced credit requirement, the other in terms of improvement in curriculum philosophy and pedagogical design.

In addition, given the recent role statement of PolyU as defined by UGC, it is clear that we should strive to provide high value-added education leading to the development of all-round students with professional competence. This is in fact a mission that we have long held and have explicitly committed to with the formulation of Strategic Objective 1 in our Strategic Plan.

It is therefore opportune for our University as a whole to review and enhance our overall curriculum approach so as to fulfil the dual purpose of responding to UGC's expectations and embracing our role and mission.

This curriculum revision is a development based on our past good work in providing quality teaching and learning. Nevertheless, in order to more holistically and vigorously address the issue of alignment with intended learning outcomes, it is beneficial for our University to embark on an explicit re-orientation of our curriculum philosophy to an outcome-oriented model, and to adopt the concept of constructive alignment to guide our teaching and assessment design. It is an international trend in higher education to move towards outcome-based education. It is also a trend for professional bodies to require professional education courses to demonstrate achievement of intended learning outcomes.

2.2 Goal and intended changes

The goal of the strategic action described above is to revise our academic programmes to become outcome-oriented programmes for the development of all-round students with professional competence.

Specifically, this necessitates the following categories of changes:

- a) *Adjusting programme components to fit new credit requirements*
 1. all 3-year full-time undergraduate programmes are required to reduce to no more than 90 credits and higher diploma programmes are encouraged to reduce to 60 credits¹.
 2. A new framework for the provision of language training and the strengthening of general education components.
- b) *Adopting an outcome-oriented model to curriculum design*
 3. Clear articulation of intended learning outcomes and designing teaching and assessment methods which align with intended outcomes.
 4. Integration of Strategic Objective 1 into the formal curriculum.
 5. Formalization of work-integration education (WIE) requirements for all undergraduate programmes.

2.3 Focus of efforts

Changes intended for this curriculum revision are not meant to be a major upheaval to existing programmes requiring changes in the overall structure of a programme. The major emphasis of the revision is on reviewing and enhancing educational philosophy and pedagogy.

While the reduction in credit requirements can be achieved with immediate effect, the shift in educational philosophy takes time. This curriculum revision exercise therefore should not be seen as a one-off initiative. Instead, further enhancement of the revised programmes should continue after their first implementation in 2005-06. Annual programme review and Departmental Assessment are important mechanisms for ensuring continual quality enhancement.

¹ Subject to Senate approval. For details please see Appendix II.

3 Programmes and Student Cohorts Involved

3.1 Undergraduate programmes

All UGC-funded full-time undergraduate programmes are required to revise their curricula according to the principles set out in these 'Guidelines'.

3.2 Higher diploma programmes

Higher diploma programmes are also required to revise their curricula to an outcome-oriented model according to the principles set out in these 'Guidelines', but flexibility is allowed with regard to credit reduction, and the integration of Strategic Objective 1 and work-integrated education in the curricula as stated below:

- a) Since there have not been indications from UGC for changes to the existing funding model for HD programmes (which is FTE-based), departments would only be encouraged to consider a reduction of credits for their HD programmes, except for those which are due to be phased out in 2004-05 and in the next 2005-08 triennium².
- b) The integration of Strategic Objective 1 into the formal curriculum is not stipulated, although strongly advised.
- c) A work-integrated education component is not mandated, although encouraged.

3.3 Self-financed programmes

Self-financed programmes are also expected to carry out similar curriculum revisions to those adopted by UGC-funded programmes.

3.4 Existing cohorts of students

FAQ

- Will the new funding model also affect existing cohorts of students?
- Will student cohorts enrolled before September 2005 be affected by this curriculum revision in any way?

The new funding model will take effect starting in the academic year 2005-06, and similarly the consequent reduction in credit requirements. However, departments should note that the revised requirements about general education will be implemented as from 2004-05 instead of 2005-06, according to the plan explained in VP(AD)'s email to Deans dated 28 April 2004 (Appendix V).

