

# Implementation and Inclusion of Elective Subjects and Syllabus in Educational Programs of Credit-Modular System in Higher Educational Establishments

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the work done in implementation the credit-module system in higher educational institutions, the work done inclusion of elective subjects and syllabus in educational programs.

**Keywords:** Credit-module system, independent study, elective subjects, approach.

**Introduction:** Implementation of credit-modular system in Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan in recent 5 years, the educational system is gradually moving to a credit-module system of education. Examples are branches of foreign universities in the country and domestic universities, carrying out the educational process with the introduction of international standards. This experience is gradually being implemented in several national higher schools. For example, in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan PD-5349 from 19.02.2018 "On measures to further improve the sphere of information technologies and communications" at the Tashkent University of Information Technologies named after Mukhammad al-Khwarazmi (TUIT). It has been gradually implementing the transition to the credit system of education from the 2018-2019 academic years. Besides mentioned above university such institutions as the National, Law Universities, University of Oriental Studies, Tashkent Medical Academy, Ferghana Polytechnic Institute and others has started to work on the credit-module system of education. It will provide an opportunity to train highly qualified specialists who are competitive in the current unstable international labor market, as well as to ensure a high rating of an educational institution among 1000 universities in the world.

According to Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan from 31.12.2020 №824 "On

measures to improve the system related to the organization of the educational process in higher educational institutions" from the 2020/2021 academic year, higher educational institutions of the republic have begun a gradual transition of the educational process to a credit-modular system.

In fact, the reform of education and the transition to a new system began half a century ago in developed countries and achieved high results and led to the prosperity of various sectors of the state. Uzbekistan chose the European ECTS credit-module system after researching world credit education models. This can be caused by:

- ECTS credit-module system is recognized by many foreign countries;
- The establishment of this system in Uzbekistan and neighboring countries (it will be much easier to ensure the exchange of professors and teachers and students);
- Similarity of educational stages;
- This system shows effective results in education.

The main objectives of the introduction of the credit system of education are determined by the following:

- first, in order to improve the quality of education, the introduction of international educational standards based on the use of international recommendations developed taking into account the trends in the

development of information and communication technologies (hereinafter — ICT) in developed countries, the provision of qualified teachers, the development of high-quality curricula and teaching materials;

- second is the expansion of promising exchange programs for students, teaching staff, and research scientists with foreign universities;
- third is the creation of a competitive environment that allows the teacher to improve the scientific and pedagogical level by mastering new educational technologies and rational forms of organization of the educational process;
- fourth — providing students with the opportunity to independently form their own educational program and ensuring transparency of knowledge assessment.

One of the main advantages of the credit system of education is that it will complement and support national standards of qualifications. That is, concepts such as contact hours, academic load and qualification requirements will be supplemented and linked with the concepts of transfer, accumulation, recognition of credits, mobility, flexibility to transform curricula and individual plans, independence.

The credit system of education also affects the number of study weeks per semester. It is planned to switch from an 18-week half-year to a 15-week half-year. The transfer of theoretical classes to the beginning of the academic semester will make it possible to optimally organize the mobility of foreign teaching staff for lectures. After successfully mastering the theoretical part of the curriculum, students will conduct practical and laboratory classes under the guidance of assistant teachers. Having scored enough points, students will be admitted to the final tests. The number of credits per subject or module is determined by the number of academic hours. In the conditions of the credit system of education, the concept of "academic hour" is also changing. The change in the labor intensity of the academic hour should not affect the teacher's pedagogical load by increasing the hours of independent study, since the teacher is obliged to monitor independent education and systematically update active educational materials for self-training of the student.

To compare the distribution of hours for education in the traditional educational system and the credit-modular educational system, the curricula of 3 higher educational institutions of Karakalpakstan, such as Nukus branch of Tashkent University of Information Technologies named after Mukhammad al-Khwarizmi (NB TUIT), Karakalpak State University named after Berdakh (KSU), Nukus State Pedagogical Institute

named after Ajiniyaz (NSPI), were taken.

From the given curricular it is seen that in traditional system of education in NSPI the 4 years students have theoretical and practical studies and specialty practice in 7 semester 17 weeks and in 8 semester 12 weeks, while in credit-modular system in 7 and 8 semesters per 15 weeks. In traditional system students have 9 subjects in 7 semester and 7 subjects in 8 semester, whereas in a new system — 6 subjects in 7 and 5 subjects in 8 semester. It means that learning workloads have been decreased. One more thing that should be paid attention is the list of elective subjects in credit system. From the curricular we can see that learners have an opportunity to choose 3 subjects (per 4 credits each) from the list according to their interests and desire. Moreover, another important part in these 2 curricula is hours for independent study. For example, in 2021 there is a subject "Stylistics", that has in total 106 hours, from which 30 hours for lectures, 30 — for seminars and 30 — for independent study. The same subject, but with little change in the name of the lesson, "English language stylistics" has in 2023, however, the distribution of hours is different, and that is 360 hours in total, 90 hours for lectures, 90 — for seminars, 90 — for independent study. It means that the principle of credit-modular system 1:1 (auditorium classes : independent study) works.

