



THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

A Guide to Iraqi Implementation



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Foreword

Iraqi Higher Education Area is structured around three cycles, Bachelor program, Master program and Doctoral program. The higher education study program is a hybrid program, mixture of the British program with the American program. About 110 Universities in Iraq, including the universities in Kurdistan region, following different study calendars. Some Universities adopting the yearly system, whereas, the other follow the semester system. Some programs in the Iraqi universities follow both the yearly and semester systems for the different modules. The most critical issue faces the three cycles of Iraqi Higher Education is that each level does not function to prepare the student for the labor market. Moreover, the student mobility with the universities abroad is another issue. Due to the hybrid study programs structure, it is hard to achieve a quality teaching/learning to improve the internationalization of Iraqi higher education. The most promising solution to the issues of standardization and mobility in the Iraqi higher education is by adopting Bologna Process. The Bologna Process is a process of cooperation and reform in the field of higher education bringing together 48 countries. It established and seeks to consolidate the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) with comparable and compatible systems of higher education in order to facilitate mobility, increase employability, allow equitable student access and progression and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness worldwide. This booklet helps the principals and the directors of curriculum development at the Iraqi universities to adopt the Bologna process and make a complete transition from the current Iraqi system, smoothly and efficiently. This booklet gives all the technical notes and the procedure to prepare the curriculum and module descriptors of the University programs.

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CHAPTER ONE

Iraqi Higher Education Program and Grading

Iraqi Higher Education Area is structured around three cycles; Bachelor program, Master program and Doctoral program. The higher education study program is a hybrid program, mixture of the British program with the American program. Different systems are adopted in the higher study of Iraq:

1. Semester system
2. Yearly system
3. Hybrid system, mixture of semester and yearly systems

According to the examination instructions No. 431 for the year 2000 and their amendments, the following were recognized:

Calculation of the Program Final Grade

The final total grade is weighted according to the number of studied years:

For four-year study, e.g., engineering, science and social science:

1. First year (first and second semesters) = 10%
2. Second year (third and fourth semesters) = 20%
3. Third year (fifth and sixth semesters) = 30%
4. Fourth year (seventh and eighth semesters) = 40%

For five-year study, e.g., architectural engineering, pharmacy;

1. First year (first and second semesters) = 5%
2. Second year (third and fourth semesters) = 10%
3. Third year (fifth and sixth semesters) = 15%
4. Fourth year (seventh and eighth semesters) = 30%
5. Fifth year (ninth and tenth semesters) = 40%

For six-year study, e.g., medicine;

1. First year (first and second semesters) = 5%
2. Second year (third and fourth semesters) = 5%
3. Third year (fifth and sixth semesters) = 5%
4. Fourth year (seventh and eighth semesters) = 20%
5. Fifth year (ninth and tenth semesters) = 25%
6. Sixth year (eleventh and twelfth semesters) = 40%

Notes:

- For semester systems, each two semesters are considered as a one academic year.
- The minimum grade the student should collect to pass in any of the taught modules should not be less than 50.
- The student has the right to do a reset examination if he/she failed in half or less of the module numbers whether it is a semester or yearly system.
- In case that the student couldn't pass in both, the final and reset examination, he/she should study the failed module(s) and any other module with pass grade.
- It is allowed for the students to shift to the next semester/year with two or less failed module, the student cannot shift to the next semester/year unless he/she passes all the current modules with the failed ones in the previous semester/year.

Grading

The following numerical grades are substituted by the alphabetical grade equivalent:

90 – 100 marks = Excellent

80 – 89 marks = Very Good

70 – 79 marks = Good

60 – 69 marks = Average

50 – 59 marks = Pass

00 – 49 marks = Fail

Curriculum and Module Credit

The number of study weeks per semester is 15 weeks, including the final examination, whereas, it is 30 weeks per year, including the final examination.

The module credit in the Iraqi higher education is measured by Units and calculated according to the number of theoretical and practical hours per week, which are the scheduled teacher-contact hours' interventions.

1. One theoretical hour = 1 Unit (semester system)
2. Two practical (Lab.) hours = 1 Unit
3. Three practical (Lab.) hours = 1.5 Unit

For the Bachelor of Science with four years' study, the student should collect around 140 - 150 Units.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

The Grade Point Average (GPA) of the Bachelor degree in the Iraqi higher education system is the summation of each year grade multiplied by the corresponding percentage weight.