Although the reduction in credit requirements will not affect the existing cohorts of students, pedagogic changes in terms of adopting an outcome-oriented approach and

² Subject to Senate approval. For details please see Appendix II.

aligning teaching and assessment with intended learning outcomes should still be introduced. These students should not be deprived the advantages of the preferred curriculum design and pedagogy.

4 Endorsement of Revised Curriculum

4.1 Endorsement of revisions to existing programmes

FAQ

- Is validation required for the revised curricula?
- How will the revised curricula be endorsed?

The revisions are not fundamental in terms of programme structure, and are therefore only required to be approved by the Faculty Board. The purpose of the endorsement process is for the Faculty Board to assess that an outcome-oriented programme design is in place with intended learning outcomes, teaching and assessment all in alignment.

4.2 Documentation for endorsement

FAQ

- What documents are required to be submitted for endorsement?

Extensive documentation is not required for endorsement to avoid turning the curriculum revision into a purely paper exercise. The ultimate purpose of this curriculum revision is to enhance the quality of our programmes with the aim of excelling in our mission of developing all-round students with professional competence. This can only be achieved when programme team members work within the paradigm of an outcome-oriented education model, and embrace strategies for aligning teaching and assessment with intended outcomes.

The process of preparing the document should therefore involve colleagues in thoughtful reviewing and rethinking about the existing curriculum. The document that is eventually produced should serve to assist both teachers and students to understand the expected outcomes of the programme and the alignment of teaching and assessment with intended outcomes.

To this effect, the document should include the following sections:

a) *Programme outcomes*

The overarching learning outcomes that you intend students to achieve upon completing the programme should be clearly articulated. At the programme level, outcomes should be articulated in broad statements of intellectual abilities, knowledge, skills and generic attributes.

To fulfil the goal of developing all-round students with professional competence, it is required that outcome statements encompass the following two categories of learning outcomes:

1. Professional/academic knowledge and skills.
2. Attributes for all-roundedness (including those listed in Strategic Objective 1).

b) *Alignment of teaching and learning with programme outcomes*

In this section major teaching and learning methods to be used in the programme should be explained with justifications that the methods are conducive to the attainment of the intended learning outcomes specified in the two categories. It should be noted that focus is not on the specification of contact hours. Instead, emphasis should be put on discussing the appropriateness of the teaching and learning designs from an educational point of view.

c) *Alignment of assessment with programme outcomes*

In this section major assessment methodologies to be used in the programme should be identified with justifications that the methods are suitable for assessing student performance with respect to the intended learning outcomes specified in the two categories. It should be noted that the focus is not on the allocation of weighting for continuous assessment and examination. Instead, emphasis should be put on discussing the appropriateness of the assessment designs to enable valid assessment of the intended learning outcomes. If deemed appropriate, subjects can employ 100% continuous assessment.

An outcome-oriented curriculum model entails a criterion-referenced assessment approach which grades students according to their actual level of learning outcome achieved instead of with reference to a normal distribution curve. In support of this ethos, the Academic Regulations Committee has recommended revisions to the General Assessment Regulations on subject grading and retake for *en bloc* implementation with effect from the 2005-06 academic year. Details of the revisions are explained in Appendix III³. In accordance with this recommendation, programme teams should revisit the assessment criteria used in their programmes. It is advisable to append assessment rubrics of major intended outcomes in the document for endorsement. The Curriculum Revision Resource Book produced by EDC contains examples of assessment rubrics for programme team's reference.

d) *Subject outcomes of component subjects*

Subject outcomes refer to the intellectual abilities, knowledge, skills and attributes that students will achieve by completing a subject. It should be noted that they are not meant to be content topics in the syllabus. In reviewing the subjects, emphasis should be on ensuring that the subject outcomes are in alignment with the overarching learning outcomes of the programme in the two categories, namely: (1) professional/academic knowledge and skills, and (2) attributes for all-roundedness.

e) *Work-integrated education*

The revised curriculum of all full-time undergraduate programmes should contain a mandatory component of work-integrated education. An outline of the following aspects regarding the WIE component should be provided:

1. Intended learning outcomes of the WIE, in particular, the generic attributes that it aims to develop.
2. Structure of the WIE component.

³ Subject to Senate approval.

