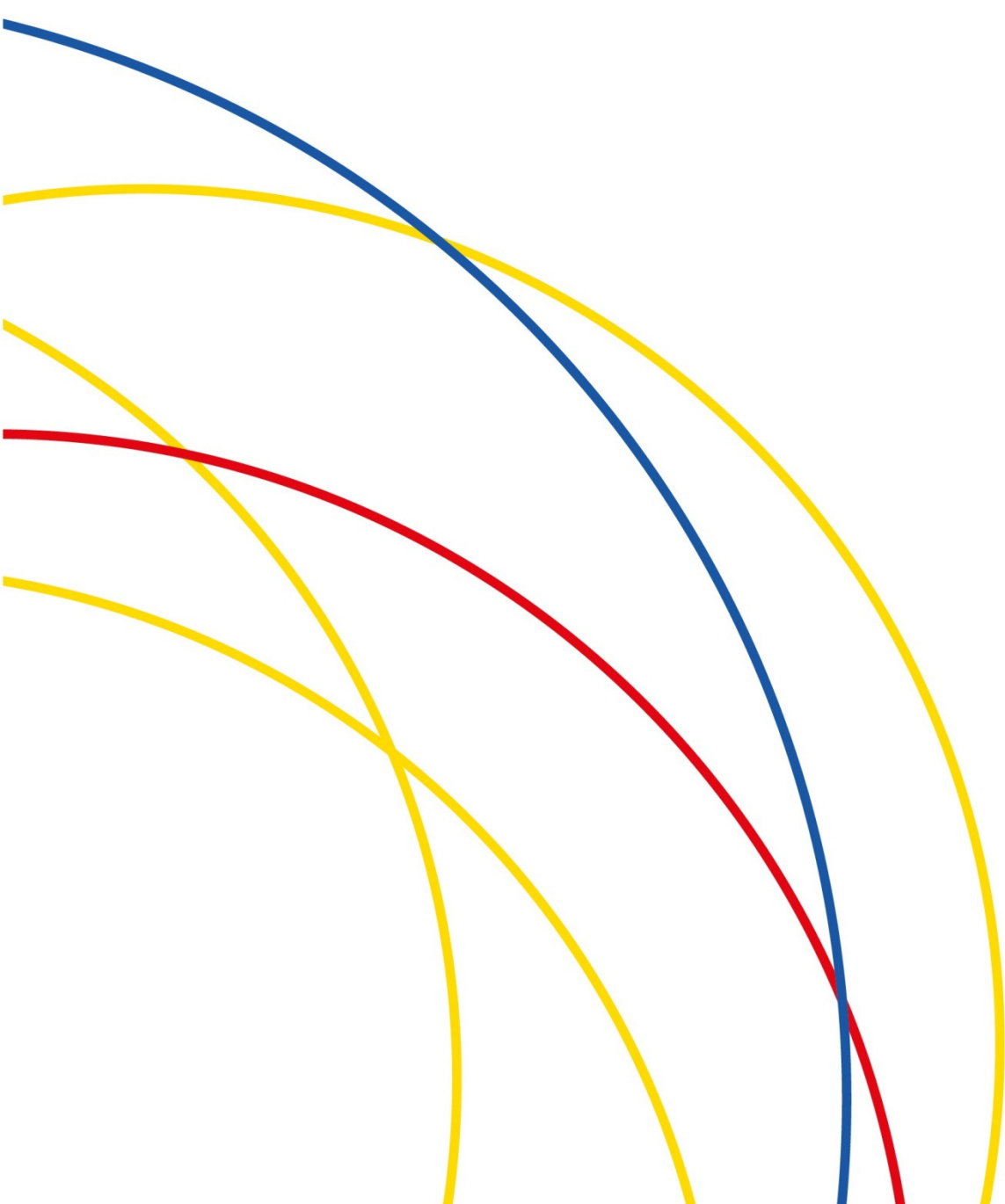




Student Mobility and Credit Transfer System in ASEAN

Mapping student mobility and Credit Transfer Systems in ASEAN region

February 2016





European Union Support to Higher Education in The ASEAN Region



SHARE, the European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region, is a four-year initiative by the EU and ASEAN. They have entrusted the implementation of SHARE to a consortium of British Council (leader), Campus France, DAAD, EP-Nuffic, ENQA and EUA. Launched in Jakarta in May 2015, SHARE aims to support ASEAN in harmonising regional higher education by sharing European expertise. It does this through strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing the quality, competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education for institutions and students, and thereby contributing to a closer ASEAN Community in 2015 and beyond.

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The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of SHARE. SHARE does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study.

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Foreword

Education is a cornerstone of every nation's social and economic development, and universities play an indispensable part in education, research, and innovation. If harmonised at the regional level, higher education can reinforce the strengths of communities like the EU and ASEAN and effectively contribute to overall regional policies. Thus, higher education serves 'as one of the catalysts in accelerating ASEAN's economic, political, and sociocultural development agenda', as stated by the chairman of the 27th ASEAN Summit in 2015.

In 2015, ASEAN and the European Union launched the EU Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) programme, which aims to support ASEAN in harmonising regional higher education by sharing European experiences. The EU has entrusted the implementation of SHARE to a consortium composed of British Council, Campus France, EP-Nuffic, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the European University Association (EUA), and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

SHARE is commissioning several studies in order to provide a solid foundation for informed decision making; among them is mapping on student mobility and credit transfer system in ASEAN region. This report to identify the current and past student mobility program and the current development of credit transfer system in the region.

Identifying and mapping of student mobility and credit transfer in the region is needed in order to increase the student mobility and enhance the recognition the period of study abroad between the ASEAN member states.

This report on mapping on student mobility and credit transfer in ASEAN region was commissioned by the SHARE Consortium Partners Campus France and EP-Nuffic.

This document is available on the Internet:
<http://www.share-asean.eu/publishedmaterials/reports/>

We hope this study will support joint efforts to promote and enhance the quality, internationalisation, and competitiveness of higher education in ASEAN.

The SHARE Team

Jakarta, Indonesia, February 2016

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned to identify the actions to undertake in the ASEAN region in order to enhance student mobility and allow recognition of period of study abroad between the 10 countries Member States: Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Brunei.

The internationalization of higher education is key in guaranteeing a lasting economic development, enabling the local labour force to compete on a global level. Investing in cross border higher education will stimulate spill overs and help emerging countries build capacity.

Although economic growth in the ASEAN and scholarship programs led by governments improved the level of student mobility (going from 166,000 ASEAN students moving abroad in 2009 to 220,000 in 2013), the intra-ASEAN mobility remains low compared to EU's figures (268, 143 EU students studying in another EU country in 2013).

The survey carried out by Campus France & EP-Nuffic in 2015, highlights the existence of major obstacles restraining student mobility within ASEAN. Rather than the cost of studying abroad that is alleviated thanks to government scholarship programs, restrictive regulations such as visas requirements are partly responsible.

Distortion in terms of quality of education creates inequalities between education systems. Indeed, the quality of knowledge varies across countries and Higher Education Institutions (HEI). As a result of the gap in education quality, inbound mobility is very low in some countries. For instance, Lao PDR only hosted 262 foreign students in 2013 for Tertiary level. Increasing transparency and compatibility is therefore crucial to enhance student mobility.

Besides, the research draws attention to the negative impact of the divergent credit transfer systems (CTS) in the ASEAN. There are three credit transfer systems coexisting in the ASEAN: UCTS, ACTS and AIMS. The lack of consensus leads to the coexistence of three different CTS, with some HEI using more than one system while others seem to ignore them. Comparisons with the Bologna Process' achievements are helpful in identifying the main obstacle to the use of credits. The report highlights three policy instruments to enhance student mobility within the ASEAN:

First, the mobility scholarship programs using means-tested criterion for outbound mobility and merit criterion for inbound mobility might encourage student mobility. Building mutual agreements and joint degree programs are suitable financial arrangements in order to share the costs between the ten governments.

Second, an explicit and comprehensive internationalisation policy might consider both the sending and receiving policy on a practical level. For example, the previous diploma or credits obtained in the hosting HEI are recognized by the sending institution, the visa procedures are not restrictive, health insurance agreements are available, student housing is facilitated by a central agency, information about conditions of living is reliable. Other measures concerning the HEI itself may include the harmonization of academic calendars, improving online application systems or increasing the number of English speaking classes.