In the following you can see the curricula of Philology and teaching languages department of KSU.

#### **The differences between curricula in traditional and credit-modular system of education of Philology and teaching languages department of KSU.**

This time, we decided to compare the 1 semester of the first year. From two years above it is obvious that in traditional system there are 15 subjects which students must master, whereas in credit system there are 10 subjects (30 credits) in 1 semester. As an example, we can show the subject "Introduction to linguistics"; in traditional system it has in total 64 hours (34- for auditorium classes, 30- for independent study), when in credit system this subject has in total 60 hours (30- for auditorium classes, 30- for independent study). It shows that at KSU according to credit-modular system it is paid more attention to independent learning of students.

Now, you can see the curricula of NB TUIT in the following:

Since NB TUIT is non-philological university, it has the only subject related to English; it is "Foreign language 1(for the 1 semester)" and "Foreign language 2 (for the 2 semester)". In traditional system it had another name, as "Practical foreign language" and at the first semester of the first academic year it has in total 100

hours (72-practical lessons and 28-independent study). However, now in new system of education “Foreign language 1” has in total 120 hours (4 credits), from which 60 hours for practical classes and 60 – for independent study. Besides, at the first year of study students choose the elective subjects not from specialty subjects but from humanitarian.

To summarize the above, we can say that the models of credit system are widespread. They are US Credit System (USCS), Asia-Pacific Credit System (UCTS), European Credit System (ECTS), the UK Credit System (CATS). Analyzing and observing the experience and results of universities the Ministry of higher and secondary special education of our republic considered ECTS to be more appropriate to implement in our educational system. Despite the fact the ECTS system is quite new stage; we can see positive results of implementing it in our institutions. Therefore, we assumed it appropriate to focus on its efficiency and advantages. The main feature of the credit-modular system is the presence of elective subjects in the program. It is an important future of the student-oriented approach.

In this case, the student is given the opportunity to accumulate part of certain credits established in the curricula by studying part of the compulsory subjects, and the rest by studying elective subjects. For example, each bachelor student has to complete 240 credits till the undergraduate program, 50% of these credits (i.e.120credits) from compulsory subjects, and 50% (120 credits) can be accumulated through elective subjects.

Elective subjects are chosen by students within the framework of a specific curriculum, based on their interests and plans for the future are the sciences. In this case, the university provides students with a list of subjects to choose from, which can be studied throughout the academic year or curriculum, and students themselves choose from this list and study subjects that are interesting to them. However, when choosing the subject the students should take into consideration that the total number of credits of elective subjects should coincide with the number of credits allocated for elective subjects in the academic year. For instance, if a student should obtain 12 credits through elective subjects and each subject is reflected in 4 credits, the student learn 3 elective subjects in that semester (4 credits\*3 subjects=12 credits). In credit-modular system of education there are two types of elective subjects:

**Limited choice.** This applies to students for each academic year very limited number of options to select items a list of items is given and they are in the specified

quantity from this list selects items by credits. For example, 3 options for students presented with a list of items and select 2 items from the list may be given the opportunity. As you can see, this is the student's choice. Opportunity will be very limited. Also, what course the student is in. what elective subjects they can study should also be determined in advance possible This is also a practice of limited choice.

**Unlimited choice.** In this program the student is given a relatively large list of electives and may receive which can be studied, and the student chooses from this list for each semester. Subjects make choices based on the amount of loans. Restriction on which subject a student can usually choose in which course will not be posted. But the amount of credits accumulated by the student in elective subjects less than the amount of credits indicated for elective subjects in the semester, or it needs to not increase. But the right to choose students is absolutely not. Some optional subjects before the student starts these subjects may require completion of another subject (prerequisite).

At the current stage, the loan module for local universities in our country the system is a completely new system. Have an initial transition to a credit-modular system on the basis of the right of limited choice of practice of optional subjects at stages Unsurprisingly, this is a logical step to implement.

**Syllabus.** Preparation for teaching each subject in the curriculum in the ECTS system it is recommended that the teacher first have his own science program. The science curriculum is a science roadmap that tells the student the most important things about science provides information. The form and content of the scientific program may vary but it should cover at least the following: description of the course, objectives of the course, themes of the course, materials and assessment.

As we have seen in the science curriculum, what is science, its goals, list of topics that will be covered during the semester, materials that will be used and bibliography, methods and evaluation criteria. In addition, it contains the contact information of the teacher, weekly with the teacher while counseling, there may also be consequences for academic cheating. Creating a scientific program is not a difficult process. But it's a teacher's school year requires some thought at the beginning: he is the teacher of his subject during the semester clearly plan the work you want to do in advance, science encourages sorting topics by their importance.