3. Support provided to enhance learning in the workplace.
4. Assessment method for the WIE experience.

f) *Curriculum map*

A curriculum map provides a holistic view of the degree to which each intended learning outcome is being taught and assessed over the span of the programme, thereby helping the programme team to check that all intended outcomes are adequately addressed. It can also assist students in selecting subjects to ensure a balanced development in their professional and generic attributes.

The most common format for a curriculum map is a matrix which places intended outcomes along one axis and subjects along the other. Another format maps outcomes with opportunities for introduction, reinforcement and assessment. Both formats are provided in Appendix I.

A curriculum map is an optional item, but it is strongly advised that it is included in the submission. Programme teams who have built a curriculum map before have found the experience very valuable for working out a balanced and progressive development of the different attributes throughout the programme.

To facilitate programme teams to formulate and document their revisions to the curriculum, a document template ‘Revisions for an Outcome-oriented Curriculum’ is provided in Appendix I. Programme teams are free to choose whether or not they use this template.

4.3 Schedule

Departments are strongly advised to start the revision process at their earliest convenience so that ample discussions can be conducted among programme team members to arrive at a shared understanding with regard to the outcome-oriented paradigm and programme design.

Below are the key dates for this curriculum revision exercise.

23 June 04	Deadline for submission of programme information to AS for inclusion in the e-Prospectus and JUPAS Handbook. Faculties/Departments can inform AS of any subsequent changes by mid-August for inclusion in the blueprints before publishing. Only information on the total number of credits for graduation and a broad outline about the programme are required at this stage.
To be decided by Faculty Board	Deadline for submission of document to Faculty Board for endorsement
20 April 05	Deadline for Faculty Boards’ endorsement of programme revisions
1 September 05	Implementation of revised curricula

4.4 Design and validation of new programmes

The design of new programmes should be similarly informed by the principles detailed in the 'Guidelines'. The changes intended for this curriculum revision should be incorporated as essential features of new programmes. Components stipulated in Section 4.2 for the programme revision document should also be included as part of the full validation documentation (for specification of the full documentation required for the validation of a new programme please refer to the 'Handbook on Programme Planning, Validation and Management' on the AS website).

Departments should be alerted that the mechanism and schedule for endorsement as set out in the 'Guidelines' are only meant for the revision of existing programmes and do not apply to the validation of new programmes. Validation is required for new programmes which should be conducted as early as possible after the approval of the Initial Programme Proposal by the Senate.

4.5 Departments with up-coming Departmental Assessment

Those departments that have their Departmental Assessment in the coming months, it will not be possible to complete the curriculum revision as stipulated in the 'Guidelines' to meet the schedule of Departmental Assessment in these cases. These departments therefore should also follow the curriculum revision schedule as set out in Section 4.3.

5 Strategic Objective 1 (SO1)

5.1 Strategic Objective 1 and Strategic Action S1.1

PolyU has accorded a high priority in the Strategic Plan to developing all-round students, as detailed in Strategic Objective 1 and the associated Strategic Action S1.1, which are reproduced below:

Strategic Objective 1:

To enhance the all-round development of students, particularly in the areas of global outlook, critical and creative thinking, social and national responsibility, cultural appreciation, life-long learning, biliteracy and trilingualism, entrepreneurship and leadership.

	<i>Strategic Action</i>	<i>Goal</i>
S1.1	Academic departments and relevant centres to review and strengthen curricula, teaching and assessment methods, and to ensure the inclusion of components that could help students to attain the qualities listed in the objective.	To ensure that each programme must contain, where appropriate, elements that would enhance students' all-round development, particularly in those areas listed in the objective, so as to develop a basic 'core-competence' in our graduates.

5.2 Attributes of all-roundedness versus professional competencies

FAQ

- Which of the two categories of outcomes is more important?
- Would attributes for all-roundedness be in conflict with professional competencies?