Third, transparency over credits and harmonization of the existing CTS framework in the ASEAN is preferable to the creation of a new one. The cornerstone to guarantee a sustainable and efficient CTS system in ASEAN is to restore trust. The lack of credibility

from both the ASEAN students and the academic and administrative staff remains the main obstacle. Indeed, the three incompatible systems calculate credits in different modalities. Credits are however not only about calculations of credit point but essentially what they are referring to. Experience from Europe shows that the instrumental value of the credit for mobility purposes is high when credits are associated to the learning outcome. The challenge is therefore to harmonize the system in order to have comparable and transferable credits in ASEAN, that are grounded on commonly recognised learning outcomes

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronyms	Descriptions
AACs	Asian Academic Credits
ACD	Asia Cooperation Dialogue
ACD-ACTS	Asia Cooperation Dialogue Asian Credit Transfer System
ACTFA	Academic Credit Transfer Framework for Asia
ADC	Aide de camp
AMERTA	Academic Mobility Exchange for Undergraduate at Airlangga
AIMS	ASEAN International Mobility for Students
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASED	Asia-Europe Dialogue
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
AUN	ASEAN University Network
ACTS	ASEAN Credit Transfer System
BFUG	Bologna Follow-Up Group
CLMV	Cambodia, Laos People Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Viet Nam
CTS	Credit Transfer System
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-region
GMS-UC	Greater Mekong Sub-region University Consortium
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IRO	International Relation Office
M-I-T	The Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand Student Mobility Program
MTCP-ASEAN	Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme - ASEAN Masters Scholarship
SEA-CTS	Southeast Asia Credit Transfer System
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SEAMEO-RIHED	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization-Regional Centre for Higher Education
SEP	Student Exchange Program
TICA	Thailand International Cooperation Agency
UCTS	University Mobility in Asia-Pacific Credit Transfer Scheme
UMAP	University Mobility in Asia-Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USCO-UMAP	Student Connection Online

1 The evolution of student mobility in ASEAN

This first part will present the evolution of student mobility in ASEAN in the recent years. Despite student mobility progressing each year, the numbers are still quite low compared to the EU's student flows.

1.1 General Trend

In the past 5 years we have seen a steady growth of ASEAN students studying abroad in parallel with the economic growth in the region. UNESCO's Institute of Statistic, Global Flow of Tertiary Level of Students recorded that in 2009 there are about 166,000¹ ASEAN students going abroad for studies and in 2013 than 220,000 students from ASEAN countries studied overseas. In 2013 the number of intra ASEAN mobility for tertiary program only contributed 9% from total outbound students from ASEAN region (see table 1).

Table 1 - Outbound students in ASEAN and intra-ASEAN mobility for Tertiary Level

Source: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx>

Country	Total Outbound Students	Intra-ASEAN Mobility	Percentage
Malaysia	56,260	2,766	4.92%
Viet Nam	53,546	2,003	3.74%
Indonesia	39,098	6,579	16.83%
Thailand	25,517	1,036	4.06%
Singapore	22,578	855	3.79%
Philippines	11,454	507	4.43%
Myanmar	6,388	1,833	28.69%
Lao PDR	4,985	3,184	63.87%
Cambodia	4,221	1,468	34.78%
Brunei	3,361	309	9.19%
Total	227,408	20,540	9.03%

There is an imbalance² in the directory of the students' flow when it comes to intra-ASEAN mobility. Malaysia, as the largest source country in the region for students abroad, only sent 4.9% of their students to ASEAN universities. Indonesia, sends the largest number of students in the region in absolute number, with more than 6500 students. A majority of these students' study in Malaysia. Viet Nam is the second country in the region in terms of students going abroad, but scores lowest in percentage (3.74%) when it comes to intra-ASEAN region.

Contradictory to the number of outbound students, Viet Nam and Indonesia have relatively low levels of inbound students. Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore have larger numbers of inbound students, with Singapore, as the only country in the region, recording more inbound than outbound. For Malaysia the inbound/outbound ratio is almost 1:1. Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Cambodia score relatively high when it comes to intra-ASEAN mobility with 28.71% to 63.89% of total outbound mobility. Inbound mobility in these countries is almost non-existent.

¹ UNESCO Global Education Digest 2009

² UNESCO Education (2013) - The International Mobility of Students in Asia Pacific

Table 2 - Intra-ASEAN Students Mobility 2013 for Tertiary LevelSource: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx>**Inbound Students**

Country	Brunei	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam
Brunei	-	-	34	-	102	6	20	8	28	-
Cambodia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indonesia	-	-	-	-	2,516	-	-	-	57	50
Lao PDR	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	243
Malaysia	309	72	6,222	-	-	346	291	796	946	412
Myanmar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Philippines*										
Singapore*										
Thailand	-	955	323	1,344	148	1,481	196	50	-	1,290
Viet Nam	-	422	-	1,832	-	-	-	-	-	-

*data not available

Outbound Students

Country	Brunei	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam
Brunei	-	-	-	-	309	-	-	-	-	-
Cambodia	-	-	-	19	72	-	-	-	955	422
Indonesia	34	-	-	-	6,222	-	-	-	323	-
Lao PDR	-	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	1,334	1,832
Malaysia	102	-	2,516	-	-	-	-	-	148	-
Myanmar	6	-	-	-	346	-	-	-	1,481	-
Philippines	20	-	-	-	291	-	-	-	196	-
Singapore	9	-	-	-	796	-	-	-	50	-
Thailand	28	-	57	-	946	-	-	-	-	5
Viet Nam	-	-	50	243	412	8	-	-	1,290	-

1.2 Factors driving student mobility

There are key factors that drive student mobility in the ASEAN region. Economic growth is one of the main key factors that many ASEAN students are choosing to study abroad.³ Apart from economic growth there are other factors that play a role. Firstly, the social and cultural background counts. This factor is most apparent for example in students from Brunei Darussalam to Malaysia and Indonesia and students from the CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam) countries going to Thailand. Second, costs and exchange rate are also factors determining the location for studying abroad. For example, the cost of living in Malaysia is lower than in Singapore. This may drive Indonesian students to choose Malaysia as one of the favored study abroad destinations. Thirdly, English as the medium of instruction is also one of the drivers for intra-ASEAN mobility. Malaysia and Singapore are the two top destinations due to the availability of English-taught courses and the perceived quality of their higher education institutions.

1.3 Intra-ASEAN mobility

Even though the ASEAN countries have experienced significant economic growth over the past years, funding for study abroad remains an issue for many students in the region. As indicated in table 4, there are various current and past mobility programmes that support intra-ASEAN mobility.

Table 3 - Current and past mobility programmes supporting intra-ASEAN mobility

Mobility programmes	Content
SEAMEO	<p>Various scholarship programmes are run by SEAMEO Centres, including SEAMEO Regional Training Centre (RETRAC), SEAMEO Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) and SEAMEO Tropical Medicine and Public Health Network (TROPMED).</p> <p>SEAMEO RETRACT provides internship and study abroad programmes designed for high school and university students as well as non-students. SEAMEO SEARCA provides various scholarships for Master's and PhD, these scholarships are made-available for full-degree programmes and exchange programmes. The scholarships are open to Southeast Asian nationals. SEAMEO TROPMED provides scholarships for Diploma programmes, Master's programmes, PhD, short courses and student and staff exchange project.</p>
Brunei Darussalam Government Scholarships for Foreign Students	<p>Full scholarship programme for undergraduate studies at three universities in Brunei Darussalam. This scholarship is open to ASEAN nationals, Commonwealth and ADC (Aide-de-camp) member countries.</p>
Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) - ASEAN Masters Scholarship	<p>MTCP -ASEAN Masters Scholarship 2015 is an initiative by the Malaysian Government as part of Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2015. The programme is open to ASEAN nationals to study in selected and well-established Malaysian public universities. This scholarship is only offered at the Postgraduate Master's Studies.</p>

³ British Council (2012) - The shape of things to come: higher education global trends and emerging opportunities to 2020

<p>ASEA-UNINET (ASEAN-European Academic University Network)</p>	<p>MTCP -ASEAN Masters Scholarship 2015 is an initiative by the Malaysian Government as part of Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2015. The programme is open to ASEAN nationals to study in selected and well-established Malaysian public universities. This scholarship is only offered at the Postgraduate Master's Studies.</p>
<p>Thai International Postgraduate Programme</p>	<p>Full postgraduate programmes from Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency. This scholarship is open to government officials who wish to study postgraduate programme in universities in Thailand. Initially, this programme was for government officials from the CLMV countries; however it is now extended to Indonesia and other developing countries in Asia.</p>
<p>Sasin - Royal Thai Government Scholarships MBA Program</p>	<p>Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) and Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration of Chulalongkorn University (Sasin) provides scholarships under the "Sasin - Royal Thai Government Scholarships" to candidates from CLMC countries to study the Master of Business Administration programme at Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration.</p>
<p>Singapore Ministry of Education - ASEAN Scholarship</p>	<p>Full degree programme scholarship from Singapore Ministry of Education for all ASEAN nationals to study in Singaporean Universities. The ASEAN Scholarship aims to provide opportunities to the young people of ASEAN to develop their potential and equip them with important skills for the 21st century.</p>
<p>AMERTA (Academic Mobility Exchange for Undergraduate at Airlangga)</p>	<p>AMERTA calls outstanding students to experience an Indonesian diverse culture and a local East Java atmosphere to study for one or two semesters. This programme is available for international students who are interested to study at Airlangga University in Indonesia. This programme also can be incorporated with AUN-CTS program for students from AUN member universities</p>
<p>Temasek Foundation - Leadership Enrichment and Regional Network Award</p>	<p><i>This</i> is a regional non-academic student exchange programme where outstanding undergraduates from leading universities in Asia participate in a semester of course curriculum, community service projects, cultural exchange activities and work attachments. This programme is for Singaporean students who want to study abroad within ASEAN and Asia and also open to all ASEAN nationals and nationals from Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan who want to study in Singapore.</p>

2 Credit transfer systems

Credit transfer systems designed to be used specifically among Universities in ASEAN member states is a fairly recent development. Traditionally, recognition of periods of studies abroad involving the ASEAN region have been carried out on case-by-case basis. Although no global credit transfer system exists for the ASEAN region at the moment there has been some systems implemented that help streamline the credit transfer process. We can identify three major credit transfer systems in use in the region: the AUN ASEAN Credit Transfer System (AUN-ACTS), the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific Credit Transfer Scheme (UMAP-UCTS), the SEAMEO-RIHED Academic Credit Transfer Framework. Of these the AUN-ACTS is the only credit system exclusive to intra-ASEAN mobility. These systems have been created to meet different motivations and universities can use several credit transfer systems. For instance, University of Indonesia uses ACTS and UCTS, as well as ECTS⁴.