It is most important information must be provided to students at the beginning of the semester. This information is very useful for both the teacher and the

students.

### **Independent work of students.**

Independent work of students is a kind of educational activity of students, which is aimed at independent performance of didactic tasks, makes learning more interesting, increases knowledge in a particular field of science. A number of studies devoted to the study of student's independent work note that this form of organization of the learning process contributes to the formation of a conscious attitude of the students themselves to mastering theoretical and practical knowledge, instills in them the habit of intense intellectual work. In achieving the goal, the necessary prerequisite is the effective organization of the student's independent work. The quality and depth of students' knowledge and the success of teaching in general depend on this. Students who work independently can make specific decisions, make serious proposals, and can choose methods of work in the process of self-study.

If one of the requirements for classes in biological disciplines is taken into account - theoretical knowledge, practical application, laboratory research of the material, then the conditions for conducting a technological lesson - to puzzle students in advance with the topics of planned not only practical classes and lecture pairs, then in both cases the identity of the main requirements - the individual work of students suggests how necessary are the skills of organizing students' self-study.

In the formation of a person's personality, self-improvement performs the main function. On this occasion, Philippe Condi argued: independent education is a process, method and philosophy of education, where the student acquires knowledge through his efforts and develops the ability to receive information and critical evaluation.

Self-study is the most effective way of self-improvement of each person, since from time immemorial people of mental labor prefer to combine all types of education, including self-study.

Student's independent work - individually organized realizable work, including in its structure such components as understanding the goal and the set educational task, clear and systematic planning of independent work, searching for the necessary educational and scientific information, mastering one's own information and its logical processing, using research methods work for laboratory research, the ability to present the acquired knowledge in biological disciplines, the establishment of self-analysis and self-control, educational and cognitive activity, as well as self-regulation, self-government, motivation for

independent learning.

The target and executive components include setting goals, defining tasks, planning actions, choosing ways to implement them, introspection and self-control of results.

The student needs to master the technique of working with educational and methodical literature before developing the skills and abilities of independent cognitive activity and developing skills for systemic self-education.

### **Results of the teachers' questionnaire**

The importance of questionnaires in research is immense, helping researchers gain relevant information quickly and effectively. Before creating a questionnaire for your study, you should first understand the meaning of questionnaires and the advantages and disadvantages of using them.

Questionnaires can be of two forms: open-ended and close-ended questions. Open-ended questions enable respondents to answer in their own words in as much or as little detail as they desire. Closed questions provide respondents with a series of predetermined responses they can choose from. In our research work we considered it appropriate to use both forms of questionnaire.

In our questionnaire there took part in total 20 English teachers of Karakalpak State University, Nukus State Pedagogical Institute and Nukus branch of Tashkent university of Information Technologies. The questionnaire has 12 questions concerned to credit-module system, its principles and the process of implementing it in education. Results of the teachers' questionnaire are presented and analyzed in different tables.

The teachers' questionnaire consists of the following questions:

Question 1: Find the definition of the concept credit-module system.

The majority of teachers 85% are familiar with the concept of credit-module system, however 10% of teachers consider that credit-module system provides universities with educated teachers and students. Moreover, only 5% of teachers have thought that credit-module system is teaching learners using new pedagogical and information technologies.

Question 2: Credit is a conditional unit of measurement of a student's academic load when studying a composite curriculum or a separate discipline (course) performed by a student during education. 1 credit consists of ... .

From above, it is seen that 85 % of teachers are aware



of the number of hours in one credit, however 3% of teachers have chosen incorrect option.

Question 3: How many credits should each student get at the end of the bachelor's and master's degree?

According to the results above, we can say that only 65% answered correctly to this question, however, we expected the same results of the second and third questions as they are related to each other. A teacher who knows the correct answer to the second question must necessarily know the answer to the third question. Since if 1 credit consists of 30 hours and the subjects of one semester contain 30 credits in total, then for 4 years of study at the bachelor's degree, the student must gain 240 credits ( $30 \text{ (credits)} \times 8 \text{ (semester)} = 240$ ) and for 2 years of study at the master's degree, the master's student must get 120 credits. 20% of teachers selected option B, that is Bachelor's – 200 credits, master's – 100 credits and 15% chose option A, that is Bachelor's – 250 credits, master's – 150 credits.

Question 4: In the credit-modular system, it is recommended that a teacher who is preparing to teach a subject initially have their own syllabus (oqiw dástúr). What should syllabus include?