Example (1):

You have finished a bachelor degree consisting of 4 years and you received:

1. First year grade = 75,
2. second year grade = 80,
3. third year grade = 90, and
4. fourth year grade = 65.

The GPA = $75 \times 10\% + 80 \times 20\% + 90 \times 30\% + 65 \times 40\% = 76.5$.

Example (2):

You have finished a bachelor's degree consisting of 8 semesters and you received:

1. First semester grade = 70,
2. second semester grade = 80,
3. third semester grade = 90,
4. fourth semester grade = 70,
5. fifth semester grade = 90,
6. sixth semester grade = 90,
7. seventh semester grade = 60, and
8. eighth semester grade = 70.

The GPA = $(70 \times 5\% + 80 \times 5\%) + (90 \times 10\% + 70 \times 10\%) + (90 \times 15\% + 90 \times 15\%) + (60 \times 20\% + 70 \times 20\%) = 76.5$.

Reference:

No. 431 for the year 2000 and their amendments, Ministry of Higher Education, Baghdad, Iraq.

CHAPTER TWO

The Issues with the Iraqi Study Program

The Iraqi higher education faces many issues, among them:

1. Some colleges/universities follow the semester system, whereas, other colleges/universities follow yearly system. These create an issue to student's mobility among the colleges/universities inside the country.
2. For the student mobility between the Iraqi universities and the Universities abroad, it is difficult for the universities abroad to equalize the taught modules and their credits.
3. The academic calendar of 15 weeks per semester or 30 weeks per year is very hard to be achieved due to the rest examinations during September of each academic year.
4. The three cycles of Iraqi higher education do not function to prepare the student for the labor market. The curricula are setup based on the benchmarking with well-known universities without considering the country market needs.
5. The Unit system does not consider the real student's workload, i.e., it is easy to find two different modules with different student workload but having the same number of Units.
6. The GPA calculation depends on the different year weights, i.e., giving more weight to the senior level and less weight to junior level. This makes the students to be less focusing on the junior level study.

CHAPTER THREE

European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is the result of the political will of 48 countries which, step by step during the last eighteen years, built an area using common tools. These 48 countries implement reforms on higher education on the basis of common key values – such as freedom of expression, autonomy for institutions, independent students' unions, academic freedom, free movement of students and staff. Through this process, countries, institutions and stakeholders of the European area continuously adapt their higher education systems making them more compatible and strengthening their quality assurance mechanisms. For all these countries, the main goal is to increase staff and students' mobility and to facilitate employability.

The Bologna Process is an intergovernmental cooperation of the 48 European countries in the field of higher education. It guides the collective effort of public authorities, universities, teachers, and students, together with stakeholder associations, employers, quality assurance agencies, international organizations, and institutions, including the European Commission, on how to improve the internationalization of higher education.

The main focus is:

1. the introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate),
2. strengthened quality assurance and
3. easier recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

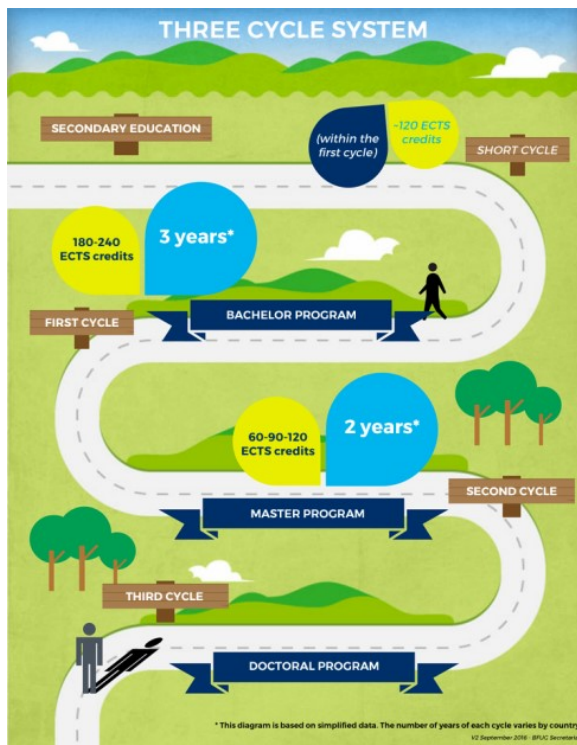
The Bologna Process is a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher-education qualifications. The process has created the European Higher Education Area under the Lisbon Recognition Convention. It is named after the University of Bologna, where the Bologna declaration was signed by education ministers from 29 European countries in 1999. The process was opened to other countries in the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe, and governmental meetings have been held in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007) and Leuven (2009).