2.1 Bologna process: providing a model

Learning derived from the Bologna process and Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) and related Working Groups have provided a model for implementation of harmonization mechanisms for HE across ASEAN member states and in the Asia-Pacific region⁵ as shown by the fact that both UCTS and ACTS are modelled after ECTS⁶. Learning opportunities have been provided under Erasmus Mundus, an EU cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education⁷, which has allowed more than 2000 ASEAN students to benefit from mobility programmes to European Higher

Box 1. Bologna Process

Named after the Bologna Declaration of 1999, the Bologna Process is an intergovernmental process whereby signatory countries agreed to a voluntary reform process of their higher education sectors which led in 2010 to the creation of the European Higher Education Area, now composed of 47 members' states. The process is supported by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES and includes Ministerial Conferences organized every 2 or 3 years and support structures like the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

Education Institutions (HEIs)⁸. In addition, the ASEAN-EU Network programme and Asia-Link programme, both running from 2002 to 2006, offered opportunities to promote cooperation, build networks and strengthen capacity in higher education in the region⁹. However, the lack of agreed quality assurance, qualifications frameworks and credit exchange procedures, presented many challenges to student mobility in both programmes in terms of credit transfer and degree recognition among participating HEIs¹⁰.

⁴ Junaidi, M.A. (2014). Current trends in Student Mobility & Credit Transfer. Chair, AUN-ACTS Secretariat. Online at: http://www.opir.kyoto-u.ac.jp/reinvent_JP/report_140930/

⁵ Boonlue, T., & Sawheny, Y. (2014). Transcultural Competence: Key Success Factor for Work Mobility. Presented at the 13th Asian University President's Forum 2014. Online at:

<http://www.christian.ac.th/aupf2014/PDF/Research%20Presentation%20Session/Research%20Session%20III/5.Transcultural%20Competence%20Key%20Success%20Fact.pdf>

⁶ As will be explored in the following sections UCTS is in the middle of adopting a new model based on Asian Academic Credits (AACs) proposed by Dr. Hotta, which is different from ECTS.

⁷ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/

⁸ EACEA (2013). ANNEX N° 1 of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2013 in favour of the Asia region, financed under the budget line 19.100101 Action Fiche for Erasmus Mundus II - Partnerships Action 2, Strand 1 Asia Regional 2013. p. 4. Online at: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/aap/2013/af_aap_2013_asia.pdf

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/asia/eu-support-education-and-science-collaboration-asia_en

¹⁰ EACEA (2013).

Key features on the European Credits Transfer System¹¹:

In Europe, ECTS credits are based on the workload students need in order to achieve expected learning outcomes. Workload indicates the time students typically need to complete all learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, self-study and examinations) required to achieve the expected learning outcomes. In a nutshell, European credits express the volume of learning (i.e. quantitative) while learning outcomes express the content of learning (i.e. qualitative)¹².

Box 2. Credits and learning outcomes in Europe

In Europe, 60 ECTS credits are attached to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning (academic year) and the associated learning outcomes. In most cases, student workload ranges from 1,500 to 1,800 hours for an academic year, whereby one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work.

- **Credits are allocated to entire qualifications or study programmes as well as to their educational components** (such as modules, course units, dissertation work, work placements and laboratory work). The number of credits ascribed to each component is based on its weight in terms of the workload students need in order to achieve the expected learning outcomes in a formal context.
- **Credits are awarded to individual students** (full-time or part-time) after completion of the learning activities required by a formal programme of study or by a single educational component and the successful assessment of the achieved learning outcomes.
- **Credits may be accumulated with a view to obtaining qualifications**, as decided by the degree-awarding institution. If students have achieved learning outcomes in other learning contexts or timeframes (formal, non-formal or informal), the associated credits may be awarded after successful assessment, validation or recognition of these learning outcomes.
- **Credits awarded in one programme may be transferred into another programme**, offered by the same or another institution. This transfer can only take place if the degree-awarding institution recognizes the credits and the associated learning outcomes. Partner institutions should agree in advance on the recognition of periods of study abroad.

ECTS and qualification frameworks.

Learning outcomes and qualification frameworks are strongly associated. National qualifications frameworks encompass all education qualifications - including all higher education qualifications- in an education system. They show what learners may be expected to know, understand and be able to do on the basis of a given qualification as well as how qualifications within a system articulate, that is how learners may move between qualifications in an education system. National qualifications frameworks are developed by the competent public authorities in the country concerned.

Box 3. The European Qualification Framework for the European Higher Education Area

The Bergen Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 19-20 May 2005 adopted the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first

¹¹ Wagenaar (2013), Credit and Credit Reference system, a world view.

¹² Ibid.

ECTS and quality assurance

Quality assurance is the process or set of processes adopted nationally and by the HEIs to ensure the quality of educational programmes and qualifications awarded. Quality assurance should ensure a learning environment in which the content of programmes, learning opportunities and facilities are fit for purpose: It should also be in compliance with the Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

ECTS are based on learning outcomes. Credits are associated with the student workload, which is a quantitative measure of all learning activities that may be feasibly required for the achievement of the expected learning outcomes. The quality of these learning activities depends on the efforts of the student and on the quality of the programmes and qualification awarded. Quality assurance arrangements are key as they are meant at ensuring and improving the quality of educational activities.

Box 4. The European Standards and Guidelines on Quality Assurance

The ESG are a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. The ESG are not standards for quality, nor do they prescribe how the quality assurance processes are implemented, but they provide guidance, covering the areas, which are vital for successful quality provision and learning environments in higher education.

The ESG should be considered in a broader context that also includes qualifications frameworks, ECTS and diploma supplement that also contribute to promoting the transparency and mutual trust in higher education in the European Higher Education Area. The focus of the ESG is on quality assurance related to learning and teaching in higher education, including the learning environment and relevant links to research and innovation.

2.2 UCTS & AAC, developed by UMAP

UMAP is a voluntary association of government and non-government representatives (e.g. umbrella organizations) of the higher education sector in the Asia-Pacific region. Initiated in 1991, UMAP has now become an important international network for the promotion of student exchanges in the region. In 1997 a proposal was put forward by Australia to support a pilot project aiming to develop a UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme (UCTS) in order to facilitate the credit transfer process¹³. Launched in the year 2000 and modelled after ECTS, UCTS became the first credit system designed to be used in the Asia-Pacific region¹⁴ including Southeast Asia. UCTS is used between universities participating in UMAP's student exchange programme¹⁵ and is currently in the process of adopting a new definition of UCTS that aims to exchange credits on a one-on-one basis among the region's HEIs¹⁶, the Asian Academic Credits (AACs). Although the UMAP International Board officially adopted this new concept in October 2012¹⁷, the old UCTS based on ECTS are still featured in UMAP's official website¹⁸.

- **Rationale**

UMAP aims to achieve enhanced international understanding through increased mobility of university students and staff in the Asia-Pacific region¹⁹.

¹³http://www.umap.org/UMAP_ST2/WebFrontPage/Introduction.aspx

¹⁴ Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Ecuador, Fiji, Guam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Macao, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Samoa, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, USA, Vietnam

¹⁵Yavaprabhas, S. (2014). *The Harmonization of Higher Education in Southeast Asia*. In Yonezawa, A. et al (Eds.) *Emerging International Dimensions in East Asian Higher Education*. Springer Science & Business Media. Dordrecht

¹⁶ All accredited public and private universities

¹⁷[http://www.inter.mua.go.th/main2/files/file/UMAP/The%20New%20UMAP%20Credit%20Transfer%20System\(UCTS\)%20and%20Its%20Use%20-%202013.pdf](http://www.inter.mua.go.th/main2/files/file/UMAP/The%20New%20UMAP%20Credit%20Transfer%20System(UCTS)%20and%20Its%20Use%20-%202013.pdf)

¹⁸http://www.umap.org/UMAP_ST2/WebFrontPage/USCO.aspx

¹⁹http://www.umap.org/UMAP_ST2/WebFrontPage/Introduction.aspx

- **Purpose**

UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme (UCTS) has been designed to facilitate student mobility between UMAP countries/territories, to be used between universities participating in UMAP's student exchange program²⁰ (UMAP Student Connection Online - USCO)²¹ with the objective of assuring credit and grades earned while on mobility can be transparently transferred from the host to the home university by providing a credit conversion scale and an explanatory scale for grade equivalence between different higher education systems²².