As a major provider of professional education, we understand the importance and accept responsibilities of enhancing the intellectual as well as the holistic development of our students. We believe the attributes for all-roundedness (i.e. generic skills) and professional competencies are complementary. Both must be addressed and are not in conflict with each other for the following reasons:

a) *Role of PolyU*

It is the role of PolyU as designated by UGC to put its '*emphasis on high value-added education with a balanced approach leading to the development of all-round students with professional competence*'.

b) *Professional development requires generic skills*

Many generic skills are important for professional development, e.g. critical and creative thinking, lifelong learning abilities, etc. Furthermore, there are few, if any, professions nowadays that do not require at least some generic skills from their recruits that would allow them to work flexibly and learn new skills effectively.

c) *Employability of our graduates*

The labour market is placing increasing demand on people to possess an appropriate combination of professional skills and generic skills so as to cope with a rapidly changing work environment. Professional skills in isolation are becoming less valuable. As knowledge or training becomes more specialised, finding a job that exactly matches the area of specialisation becomes more unlikely. Many graduates are not employed in their own discipline. Therefore, skills that are transferable must not be neglected in their professional education.

5.3 Integrating SO1 into the formal curriculum

FAQ

- Does SO1 need to be incorporated into the formal curriculum of all programmes?
- Must a programme address all attributes indicated in SO1?

It is the University's strategic plan that SO1 needs to be incorporated into the formal curriculum for all programmes. However, it is not necessary to address all SO1 attributes in every subject. But it must be demonstrated through curriculum mapping that at the programme level SO1 is being addressed appropriately and adequately. There are many ways in which generic skills can be integrated into teaching and assessment; problem-based learning, action planning, reflective journals and portfolios are some common examples.

Due to the differing needs of different disciplines, programme teams have the flexibility, subject to endorsement by their Faculty Board, to identify attributes which are more, or less, relevant in their disciplinary context and thus assign different levels of emphasis.

5.4 Attaining SO1 outside the formal curriculum

FAQ

- Can SO1 be addressed outside the 90 credits?
- Can SO1 be assigned to be attained through activities offered by SAO?

It is legitimate to count on learning experiences which fall outside those provided in the basic credit requirements to achieve SO1. Non-credit bearing co-curricular activities organised by the department or extra-curricular activities offered by the Student Affairs Office can be counted towards the fulfilment of SO1. However, such activities should be planned as an integral part of the programme and should not be left to voluntary participation by students. In such cases, a department must include in the endorsement document a plan which delineates clearly the strategies for (1) assisting students to identify co-curricular or extra-curricular activities which are relevant to the programme outcomes, (2) motivating students to attend such activities, and (3) documenting students' participation and achievement in such activities.

6 Work-Integrated Education (WIE)

6.1 The University's policy of formalising the requirements of WIE

While sandwich programmes or clinical placements/fieldwork have been an established feature of many of our programmes, the inclusion of a WIE component has been subject to the design of individual programmes in the past. The University has committed to further promoting this learning approach and has written into its Academic Development Proposal submitted to UGC that WIE requirements would be formalised for all full-time undergraduate programmes in the next triennium.

The emphasis on WIE aims to achieve the following objectives:

- a) To reaffirm the positioning of PolyU as a university offering academic programmes in a professional context.
- b) To strengthen the competitive edge of our professionally oriented programmes with a view to attracting more quality students and to enhancing the employability of students.
- c) To help achieve the strategic objective of enhancing the all-round development of students.

6.2 Formalisation of work-integrated education

FAQ

- What does it mean by formalising WIE?
- What does it mean that WIE activities have to be 'structured'? (Clause 1.5 in ADP)
- What does it mean that WIE activities have to be 'measurable'? (Clause 1.5 in ADP)

By formalising the requirements of WIE, it is stipulated that:

- a) All full-time UGC-funded undergraduate programmes should include a mandatory WIE component.
- b) The mandatory WIE component(s) should be credit bearing.
- c) Mandatory WIE activities should be in alignment with PolyU's strategic goal of providing value-added education leading to the development of all-round students with professional competence. This requires that the WIE activities should aim to achieve learning outcomes in the following:
 - professional knowledge and skills, and
 - attributes for all-roundedness as specified in SO1.
- d) Mandatory WIE activities should be 'structured', as follows:
 - There should be intended learning outcomes set for the workplace learning.
 - Work experience should be purposefully designed to provide intentional learning aimed at the attainment of the intended outcomes, instead of leaving learning to occur incidentally as a side effect of work.