Before the signing of the Bologna declaration, the Magna Charta Universitatum was issued at a meeting of university rectors celebrating the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna (and European universities) in 1988. One year before the

declaration, education ministers Claude Allegre (France), Jürgen Rüttgers (Germany), Luigi Berlinguer (Italy) and Baroness Blackstone (UK) signed the Sorbonne declaration in Paris in 1998, committing themselves to "harmonising the architecture of the European Higher Education system". The Bologna Process has 48 participating countries.

It is worthy to mention that the Bologna Process increases the opportunities for studying abroad, as well as making it possible to study at several different universities in Europe to make a degree. It also means that your study abroad experience can span multiple languages and cultures, something that will only make you stronger as a candidate upon graduation. The Bologna Process also allows for academics to move more freely between universities, making the teaching experience more diverse amongst European institutions.

European Higher Education Area is structured around three cycles, where each level has the function of preparing the student for the labor market, for further competence building and for active citizenship.



CHAPTER FOUR

European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

Introduction to ECTS

ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) is an important element of the Bologna process, meant to help international students make the most of their study abroad experience. Initially, the ECTS was directed towards Erasmus students, as a tool for acknowledging courses and programs they studied while abroad.

The ECTS credit system makes degree programs and student performance more transparent and comparable all across European Union countries. ECTS replaced or complemented the different local (national) standards within Europe.

The top benefits of ECTS for students include:

1. You can study a Bachelor in an EU-country and a Master in another EU-country, as if you studied both in the same country.
2. Find work in any EU country you want, as your studies will be easily recognized.
3. If taking a joint-degree, studying a semester abroad, or an Erasmus study experience, it will be easy for your home university to keep track of the study hours, with the help of ‘credit transfers’.
4. Simplified academic paperwork.
5. Easier to estimate the complexity of a study class, seminar, internship, thesis, etc., based on the number of credits it offers upon completion;
6. Less differentiation between local and international students in universities.
7. Even if you drop out of a program, ECTS credits help you prove your academic achievements, so you don't have to take the same courses all over again.
8. Your degree will have the same number of credits, no matter what academic discipline you pursue.

How do ECTS-credits work?

By completing a course, seminar, module etc., you get awarded ECTS-credit points. Every ECTS credit point represents the amount of workload you accomplished in that period of time.

Some examples of ECTS credits assigned per degree type are:

1. One year of studies - 60 ECTS-credits;
2. One Semester of studies – 30 ECTS-credits;
3. Three-year Bachelor's program - 180 ECTS-credits;
4. Four-year Bachelor's program - 240 ECTS-credits;
5. Two-year Master's program - 120 ECTS-credits.

Depending on the country, one ECTS credit point can equal on average between 25 and 30 workload hours. The ECTS of 25 workload hours is the most suitable to shift smoothly from the Iraqi system.

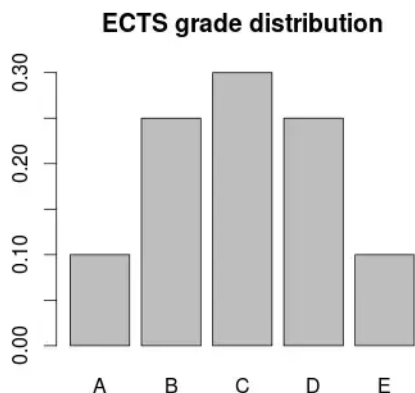
ECTS Grading

Besides the ECTS-credits, the European Commission defined an ECTS grading system, as well. Since there are nearly as many different grading systems as countries, its aim is to make grades more comparable to each other.

The ECTS grading system is not replacing the local grading systems, but it's meant to be a supplement to local grades, for example, on a transcript of records. Similar to the American Grading Scale, the ECTS is based on the class percentile. That means that the grade shows how a student performed compared to the other students in the same class.