- **Scope**

Currently there are 438 member universities²³ participating in UMAP located in 23 countries²⁴ across Asia-Pacific, 7 of which are ASEAN member countries.

The UMAP Exchange Program is open to all accredited public and private universities in countries/territories in the Asia-Pacific region. Ministries, umbrella organizations or the individual higher education institution can represent members in UMAP. Countries in other regions can join UMAP with the approval of the UMAP Board and its governing authority²⁵.

- **Features**

Types of programs that can apply UCTS include both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Until now student mobility under UCTS has mainly been semester based, for a minimum duration of one semester and a maximum of two²⁶, and *not for research*²⁷. The tuition fees should be waived by the host university²⁸.

Modelled after ECTS, UCTS adopted the 60-credit point scale, which is capable of operating both under a three-term or a two-semester academic year system, however UCTS hasn't focused on *learning outcomes to the extent that ECTS does*²⁹. The scheme includes the UMAP Study Plan, which establishes an agreement on the subjects the student will participate in, and the credits that will be received, a credit point scale and a grading scale³⁰.

UCTS has functioned under a grade and credit conversion principle³¹ with the aid of the UCTS Credit Point Scale, which is a tool meant to aid institutions in the conversion of credits from the host to the home institution, and the UCTS Grading Scale which aims to assist in the conversion of grades from one participating institution to another³². Both the UCTS Credit Point Scale and the UCTS Grading Scale are meant for comparison and explanatory purposes only and are not meant to supplant existing credit and grading scales³³.

²⁰Yavaprabhas, 2014.

²¹USCO contemplates 3 types of mobility programs: UMAP Multilateral Student Exchange Program, UMAP Bilateral Student Exchange Program, and UMAP Student Exchange on Special Courses.

²²http://www.umap.org/UMAP_ST2/WebFrontPage/USCO.aspx

²³*Emerging International Dimensions in East Asian Higher Education*, edited by Akiyoshi Yonezawa, Yuto Kitamura, Arthur Meerman, Kazuo Kuroda. Springer Science & Business Media. 2014. p. 99

²⁴Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Ecuador, Fiji, Guam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Macao, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Samoa, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, USA, Vietnam

²⁵http://www.umap.org/UMAP_ST2/WebFrontPage/Introduction.aspx

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Junaidi, 2014.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Yavaprabhas, 2014. p.99

³⁰APEC, 2014.

³¹Junaidi, 2014b. [ppt presentation]

³²APEC, 2014.

³³http://www.umap.org/UMAP_ST2/WebFrontPage/USCO.aspx

- **The New UCTS: Introduction of AACs**

As the trend towards internationalisation rapidly increases, and with it the number of universities and students participating in mobility programs expands, managing large-scale international mobility becomes difficult without *a simple (transparent, compatible, and systematic) system to process the related paperwork*³⁴. With this in mind the UMAP International Board officially adopted in October 2012 a *new concept for the UCTS which was developed based upon the concept of Asian Academic Credits (AACs)* with the aim of simplifying credit transfer between Asian higher education

Box 5. Asian Academic Credits (AACs)

Developed by Dr. Taiji Hotta following research on credit systems across ASEAN+3 nations, the AACs seek to simplify the process of credit transfer among Asian higher education institutions allowing credits to be transferred among them on a one-on-one basis, where 1 AAC = 38-48 hours of student workload (including 13-16 hours of teaching). In October 2012 the UMAP International Board officially adopted the concept of AACs to replace the old model of UCTS, however as of 30 September 2015 the UMAP webpage has not reflected this change.

institutions that *is completely different from the original UCTS based on ECTS*. Based on general trends observed in the results of two comparative studies, a 2010 study on ASEAN+3 nations³⁵ and a 2012-2014 study on 24 Asian nations³⁶, the AACs proposal³⁷ seeks to transfer credits among participating universities in the Asia-Pacific region on a one-on-one basis, thus creating a “UMAP Academic Credit Zone”. Under the definition of the AACs, introduced since 2013³⁸, one UCTS would equal *38-48 hours of student workload, including 13-16 academic hours of instruction and 25-32 hours of students for homework, lab, preparation for quizzes and exams, and writing a term paper*³⁹ but may not include reading time or final exams week⁴⁰.

UCTS has traditionally functioned under a credit conversion principle⁴¹, which tends to *lower the value of academic programs that have more credits than others*⁴² by using the *total number of credits required to complete each degree*⁴³. Furthermore, research showed similarities between Asian nations, therefore converting Asian credits earned in the host institutions into European style ECTS (which the old UCTS was modelled after) and then back to the home institution credits seems inefficient⁴⁴. Introduction of the AACs principles by UCTS would avoid this complication and would no longer require credit conversion among Asian higher education institutions that apply the AACs making student mobility within higher education institutions in the region much more convenient.

³⁴[http://www.inter.mua.go.th/main2/files/file/UMAP/The%20New%20UMAP%20Credit%20Transfer%20System\(UCTS\)%20and%20Its%20Use%20-%202013.pdf](http://www.inter.mua.go.th/main2/files/file/UMAP/The%20New%20UMAP%20Credit%20Transfer%20System(UCTS)%20and%20Its%20Use%20-%202013.pdf) p.1

³⁵ <http://ir.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/00030722>

³⁶ KAKENHI-#24402045

³⁷ By Hotta, 2010.

³⁸ An official document by the UMAP Secretariat announced the introduction of the AACs principles for use under UCTS in 2013. However, confirmation that this new model has already replaced the old UCTS in practice was not possible to obtain.

³⁹ Hotta, Taiji (2014). Possibilities of ACFTA (Academic Credit Transfer Framework for Asia) for Student Mobility in Asia. Presented at the Sophia-AIMS International Symposium. Panel Discussion on “The Role and Future of AIMS Program in an Emerging ASEAN Community” on 13 December 2014.

⁴⁰ UMAP Secretariat. Announcement. July 24, 2013.

⁴¹ Junaidi, 2014b.

⁴² E.g. one credit in a 4 year program in Japan that has a total 124 credits would be converted as follows: 124 credits/4years= 31credits/year; 60UCTS per year/31 = 1.93, therefore 1 credit in Japan = 1.93 UCTS.

⁴³ Hotta, Taiji (2013). The Development of Asian Academic Credits System: Recent new challenges by Asian groups and lessons from Europe. PPT Presentation for the Planning Commission, Government of India (March 8, 2013)

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Issues around UCTS

UCTS have the potential be very relevant for the ASEAN region as 7 of its member countries participate in UMAP's exchange programme. In addition, SEAMEO-RIHED's mobility scheme, AIMS, and more recently the ACTFA, both utilize UCTS to assist credit transfer for student mobility⁴⁵, making UCTS a scheme widely available in the region and beyond.

However, a study from 2009 indicates that UCTS has been poorly put into practice and very few HEIs actually utilize it⁴⁶. Furthermore, a review of the M-I-T pilot project found UCTS to have limited usefulness as the system was inconsistently used⁴⁷. In this regard the recent introduction of the AACs principles in UCTS may prove to be very useful as the scheme will no longer need credit conversion, allowing all participating universities to transfer credits on a one-on-one basis among themselves⁴⁸, which has the potential to have a significant impact in the ASEAN region and its higher education harmonisation efforts⁴⁹.

2.3 ACTS developed by AUN

Over the past 10 years the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization-Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) have been the only organizations taking prominent roles in actively promoting higher education harmonization in the ASEAN region⁵⁰.

AUN supports academic exchanges among its 30 member Universities and introduced the ASEAN Academic Transfer System (ACTS) for that purpose. Proposed in 2008 and established in March 2009 ACTS was first created with the purpose of introducing ASEAN students to the ASEAN integration due in 2015⁵¹. The pilot project implementation of ACTS began in July 2011⁵² among 26 AUN members and went through an evaluation in 2013⁵³. The immediate impact of AUN is not only confined to its 30 member universities as it has now expanded to include non-member institutions through an increase in academic and non-academic activities⁵⁴. Other higher education institutions across the region are

Box 6. The AUN

Established in 1995 the **ASEAN University Network (AUN)** is a policy-oriented governmental body and a leading organization in the harmonization process at the university network level. Part of the ASEAN organization, AUN is the only body that is able to put forward proposals to the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASEM) for the ASEAN Summit. If nation leaders in the meetings agree with proposals, they have high potential to be effectively implemented among the 10 ASEAN member countries¹.

Box 7. ASEAN+3

Designed in 1997 to address issues of mutual concern and improve ties with the People's Republic of China, South Korea and Japan, ASEAN+3 is now exploring ways to promote mobility with quality assurance. Efforts have led to the creation of a specialized working group that has recently agreed on '*Guidelines for the promotion of Student Exchange with quality assurance*'.

⁴⁵Yavaprabhas, 2014. p. 99

⁴⁶Nguyen (2009) in Yavaprabhas, 2014.

⁴⁷APEC, 2014.

⁴⁸Hotta, 2014.