- Appropriate mechanisms of support provided by PolyU and workplace supervisors should be devised to ensure that effective learning does take place.
- e) Mandatory WIE activities should be ‘measurable’ in terms of the following:
- Students should be required to document their workplace learning experience using instruments appropriate for demonstrating attainment of WIE learning outcomes, e.g. reports, reflective journals, portfolios, etc.
 - Assessment of the attainment of intended learning outcomes and the provision of student feedback should be built in.

6.3 Nature, format and extent of WIE

FAQ

- What kinds of WIE will be accepted as a mandatory component?

All structured and measurable learning experience which takes place in an organisational context relevant to a student’s future profession or to the development of generic skills that will be valuable in that profession will be considered as satisfying the WIE requirement.

WIE should be a cooperative venture between the PolyU department and the work organisation. In order to enhance the feasibility of placement arrangements, and to provide more flexibility to departments so that they can take account of the specific situations of individual industries, WIE is intended to be flexible. The following list indicates the flexibility that will be entertained:

- a) The WIE component can be scheduled at any stage of a student’s study.
- b) The WIE period can vary from programme to programme and range from a few weeks to a full year.
- c) The WIE component can be delivered in Hong Kong, Chinese mainland or overseas.
- d) A wide range of formats are acceptable, e.g. sandwich programme, block placement, internship, cooperative project, clinical placement, Preferred Graduate Development Programme...
- e) Community service and summer jobs secured by students themselves, if relevant to a student’s future profession or to the development of generic skills that will be valuable in that profession, and supplemented with mechanisms to ensure that they are ‘structured’ and ‘measurable’, can be recognised as satisfying the WIE requirement subject to the endorsement of their parent departments.

6.4 Credits for WIE

FAQ

- How will WIE contribute towards the credit requirements of a programme?
- Should the credits for WIE count towards the GPA?

The following are the guidelines with regard to WIE credits:

- a) Mandatory WIE component(s) should be credit-bearing.
- b) Departments have the autonomy to decide whether the WIE component is an essential requirement of the programme. If the WIE component is considered an essential part of the academic programme, it should be included within the 90 credits. (Please refer to Appendix II for details.) A WIE component can be counted outside the 90 credits, if the activities do not form part and parcel of the programme curriculum. WIE activities which do not form part and parcel of the programme curriculum can be assigned 'training credits' and will be reflected on the transcripts for co-curricular activities. Training credits will not count towards the 90 credits.
- c) Whether the practical credits (for practical component) and training credits (for WIE component) will be counted in the GPA calculation will be decided by the department.
- d) Number of credits carried by a WIE component may vary from programme to programme depending upon the nature and extent of the activities and will be decided by the department.

7 Language and General Education Requirements

7.1 Task Force on Mandatory Language and General Education Subjects

A Task Force on Mandatory Language and General Education Subjects has recommended a new framework for the provision of language and general education subjects in PolyU which has been subsequently endorsed in the Senate paper SEN/34/A5 (Appendix IV). The new approach involves the provision of language training to suit the individual needs of students, and the strengthening of general education components through focused design and increased choices of subjects and the requirement for student participation in co-curricular activities.

7.2 Language subjects

The implementation plan should be worked out by the faculties/departments in conjunction with the English Language Centre and the Chinese Language Centre, as guided by the framework endorsed in the Senate Paper SEN/34/A5 (Appendix IV).

7.3 General Education subjects

It was resolved at the meeting of the Working Group on Implementation of the Revised Credit-bearing General Education Requirements/Provisions on 26 April 2004 to implement the Senate-approved General Education revisions in a phase-in manner, starting from the 2004-05 cohort of intake. The implementation plan is detailed in VP(AD)'s email to Deans on the subject dated 28 April 2004 (Appendix V).

8 The New Credit Model

8.1 Academic regulations

Among the frequently asked questions are those relating to credit and subject values, programme composition, etc. for the new credit model.