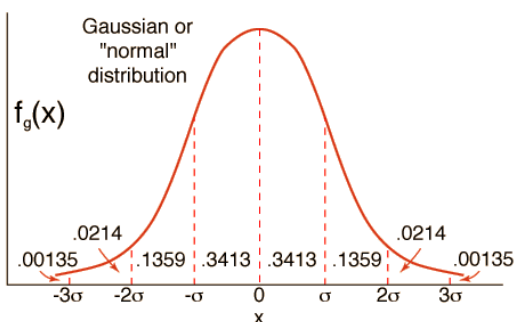
Before the evaluation, the results are divided into two subgroups: pass and fail. Therefore, the results are independent of the students who failed a course. The grading system is defined as follows:

- A: Best 10%
- B: Next 25%
- C: Next 30%
- D: Next 25%
- E: Next 10%
- FX: Fail (almost passing)
- F: Fail



Note: the grades A, B, C, D and E are for the success group

This distribution is a discrete distribution on 5 categories, so it can hardly be called a Gaussian distribution. However, the shape is Gaussian-like and it is easy to see that the European Union got the idea from the Gaussian distribution.



In a very perfect world, the transformation is the same in all countries and for all tests. For example:

50–60%=E,

60–70%=D,

70–80%=C,

80–90%=B, and

90–100%=A - and then the grades will approximately have a normal distribution with mean 75% and standard deviation 11.4%.

Example:

A class of 12 students, 10 students were passed and two were failed. The ECTS grading is shown in the following table, corresponding to the student's marks:

Names	Marks descending	Group	Grade	%
Student 1	76	Pass Group	A	10%
Student 2	75		B	25%
Student 3	73		B	
Student 4	73		B	
Student 5	71		C	30%
Student 6	65		C	
Student 7	60		C	
Student 8	55		D	25%
Student 9	54		D	
Student 10	51		E	10%
Student 11	46	Fail Group	FX	
Student 12	30		F	

FX - some more work required before the credit can be awarded, eligible for Reset Exam

F - considerable further work is required, should repeat the study course

CHAPTER FIVE

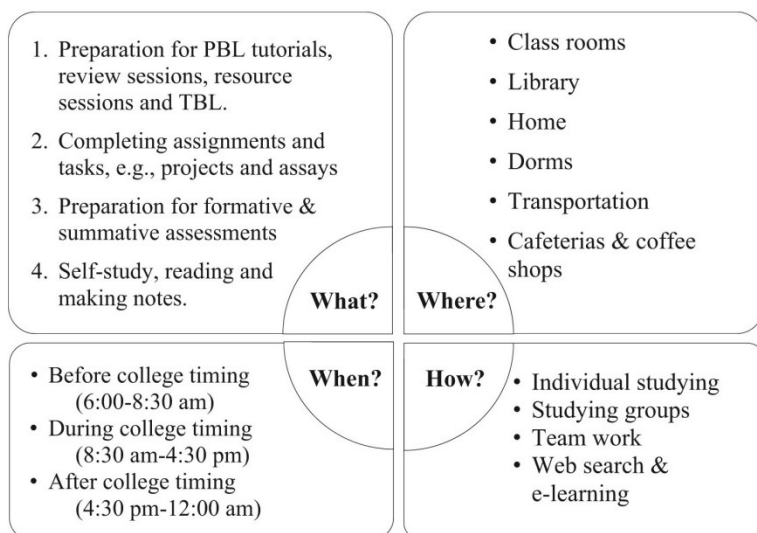
Students Workload (SWL) in Bologna Process

Student Workload (SWL) is measured in ECTS credits and 60 ECTS as a fulltime year of studies. The full time student is expected to complete 60 ECTS credits in an academic year of app. 1500hr, which gives an approximate 47hr of student learning per week (1 ECTS = 25hr workload). Thus a 5 ECTS credit course equals 125hr, a 6 ECTS credit course 150hr and a 10 ECTS credit course 250hr per semester. The full time student is expected to complete 30 ECTS credits in an academic year of app. 750hr, which gives 47hr of student learning per week (1 ECTS = 25hr workload).

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a numerical descriptive value of qualification expressed in terms of Student Workload (SWL). It is defined as “the number of working hours typically required to complete the learning activities of course units in order to achieve their expected learning outcomes”. In this system, the total SWL comprises two components;

1. Structured SWL which is the scheduled teacher-contact hours’ interventions; and
2. Unstructured SWL (USWL) which is the time spent by students in their own self-study, completing course assignments, and preparing for all types of exams, e.g. assessment workload.