⁴⁹As stated earlier, it is not yet clear if implementation of the AACs principles under UCTS has already started since UMAPs USCO website still states, as of 30 September 2015, that UCTS were modelled after the ECTS 60 credit point scale.

⁵⁰Yavaprabhas, 2014.

⁵¹Junaidi, 2014.

⁵²Junaidi, 2014b.

⁵³<http://slidegur.com/doc/50313/ppt---office-of-the-higher-education-commission>

⁵⁴ASEAN state of Ed, report, 2013. p.4

adopting design features of the ACTS⁵⁵; the aim is to have all ASEAN universities use ACTS by 2017⁵⁶. Participating universities now also include AUN partner universities from ASEAN+3 (China, Japan⁵⁷ and Korea)⁵⁸. For example, 2012 discussions under the “Reinventing Japan Project” led to some Japanese universities formally joining the AUN-ACTS system in 2013⁵⁹.

Cooperation under the ASEAN+3 framework has led to the creation in 2013 of a “*Working Group on Mobility of Higher Education and Ensuring Quality Assurance of Higher Education among ASEAN Plus Three Countries*”. One of the main aims of the working group is to analyse existing credit transfer systems in the region and promote mobility with quality⁶⁰. With that objective the “*ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange*” were agreed upon during the working group’s 3rd meeting in June 2015⁶¹.

As mentioned earlier ACTS was developed by AUN to facilitate mobility among its members. The drawback has been, however, that AUN only consists of leading first-tier universities; AUN wants a quality program and they only admit quality assured universities⁶², therefore making it an elite programme. In addition to this, while 30 universities are members of the AUN, only 12 out of the 30 universities provide scholarship for exchange programmes (See Table 4).

Table 4 - AUN Student exchange programme

AUN STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMME		
Universiti Brunei Darussalam	Student exchange programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate students of AUN Member Universities Duration: One semester Open to all undergraduate programs including summer program (Global Discovery Program) subject to meeting university requirement The UBD Student Exchange Programme which covers a grant which includes tuition fee waiver on reciprocal basis.
Universiti Brunei Darussalam	Graduate Research Scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For PhD only
Royal University of Phnom Penh	Exchange Programme (Khmer Literature and Language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition fees waiver for AUN students specializing in Khmer Literature and Language
Universitas Gadjah Mada	GMU Study Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition waiver for MBA (Master of Management) Tuition waiver for MPA Full scholarships for Religion and Cross Cultural Studies Programme
Universitas Indonesia	UI Study Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition waiver for undergraduate and graduate programmes (regular programmes)
University of	Student exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to all undergraduate programmes except

⁵⁵ibid. p.24

⁵⁶Junaidi, 2014.

⁵⁷Re-Inventing Japan Project member universities

⁵⁸Junaidi, 2014b.

⁵⁹Junaidi, 2014.

⁶⁰<https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/globalhighered/towards-harmonization-higher-education-southeast-asia>

⁶¹https://eu.daad.de/medien/eu/asem/bildungssekretariat/5th_asem_education_ministers_meeting_2015.pdf

⁶²Junaidi, 2014.

Malaya	programme	for medicine, pharmacy and dentistry
Universiti Sains Malaysia	Exchange student programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to all programmes available except for medicine, pharmacy and dentistry • Tuition fee is waived for the 1st semester and students pay for the 2nd semester
Ateneo de Manila University	Scholarship for UN Master of Arts in International Peace Studies at the University for Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full scholarship provided for several Asian countries where English is not widely used
De La Salle University	DLSU Study Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in any programme at the College of Liberal Arts • Tuition fee waiver
University of The Philippines	UP Scholarship for Foreign Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference of students from Africa and less developed countries in Asia and the Pacific Region with which The Philippines has diplomatic relations. • Scholarships offered to study at any graduate degree programme offered in any of the UP's autonomous universities • Full scholarships at the graduate level (Master's and PhD)
University of The Philippines	UP Presidential Scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full scholarships for foreign students from the ASEAN member states at the undergraduate level
Nanyang Technological University	NTU-AUN student exchange (TF LEARN@NTU Scholarship)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full scholarship covering: full tuition, hostel fees at NTU, airfares and living allowance for the entire semester at NTU. • Must be nationals of Asian countries (except Singapore) • Full-time undergraduates of NTU partner Universities • Have completed at least 2 semesters of study at home university
Nanyang Technological University	NTU-AUN Graduate Research Scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition fee waiver and stipend for living expenses (including accommodation at NTU)
National University of Singapore	TF LEARN Programme@NUS (Temasek Foundation Leadership Enrichment and Regional Networking Programme@National University of Singapore)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For students from ASEAN and Asia • Students participate for 1 semester between NUS and its partner universities in Asia/ASEAN
Chulalongkorn University	Scholarship for ASEAN Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships offered for Master's degree and Doctoral degree • Scholarships covers airfare, tuition fees, stipend and accommodation.

- **Rationale**

The AUN designed the mechanisms of the ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS) to foster student and academic mobility mainly to *strengthen higher education cooperation among AUN Member Universities*, complementing their members'

programs by expanding the courses available to students so that they may gain international experience that will better prepare AUN Universities' students for a future career *that will likely involve moving around in the region*⁶³ and by doing so help to *promote harmony, understanding and the ASEAN spirit in the region* in view of ASEAN integration in 2015.

- **Purpose**

ACTS was developed to facilitate mobility and credit transfer under the AUN Student Exchange Program (SEP) and designed to *accommodate differences* of the credit systems used among its member Universities without the *need to modify the existing institutional or national credit systems*⁶⁴.

- **Scope**

More than 100 students from 6 ASEAN countries participated in the AUN student Exchange Programme under the ACTS scheme⁶⁵ during its first two years of implementation⁶⁶ since 2011. As of July 2015 the total of applications accepted by Universities has grown to 577.

Utilization of ACTS has expanded beyond ASEAN member states. AUN-ACTS now includes AUN partner universities and participating universities in the 'ASEAN +3' countries⁶⁷. Japan's Kyoto University is already in the system and the *aim is to have all ASEAN universities use ACTS by 2017*⁶⁸.

There has been a steady increase in the number of nominated applicants. In 2011 the number of '*nominated applicants*' was 180, in 2012 there were 247, and 315 in 2013⁶⁹. Applicants recorded in the ACTS online application system have totalled 1694⁷⁰ as of July 2015⁷¹.

Universities with the highest participation rates have been Universities in Malaysia with the highest rate of inbound students, and the UBD (Universiti Brunei Darussalam), which has the highest outbound participation rate having sent 75 students with full scholarships. The countries with the lowest activity levels in the program are the CLMV countries; however, *Myanmar has just started opening up their higher education sector and Vietnam is also getting more active*⁷².

Courses apply for both graduate and undergraduate levels and their number is constantly changing. Special programs with partner universities can also be put into the system. In 2014, there were 19,549⁷³ courses available in the system and more than 10,000 courses in English⁷⁴.

- **Features**

Types of programmes that can use ACTS can include both graduate and undergraduate level courses with a duration of 1 or 2 semesters, as well as short course programs

⁶³<http://acts.ui.ac.id/about-aun-acts/aims-and-scope.html>

⁶⁴<http://acts.ui.ac.id/>

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ China, Japan and Korea

⁶⁸ Junaidi, 2014.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ <http://www.share-asean.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Session-7c-Melda-Kamil.pdf>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Junaidi, 2014.

⁷³ <http://www.share-asean.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Session-7c-Melda-Kamil.pdf>

⁷⁴ Junaidi, 2014.

(e.g. summer programs). In addition, students who wish to pursue research can have their credits transferred under ACTS⁷⁵.

Modelled on ECTS, ACTS is a student-centred system *based on students' workload* and linked to learning outcomes on the basis of an evaluation⁷⁶. Students get a 'Certificate of Completion' signed by the AUN-ACTS Secretariat on behalf of the university upon completion of their study mobility period with information on the course, its duration, and the ACTS grading scale. In addition, the Transcript of Academic Record includes information about the student, the home and host university, the course code and title, the language of instruction and the duration of the course. A 'Diploma Supplement' is also used by some universities⁷⁷, however the use of diploma supplements in Southeast Asia is relatively new idea and there are no specific policies or broad implementation⁷⁸.

An ACTS grading scale has been agreed to be used by member universities in order to simplify the grade conversion task⁷⁹. The grading scale is *based on the achievement ranking of a student in a given assessment* with students divided into 5 subgroups from A (excellent) to E/F (fail)⁸⁰. A normal distribution guide is given if necessary. Since ACTS has a non-conversion principle making sure that the participating universities are quality assured is important for the AUN-ACTS system⁸¹.

An online application system makes the ACTS system student-friendly. Students can apply to 3 universities in 3 countries at the same time; approval is done through the online system allowing students to check their application status in a convenient manner⁸².

Issues around ACTS

Across ASEAN, many HEIs have their own credit and grading systems, which can lead to difficulties in terms of student mobility. *ACTS avoids this complexity and complication by finding a common platform for everybody to agree upon*⁸³ (i.e. grading scale, supporting documents, number of credits per term, and type of credit transfer), replacing the need for memoranda of understanding or bilateral agreements between individual countries and institutions⁸⁴. It is important to note that modification of existing credit systems are not required by ACTS as it *works to harmonize the system*⁸⁵.