Notwithstanding the reduction in the number of credits, academic regulations now in place governing the credit-based system will still be valid for the revised programmes. Such regulations are detailed in the relevant Regulations Handbooks, in particular the ‘Handbook on Programme Planning, Validation and Management’ and the ‘Handbook on Academic Regulations and Procedures for Credit-Based Programmes’, published by AS.

To align with the changes in credit requirements, the Academic Regulations Committee has recommended a number of revisions to the existing guidelines, which are still subject to Senate’s final approval. They are set out in Appendix II.

8.2 Credit value and student effort

FAQ

- Is one credit in a 90-credit programme equivalent to one credit in an existing programme in terms of student effort?
- Is a 90-credit programme equivalent to an existing programme?

In terms of student effort, one credit in a new 90-credit programme should be equivalent to one credit in the existing programme; at the same time, the academic value of a revised programme should be equivalent to that of the existing one.

The general guidelines about student effort for a credit given in the ‘Handbook on Programme Planning, Validation and Management’ should still apply for the 90-credit model. The relevant section is reproduced below for easy reference:

“In terms of student effort, a student is expected to spend about 35 to 45 hours of study (inclusive of contact hours, private study etc.) to earn a credit. How a credit is to be translated into contact hours, hours of supervised work and private study etc. will depend on the teaching/learning activities and the nature of the subject matter, and will be decided by the Programme Committee, the department and the Faculty.” (Programme Planning, Validation and Management: A2-1)

In addition, the Academic Regulations Committee has recommended the following additional guidelines⁴ (see Appendix II):

“For the purpose of converting academic and practical requirements into credits, a ratio of 1:3 would be applied, i.e. 3 hours of practical work would be equivalent to 1 contact hour for academic subjects.”

⁴ Subject to Senate approval.

“In the case where participation in laboratory/workshop, apart from attendance at lectures, is part of the requirement of a subject, departments can decide on the most appropriate ratio to be adopted for conversion purpose.”

8.3 Practical subjects

FAQ

- Are practical subjects counted towards the 90 credits?

Practical requirements, such as clinical work and fieldwork for Health and Social Work programmes, which form part and parcel of the programme curriculum, should count towards the 90 credits, but should normally account for no more than one-tenth of the total credit requirement for the programme.

8.4 Additional learning components

FAQ

- Can learning components additional to the 90 credits be stipulated for students?

It has been an acknowledged practice in the credit-based system to have additional learning components.

8.5 Subject size

FAQ

- How much flexibility is allowed in deciding the credit value of a subject?

Certain flexibility is allowed as explained in the following excerpt from the ‘Handbook on Programme Planning, Validation and Management’:

“To facilitate the usage of the same subjects in several programmes and to facilitate choices, credit transfer and time-tabling, it is recommended that each programme be composed mainly of subjects of standard size. The standard size of a subject is 3 credits, although subjects of other non-standard sizes in integral number of credits are allowed wherever appropriate...” (Programme Planning, Validation and Management: A2-3)

In view of the constraint of 90 credits for a full-time undergraduate programme, the credit value of some of the subjects will have to be appropriately adjusted, e.g. to reduce the size of some subjects (from the current 3 credits) to 2 credits, so that the credit requirement for a programme can be accommodated under the specified ceiling. Under the revised framework for the provision of general education and language subjects, general education subjects will be of two credits, and the credit value of language subjects, which can be reduced to less than 3 credits, will be decided by the programme’s host department.

8.6 Progression in double-degree programmes

FAQ

- How much flexibility is allowed in the progression in double-degree programmes, e.g. can more credits be allocated to the first three years?

It is not advisable to cram the first three years with more credits. The first three years should consist of no more than 90 credits, and a four-year double-degree programme should normally consist of 120 credits. Flexibility will be allowed for some more credits to be included in the fourth self-financed year of studies, if deemed necessary for professional requirements, hence making the total credit requirements slightly above 120 credits. Please refer to Section 5 of Volume I of the Academic Development Proposals for the Triennium 2005-2008 for the basic structure of the new double degree programmes (except for the one jointly offered by FENG and FB) to be offered in the next triennium.