This question is open-ended question and teachers wrote their answers. However, before analyzing their answers, we give here the main things that syllabus should include. They are:

1. Brief description of the course
2. Objectives of the course
3. Themes of the course
4. Materials of the course
5. Assessment

According to the results, 60% of teachers included all the given points above and 40% teachers added that syllabus should include literature and requirements. It means that almost all the respondents know how to design syllabus according to the credit-modular system.

Question 5: What does elective subject mean in credit-module system?

80% of teachers answered correctly, that is an elective subject is the subject chosen by students depending on their interests and desire. However, 5% of respondents answered that it is a subject selected by teachers and the other 15% marked that it is an opportunity for students to select which classes to attend and which do not participate.

Question 6: What, do you think, are the rights of students to select the subjects at your university?

As it was stated in the first paragraph, elective subjects

are divided into limited (students in each academic year are given a very limited list of subjects to make a choice, and they choose subjects from this list according to a certain number of credits.) and unlimited (students in each academic year are given a wide list of subjects to make a choice, and they choose subjects from this list for each semester according to a number of credits. Here, the students' rights are not limited when choosing the subject to study in each course).

Since the credit-module system of education is a new system in our republic, from our opinion, it is appropriate to introduce a limited practice of elective subjects. And to this question 65% of teachers pointed to the limited rights, while 30% -to unlimited and 5% marked that they are not familiar with the given information.

Question 7: To what extent are the lessons conducted at your university student-oriented?

One of the main principles of credit-module system is to make the process of study more student-oriented. As the old traditional system used to see the teachers as the main sources of knowledge, and it was impossible to make anything without teachers. Moreover during the classes the teachers spoke approximately 80% of the whole time of the lesson. It means that classes were teacher-oriented. Unfortunately, there are a few numbers of teachers who still continue to have such type of classes and it is a typical process since it is difficult to immediately switch to a new educational system for both the teacher and the student, since students from school get used to teachers as the central manager.

From the above, it is seen that only 25% of teachers have 100%-80% student-oriented classes, 65% percent have 70-50% of student-oriented classes and 10% of teachers are still the main speakers in the class. It means that we have some issues with making our students more responsible and independent during the lessons.

Question 8: Independent learning is one of the main features of credit-module system. How many percent is given to independent study (IS) out of the total number of hours devoted to one subject in a semester?

In a lot of literature it is written that 50% of the hours are for independent study and 50% are for auditorium classes. However, we did not include this variant of answers in our questionnaire, since in other literatures we also met the second variant (40%-for auditorium classes, 60%- for IS) of the distribution of hours and included it in our questionnaire. By doing this we wanted to check whether our teachers also know about the second option of allocating hours.

70% of respondents select the correct answer, 15% state that 30%- for auditorium classes and 70% - for IS, when 5% claim that 30% - for IS and 70% - for auditorium classes. And 10% of teachers separately indicate their correct answer that is 50%-50%. The answers show that most of the teachers know the both options of distribution of hours.

Question 9: Can you describe the efficiency of independent learning in credit-module system based on outcomes of independent work of your students?

Independent learning is a method or learning process where learners have ownership and control of their learning – they learn by their own actions and direct, regulate, and assess their own learning. According to the results, 80% of teachers describe the efficiency of independent learning that it shows its results during the lessons. The students became more motivated and improve their critical thinking on a particular topic. Only 20% of teachers answered that it depends on requirements.

Question 10: What are the advantages of the credit-module system over traditional system?

According to the results, 90% of teachers wrote their opinions positively about credit-modular system and 10% of teachers said that there aren't any differences. Unfortunately, those 10% of teachers who don't see any differences between current and credit-modular system conduct their lessons in an old way. Since they don't know that lessons must be student-oriented and the learners should study independently. Besides it means that these teachers do not allow their students to be aware of credits, assessments beforehand. This is contrary to the principle of transparency.

In sum up, we can say that the surveyed teachers did not show the negative results. Instead by their answers we could understand in what extent the credit-modular system is familiar to our teachers, if they know the functions and the principles of this system and finally we were able to find out whether this new system is really being implemented in practice in universities of Uzbekistan.

## CONCLUSION

In Uzbekistan in recent years, the educational system is gradually moving to a credit-module system of education and there are already positive results. Examples are branches of foreign universities in the country and domestic universities, carrying out the educational process with the introduction of international standards. This experience is gradually being introduced in several national higher education institutions.

Credit-module system of the educational process is a

model of educational process organization, which is based on a combination of modular learning technologies and credits or credit educational units. Organization and implementation of the learning process - it is a multifaceted and complex system of action and interaction.

The relevance of autonomous education grows in the educational process, which will lead to a growth in the independence, creative initiative, and activity of professionals in the future. University students will always be able to seek aid and advice from lecturers and fellow students under the credit-module system. This strengthens mutual solidarity and helps to shape teamwork abilities. Professors and teachers at higher education institutions would have more obligation and demand as the credit-module teaching system is implemented.

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