⁷⁵Ibid

⁷⁶ <http://apps.acts.ui.ac.id/index.php/home/procedure/89>

⁷⁷ Junaidi, 2014.

⁷⁸ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/events/cluster_asia/28-09/mobility_and_recognition_supachai_yavarabhas.pdf

⁷⁹ <http://acts.ui.ac.id/news-events/welcome.html>

⁸⁰ <http://acts.ui.ac.id/about-aun-acts/grading-scale.html>

⁸¹ Junaidi, 2014.

⁸² <http://acts.ui.ac.id/news-events/welcome.html>

⁸³ Junaidi, 2014.

⁸⁴ APEC, 2014.

⁸⁵ Junaidi, 2014.

2.4 AIMS developed by SEAMEO-RIHED

Although AUN-ACTS are in place, the system is not applicable to all HEIs in the region, therefore SEAMEO-RIHED is attempting to create a credit transfer scheme for all HEIs in Southeast Asia. Discussions first centred around the development of a Southeast Asia Credit Transfer System (SEA-CTS) in 2009 based on UMAP's UCTS⁸⁶. To that effect a student exchange programme designed to support student mobility among member countries in the form of scholarship was piloted in 2009 among 3 Southeast Asian countries: Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. The pilot project, known as M-I-T, employed UCTS to assist credit transfer for student mobility until a regional system was developed, given that SEA-CTS were not developed as such. The pilot project identified 5 disciplines suitable for undergraduate student mobility: agriculture, language and culture, hospitality and tourism, international business and food science and technology⁸⁷. The project was successful and then went on to become a fully-fledged ASEAN programme, now known as the ASEAN International Mobility for Students programme (AIMS).

Box 8. SEAMEO-RIHED

SEAMEO-RIHED is a regional intergovernmental organization; therefore, agreements at meetings hosted by it are highly likely to affect all HEIs in the region, around 7000 HEIs. In 2005 SEAMEO-RIHED began to host annual meetings where senior officers can discuss higher education in the region, before that time senior officials had no other available stage to discuss these matters. Furthermore, SEAMEO-RIHED is the organization that started the harmonization process in the region and its main driver at the governmental level¹. Some of SEAMEO-RIHED key developments in the area include the ASEAN International Mobility for Students Programme (AIMS) and its most recent projects "Harmonization and Networking in Higher Education, Building a Common Credit Transfer System for Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and beyond", currently at its initial stage¹.

Aware of the need to develop a credit transfer framework that is applicable to all higher education institutions in the region SEAMEO-RIHED is now working, with support from the Asian Development Bank, on developing a Regional Credit Transfer Framework that would contribute to reach the development goals of the *ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community* and the *GMS Human Resource Development Strategic Framework and Action Plan*, both of which are meant to contribute towards harmonizing the regions' higher education systems by focusing on two mechanisms: quality assurance and credit transfer systems.

Box 9. The Greater Mekong Subregion

An economic area composed of the six countries naturally bound by the Mekong River with a combined population of 326 million, the 6 countries of the GMS have now established the *GMS University Consortium*, consisting of 23 universities, and are now working together to strengthen quality assurance and credit transfer systems among its universities together with a linkage to those of ASEAN, Japan and Korea.

Under this context SEAMEO-RIHED is now in the initial phase of developing the Academic Credit Transfer Framework (ACTFA) with the aim of providing the means to harmonize existing higher education credit transfer arrangements in the region. The ACTFA would present a permeable framework with a set of tools meant to *measure the amount and magnitude of educational values in each institution*⁸⁸. The kick-off meeting of the ACTFA project took place as recently as 8-9 July 2015 where a university consortium to pilot the framework has been formally established, the *GMS University Consortium (GMS-UC)*, consisting of 23 universities from the six GMS countries (PR of China, Cambodia, Lao

⁸⁶Yavaprabhas, 2014. p.100

⁸⁷http://www.rihed.seameo.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/M-I-T_Project_Review_2010.pdf p.9

⁸⁸Hotta, 2014.

PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam) as well as Malaysia and the Philippines⁸⁹. The GMS University Consortium will seek to complement the AUN by including second-tier universities located strategically in economic corridors of the GMS. *The GMS University Consortium can benefit from strengthened quality assurance capacity and student and faculty exchange with AUN*⁹⁰.

- **Rationale**

The ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) initiated in support of the objectives of the *Framework for Regional Integration in Higher Education in Southeast Asia: The Road Towards a Common Space*⁹¹ and is considered as a means to accelerate efforts to meet the needs of the ASEAN Community⁹². SEAMEO-RIHED considers student mobility as one of the key strategic cooperation elements that may lead towards developing a *harmonised higher education environment*⁹³ among Southeast Asian countries in order to create the conditions to increase global competitiveness⁹⁴, as such the AIMS program has been a vital element of its education programs as indicated in its 4th *Five-Year Development Plan to cultivate globalized human resources*⁹⁵.

- **Purpose**

The AIMS programme seeks to *create a vibrant student mobility programme for citizens of all SEAMEO member countries* and enhance the visibility of higher education in Southeast Asia by developing its capacity to offer international education and encourage students to study abroad in the region in order to build the reputation of its higher education institutions⁹⁶.

- **Scope**

Participation in the AIMS program initiated with 117 students from 23 higher education institutions during its pilot phase⁹⁷ (the M-I-T in 2009). Since then 670⁹⁸ students have participated⁹⁹ in the program which has now grown to include 60 universities¹⁰⁰.

Types of universities participating in the program cover a wide range and can include top research universities as well as teaching universities. Courses and universities *have been selected by the government*¹⁰¹.

The AIMS program is active in 7 countries (Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Japan)¹⁰² and is set to expand further with inclusion of more Southeast Asian countries¹⁰³. A target was set for 2015 to increase its institutional membership to 10 countries¹⁰⁴.

⁸⁹<http://www.rihed.seameo.org/kick-off-meeting-of-the-gms-university-consortium-and-academic-credit-transfer-framework-for-asia/>

⁹⁰ADB (2013) Technical Assistance Report. Project Number: 46071 Regional—Policy and Advisory Technical Assistance (R-PATA) December 2013 Implementing the Greater Mekong Subregion Human Resource Development Strategic Framework and Action Plan

⁹¹http://www.rihed.seameo.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/M-I-T_Project_Review_2010.pdf

⁹²<http://www.up.edu.ph/the-aims-programme-up-and-the-future-of-student-mobility-in-the-asean/>

⁹³<http://www.rihed.seameo.org/programmes/aims/>

⁹⁴<http://www.up.edu.ph/the-aims-programme-up-and-the-future-of-student-mobility-in-the-asean/>

⁹⁵<http://www.rihed.seameo.org/programmes/aims/>

⁹⁶<http://www.up.edu.ph/the-aims-programme-up-and-the-future-of-student-mobility-in-the-asean/>

⁹⁷http://www.eadtu.eu/images/publicaties/APEC_CBE_Workshop_Paper.pdf

⁹⁸ Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin, SEAMEO-RIHED. Chapter 5: AIMS programme - Student Mobility as a Key Mechanism to Cultivate Globalized Human Resources. p. 87

⁹⁹ASEAN STATE OF ED REPORT, 2013. P.26

¹⁰⁰<http://www.up.edu.ph/the-aims-programme-up-and-the-future-of-student-mobility-in-the-asean/>

¹⁰¹Junaidi, 2014.

¹⁰² Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin, SEAMEO-RIHED. p. 87

¹⁰³<http://www.rihed.seameo.org/the-22nd-seameo-rihed-governing-board-meeting/>

¹⁰⁴Chantavit Sujatanond (2014) in <http://www.up.edu.ph/the-aims-programme-up-and-the-future-of-student-mobility-in-the-asean/>

Currently there are 7 fields of study students can participate in under the AIMS program, up from its initial 5 disciplines during the pilot phase. The target now includes expanding to up to 10 the number of available disciplines¹⁰⁵.

- **Features**

The AIMS program is a government-led initiative. In regards to the institutions, the government decides which universities are considered eligible to participate in the programme and allocates the corresponding funds. When it comes to students it is also the government that provides the scholarships and advises students on which courses to take and where to go¹⁰⁶. In addition, there are initiatives by participating universities to also involved students that are privately funded¹⁰⁷.

The AIMS programme operates on the principle of reciprocity. Participating countries commit to sending 50 outbound students and, in turn, have the responsibility of sponsoring 50 incoming students¹⁰⁸. However perfect balance has not been achieved due, among other factors, student's preferences and fiscal constraints¹⁰⁹.

The UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme (UCTS) is used to assist the transfer of credits earned during the students' studies abroad and facilitate recognition¹¹⁰.

Mechanisms are in place to provide student support through pre-departure briefings, simple enrolment procedures, in country orientation, development of communication strategies between institutions and students, and *ensuring that at least two students are included in each student exchange intake*¹¹¹.