The below Figure shows the variable nature of independent students learning activities (SSWL+USWL).



Calculation of the Possible Weekly Unstructured SWL

	Time	Venue	No. of hours
Weekdays	Before the college timing (6:30–8:30 am)	In the dorms or transportation	1 h
	During the college timing (8:30–4:30 pm)	In the classrooms or the library	1–2 h
	After the college timing (4:30–12:00 midnight)	In the classrooms, library, dorms, home, or in coffee shops	3–4 h
Weekend days	NA	At home or dorm	5–6 h/day
Sum of unstructured SWL (h)			30–35 h/wk

Example: Calculation of the Total SWL for a Module with 5 ECTS

Academic Debates (4 hr Theory)					
Activity type	Structured SWL	Unstructured SWL	#	Time factor	Workload (hr)
Class	Class Lectures		14	4	56
L	Lab.				0
P	Practical Training				0
Self-study		Study	14	2	28
Project Work		Preparation	14	1	14
Assignment		Preparation	2	5	10
Seminars		Preparation	1	4	4
Quizes		Preparation	0	0	0
Exam		Exam Preparation	1	2	2
	Mid-term		1	2	2
		Exam Preparation	1	6	6
	Final-term		1	3	3
			Total SWL hr/sem		125
	SSWL = 61hr	USWL = 64hr	ECTS		5

Example; Calculation of the Total SWL for a Semester of 30 ECTS credits

	SWL (Lectures+Labs)	USWL
Sunday	4 h	4-6 h
Monday	4 h	4-6 h
Tuesday	4 h	4-6 h
Wednesday	4 h	4-6 h
Thursday	4 h	4-6 h
Friday	Weekend	5-6 h
Saturday		
	20 h	25-36 h
1 week (Total SWL) ¹	45 - 56 h (50 h)	
15 weeks - Full semester ²	675 - 840 h (750 h)	
	27 - 33.6 ECTS (30 ECTS)	

SWL: Structured Workload

USWL: Unstructured Workload

¹EHEA recommends 50 – 60 h per week.

²Necessary ECTS per Semester = 27.5 – 30 ECTS

³Necessary ECTS per B.Sc. Program = 220 – 240 ECTS

EHEA = European Higher Education Area

CHAPTER SIX

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Calculation of the Grade Point Average (GPA):

1. Each alphabetical grade is substituted by numerical equivalent: A=5.0, B=4.0, C=3.0, D=2.0 and E=1.
2. The numerical equivalent is multiplied by the number of credits for the course.
3. The products of the course and credits are totaled.
4. The sum is divided by the total number of credits.
5. The quotient is calculated to three decimal points.
6. GPAs are not rounded up.

Example:

You have finished a bachelor's degree consisting of 40 courses (modules) (5 per semester) each valued at 6 ECTS credits.

You have received:

- 13 As,
- 11 Bs,
- 14 Cs and
- 2 Ds.

Remember: A=5, B=4, C=3 and D=2.

To calculate the GPA:

1. Multiply the grade (A=5, B=4...) by the number of ECTS credits
2. Multiply the number of courses with the same grade and add them together->
3. In this example $(5 \times 6 \times 13) + (4 \times 6 \times 11) + (3 \times 6 \times 14) + (2 \times 6 \times 2) = 930$.
4. Divide the total by the total ECTS credits to find the grade per ECTS, the Grade Point Average -> $930/240 = 3,875$.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Executive Summary

1st cycle (B.Sc. degree):

4 years = 8 Semesters = 240 ECTS = 6000hr SWL

5 years = 10 Semesters = 300 ECTS = 7500hr SWL

6 Years = 12 Semester = 360 ECTS = 9000hr SWL

2nd cycle (M.Sc. degree):

2 years = 2 semesters + 1 Year thesis project = 120 ECTS

3rd cycle (Ph.D. degree):

180 ECTS and higher

1 ECTS = 25hr

1 Semester = 30 ECTS

1 Year = 60 ECTS

1 Semester = 15 Weeks

1 Semester = 750hr SWL

1 Year = 1500hr SWL

SWL = SSWL + USWL