The need to develop expertise in strategic priority areas in Southeast Asia has defined the available fields of study of the AIMS program, which are defined by the participating countries in a collective manner. These include: hospitality and tourism, agriculture, language and culture, international business, food science and technology, economics, and engineering¹¹².

Issues around AIMS

The push for internationalisation of higher education is a common trend throughout the world and Southeast Asia is no exception. In this regards the AIMS programme has been a *major catalyst in this affair*¹¹³. Early success of the AIMS program can be attributed to the financial backing of the education ministries of participating countries which is available both to institutions and students, as well as efforts to provide training to institutions on how to use UMAP's UCTS to assist the managing of transfer of credits between higher education institutions earned by students during mobility periods, identifying priority areas as well as fostering communication between participating institutions¹¹⁴.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Junaidi, 2014.

¹⁰⁷Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin, SEAMEO-RIHED. p. 88

¹⁰⁸<http://www.up.edu.ph/the-aims-programme-up-and-the-future-of-student-mobility-in-the-asean/>

¹⁰⁹Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin, SEAMEO-RIHED. p. 87

¹¹⁰See next subheading for detailed information on UCTS.

¹¹¹http://www.eadtu.eu/images/publicaties/APEC_CBE_Workshop_Paper.pdf

¹¹²<http://www.up.edu.ph/the-aims-programme-up-and-the-future-of-student-mobility-in-the-asean/>

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴http://www.eadtu.eu/images/publicaties/APEC_CBE_Workshop_Paper.pdf

3 Credit transfer systems in ASEAN and beyond

Fragmentation between CTS in ASEAN is an obstacle to the increase of student mobility. Indeed, the lack of credibility regarding credits is a factor of mistrust for both the students and the administrative staff. One strategy to avoid the credibility problem is to create joint degrees with EU countries.

3.1 Coexisting credit transfer systems in ASEAN

Box 10. Understanding of Credits in Asia

The definition of credits in Asia commonly refers to contact hours and implementation at national and institutional level varies. However, in Asian ASEM countries, including ASEAN countries, universities have already begun to reflect students' workloads in their universities credit systems.

Credit transfer systems around the world and even within the institutions of a single country can vary greatly if there is no consensus for a credit transfer (or translation) and accumulation scheme¹¹⁵. International and regional credit transfer schemes have emerged that have proven successful, like those already mentioned, while others have been left as ideas to be re-visited¹¹⁶, like the ACD-ACTS whose development has been put on the table under the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) since 2008 and that would encompass the region covering Central Asia, West Asia, East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia but that has not yet been implemented¹¹⁷.

The issue increases in difficulty if the systems in question are still in the process of developing national qualifications frameworks and higher education quality assurance systems. The HE credit systems of the ASEAN member countries are in different stages of development. Credit system in Thailand, the Philippines and Brunei are already in use, harmonisation efforts of national level credit systems are currently underway in Malaysia, while credit systems have just been introduced in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam¹¹⁸. In the following section efforts at the regional and international levels to harmonize credit transfer in higher education in the ASEAN region will be examined.

UCTS have the potential to be relevant for the ASEAN region as 7 of its member countries participate in UMAP's exchange programme. In addition, SEAMEO-RIHED's mobility scheme, AIMS, and more recently the ACTFA, both utilize UCTS to assist credit transfer for student mobility¹¹⁹, making UCTS a scheme widely available in the region and beyond.

However, a study from 2009 indicates that UCTS has been poorly put into practice and very few HEIs actually utilize it¹²⁰. Furthermore, a review of the M-I-T pilot project found UCTS to have limited usefulness as the system was inconsistently used¹²¹. In this regard the recent introduction of the AACs principles in UCTS may prove to be very useful as the scheme will no longer need credit conversion, allowing all participating universities to transfer credits on a one-on-one basis among themselves¹²², which has the potential to

¹¹⁵<http://www.asiaexchange.org/information/study-credits/>

¹¹⁶http://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/speeches/-/asset_publisher/t3pS/content/press-release--statement-by-yb-dato%E2%80%99sri-anifah-aman-at-the-asia-cooperation-dialogue-acd-new-york-22-september-2014-english-version-only?redirect=%2Fweb%2Fguest%2Fspeeches

¹¹⁷<http://www.mei.edu/content/asia-cooperation-dialogue-acd-progress-and-potential>

¹¹⁸<http://international.ui.ac.id/aun-acts.html>

¹¹⁹Yavaprabhas, 2014. p. 99

¹²⁰Nguyen (2009) in Yavaprabhas, 2014.

¹²¹APEC, 2014.

¹²²Hotta, 2014.

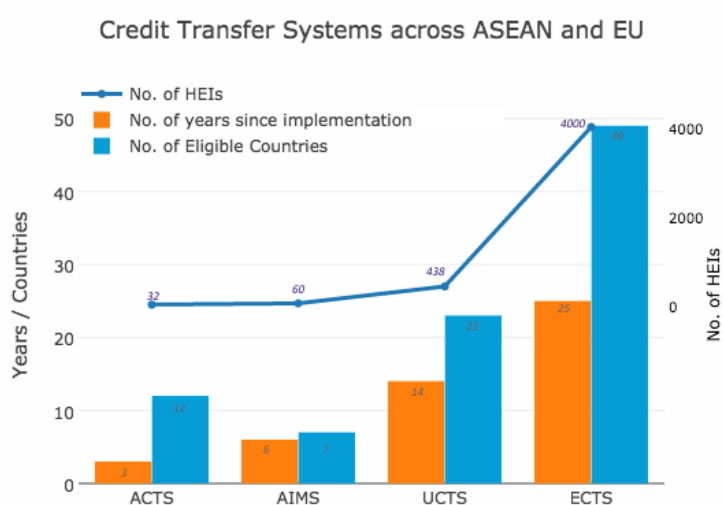
have a significant impact in the ASEAN region and its higher education harmonisation efforts¹²³.

Universities have their own credit and grading systems, which can lead to difficulties in terms of student mobility. *ACTS avoids this complexity and complication by finding a common platform for everybody to agree upon*¹²⁴ (i.e. grading scale, supporting documents, number of credits per term, and type of credit transfer), replacing the need for memoranda of understanding or bilateral agreements between individual countries and institutions¹²⁵. It is important to note that modification of existing credit systems are not required by ACTS as it *works to harmonize the system*¹²⁶.

The push for internationalisation of HE is a common trend throughout the world and Southeast Asia is no exception. In this regards the AIMS programme has been a *major catalyst in this affair*¹²⁷. Early success of the AIMS program can be attributed to the financial backing of the education ministries of participating countries which is available both to institutions and students, as well as efforts to provide training to institutions on how to use UMAP's UCTS to assist the managing of transfer of credits between higher education institutions earned by students during mobility periods, identifying priority areas as well as fostering communication between participating institutions¹²⁸.

3.2 Credit transfer systems across EU-ASEAN

Figure 1 - Credit Transfer System across ASEAN and EU



As mentioned earlier, instances of credit transfer collaboration between the EU and ASEAN higher education institutions have been provided for over a decade now with programmes such as Asia-Link, Erasmus Mundus and the ASEAN-EU Network programme. For example, the National University of Malaysia¹²⁹ and the University of Duisburg-Essen developed in

¹²³ As stated earlier, it is not yet clear if implementation of the AACs principles under UCTS has already started since UMAP's USCO website still states, as of 30 September 2015, that UCTS were modelled after the ECTS 60 credit point scale.

¹²⁴ Junaidi, 2014.

¹²⁵ APEC, 2014.

¹²⁶ Junaidi, 2014.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ http://www.eadtu.eu/images/publicaties/APEC_CBE_Workshop_Paper.pdf

¹²⁹ Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

2003 a joint degree programme in Computer Science and Communication Engineering, comprising double degrees, and a student exchange programme¹³⁰ where courses were compared and made equivalent for credit transfer¹³¹. The partnership later expanded to include the University of Indonesia and the University of Parma, and with funding from the Asia-Link programme the network carried out a project focused on outcome-based education description in their joint-degree and double degree programs in engineering with the title “Contribution towards an EU-ASEAN Credit Transfer System leading to Implementation of Student Mobility and Joint-Award Degree Program in Engineering Education” where differences and commonalities on learning outcomes among the institutions were explored¹³².

Little seems to be published on the Asian student experience on mobility programmes¹³³, which presents a challenge for exploring how credit transfer actually works down on the ground and the degree the programs available, either AUN-ACTS, AIMS or UMAP, facilitate both mobility and credit transfer. There has been, however, a 2012 Erasmus Mundus survey that touches on the topic but is not limited to ASEAN countries, as well as the survey that has been carried out by Campus France and EP-Nuffic for the purpose of this report which does focus on the ASEAN student and university experience; the results of both will be explored in the following section.

4 Obstacles to student mobility in the ASEAN region, lessons learned from surveys

Three studies’ results are helpful in identifying the obstacles to student mobility in the ASEAN region.

The results presented here are based on three sources. The first one is the Asia survey carried out by the Erasmus Mundus Regional Cluster. Campus France and EP-NUFFIC executed the second one. This survey focuses on the experiences of students and HEI staff from 10 ASEAN states between July and August 2015. The third experiment is the case study called “Free Movers”. It explores the conclusions of the Asia Exchange Programme (AE) taking place between Finland and three ASEAN countries: Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. The specifics are available in Appendix 3.

The results of the EP-NUFFIC/Campus France institutional survey illustrate that intra-ASEAN mobility is still low. The survey indicated that more than half of the universities (62%) only received up to 5 students and/or sent up to 5 of their own students to study abroad in the ASEAN region.

In terms of mobility only a quarter of institutions surveyed by EP-NUFFIC/Campus France reported to take mobility into account through the accumulation of credits. It is important to note that the majority of the institutions that answered do not provide information to students on recognition and credit mobility (75%). There are differences in preferences

¹³⁰These cover disciplines such as computer science and communication engineering, civil and structural engineering and mechanical engineering. The programs face many challenges, partly because the educational systems in these countries vary greatly.

¹³¹European Journal of Social Sciences - Volume 8, Number 3 (2009) Lessons from the Joint UKM-UDE (Malaysia-Germany) Student Mobility Programs. http://pdfbookant.org/k-2492678.html#download_area

¹³²The Association of South East Asian Institutions of Higher Education (ASAIHL) Curtin University of Technology, Perth Western Australia, 5-7 December 2007. Conference Proceedings - Part 2. Online at: <https://www.academia.edu/788146/>

¹³³APEC, 2014

regarding the method of credits' recognitions between Asian and EU students. Because of the lack of CTS credibility in ASEAN, Asian students prefer formal check rather than automatic check for credits.

Results from the student experience show that credit transfer is considered to be an obstacle for about a third of respondents (28%). In terms of the platform used for their mobility, out of the 176 respondents 67% of students used AUN-ACTS and 7% used AIMS, while the remaining 26% used another modality¹³⁴. Significantly, less than half were informed about recognition arrangements between their home and host institutions. Of those who did receive information, their international relations office was cited as the most important source of information regarding credit transfer and diploma recognition (51%), while information provided by fellow students with study abroad experience was mentioned as the second source of importance of information on this topic (40%). Furthermore, it was also observed that information regarding the aim of CTS in their studies is limited, 47% did not know what CTS are meant to measure.

The use of different grading scales, the lack of compatibility of different credit systems and the fact that Diploma Supplements and a learning outcomes approach are rarely used as recognition tools¹³⁵ limits the interest of students in CTS. Likewise, many HEIs seem to ignore the value of CTS as a driver to student mobility.

¹³⁴Bilateral agreements, free-movers, other existing regional programs like UMAP, etc.

¹³⁵ibid.

5 Moving forward

Internationalisation¹³⁶ in higher education has many dimensions. It includes the type of courses/programmes offered, the teaching material, curriculum content, the diversity among students and staff in addition to the learning environment and context. Many universities in the ASEAN region still fall behind in term of internationalising themselves, in human resources, system and infrastructure.

Furthermore, limited **support from governments**¹ hinders the students in deciding to study abroad. Government policies and regulations, such as visa regulations, could have an impact in determining the flow of inbound students. Additionally, financial aid or scholarship from the government also plays a significant role in attracting students to study abroad in the ASEAN region.

The main challenge to foster credit transfer and with it student mobility among ASEAN nations seems to be harmonizing the existing higher education systems. In the opinion of experts, the ASEAN experience has shown that it is *better to harmonize the system and work with the existing system rather than creating a new one*¹³⁷.

Important points that need to be considered relate to the characteristics of each national higher education system. Key constraints include: national regulations, curricula and quality¹³⁸. Bachelor degrees are awarded after four years in some countries and after three years in others. A rigid curriculum makes credit transfer difficult for students who participate in mobility programs, while the existence of two different academic calendars in ASEAN member states also present an important difficulty for mobility within as well as outside the region. In order to foster mobility Universities in the region will have to move towards a more international academic calendar: September to December, and February to early June. *This will make credit transfer mobility compatible for the ASEAN region*¹³⁹. The treatment of grades imposes a further challenge in ensuring compatibility among the diverse systems, as it is difficult to persuade each university and professor to change their current grading system into another. In this regard, the AACs introduced by Hotta propose a *dual grading system where students receive two scores - one based on the host university regulation and the other on a common credit system*¹⁴⁰.

The number of students moving within the higher education systems in the region remains relatively low. Although Universities are using different credit transfer systems to foster student mobility the fact that it remains low may be due, in the opinion of experts, to the *fact that existing CTS's in the region are either too general and all too inclusive or too narrow and applicable to only limited number of universities*¹⁴¹. In this regard, it has been pointed out that Asian students seem to prefer staying in the host country until the end of their program instead of coming back to their home university after a period abroad. Therefore *'one-way' mobility programs may be more feasible under the Asian context*¹⁴². On the other hand, *not many European students go to Asia*¹⁴³. It is important to note that little is published on the experience of students that have taken

¹³⁶ <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/01/11/high-time-internationalization-indonesian-higher-learning.html>

¹³⁷ Junaidi, 2014.

¹³⁸ Pham, 2012.

¹³⁹ Junaidi, 2014.

¹⁴⁰ Pham, 2012.

¹⁴¹ <http://www.rihed.seameo.org/programmes/credit-transfer-system/>

¹⁴² Pham, 2012.

¹⁴³ Boonlue, T., & Sawheny, Y. (2014)

part in mobility programs such as ACTS, AIMS and UMAP, nor on the extent these systems have *helped increase the amount of credit mobility*¹⁴⁴.

Suitable financial arrangements for the sharing of costs has also come up as recommendation¹⁴⁵ in order to ensure a sustainable credit transfer scheme in the future¹⁴⁶. The results of the EP-Nuffic survey, which reported financial resources as a major obstacle in the implementation, and functioning of the credit system have supported this observation¹⁴⁷.

Finally, ***more focus and better coordination between ASEAN member countries in their quality assurance agencies and frameworks***, which are now being developed in almost all ASEAN member countries, is an important requirement for achieving harmonisation along with target achievement dates¹⁴⁸.

Reconsidering the value of CTS is key for a fruitful international of higher education and functioning student mobility:

Credit transfer is the process by which credits for the successful completion of a unit of study is transferred from a host institution to the home institution to form part of the credits for a student's overall qualification¹⁴⁹. Students considering crossing the border to study may be reluctant if they are not certain that they will receive credit for study done at a host institution. Lack of clarity and agreement around credit transfer processes can also deter students from expanding their skills and knowledge: they may choose to study at an institution with similar units rather than studying somewhere which could enhance their overall academic experience¹⁵⁰. The added value of mobility would then be limited to the discovery of studying in a foreign institution. This is certainly crucial to strengthen mind-openness and foster cross-mutual understanding between societies, but an international can bring much more in terms of qualifications for students.

Research showed that “however well executed tools and frameworks for credit transfer and qualification recognition are, on their own they may be insufficient to satisfy concerns about the equivalence of *qualifications*” and hence hinders students trust in crossing the border to study.

Whatever the level of sophistication in the calculation of credits, “CTS cannot automatically guarantee that students have achieved the skills and knowledge defined in a course or degree”¹⁵¹ if they are not associated with learning outcomes. **CTS might be pointless for mobility purposes if they cannot reflect evidence on student achievement of learning outcomes.**

For sure, student mobility without recognition is possible (e.g. for cultural immersion and exchanges) and required limited arrangements such as MoU between higher education institutions. Mobility with recognition adds however a considerable value to students, who can progress in their studies via their international academic experience. Mobility with

¹⁴⁴APEC, 2014

¹⁴⁵ Suggested by participants at a SEMAEO-RIHED regional workshop in Bangkok on November 2012.

¹⁴⁶Pham, 2012.

¹⁴⁷EP-Nuffic Survey, 2015.

¹⁴⁸Mongkhonvanit, P. (2012). How the Bologna Process affects the ASEAN integration of Higher Education, and the lessons learned from the EHEA Ministerial Conference and Third Bologna Policy Forum (bPF) in Bucharest. In International Association of Universities Horizons June 2012 Vol. 18 Number 2. p. 13. Online at: https://www.academia.edu/1760470/UNESCO_chairs_for_higher_education_for_sustainable_development

¹⁴⁹ Junor, S., A. Usher, et al. (2008). Student Mobility & Credit Transfer : A National and Global Survey, Educational Policy Institute.

¹⁵⁰ Sison, M. D. and L. Brennan (2012). "Students as Global Citizens: Strategies for Mobilizing Studies Abroad." Journal of Marketing for Higher Education 22(2) : 167-181.

¹⁵¹ APEC (2014).

recognition requires however a range of supporting infrastructure tools¹⁵² in addition to a credit transfer system notably national quality assurance mechanisms and national qualification frameworks that are compatible.

There is therefore a clear opportunity for the SHARE project to explore how learning outcomes might be compared and how CTS may enable recognition of qualification, and build up trust of students on the validity of mobility. SHARE furthermore provides the opportunity to link CTS to national qualification and quality assurance frameworks.

¹⁵² EACEA (2012). Erasmus Mundus Clustering Masters Courses, Doctoral Programmes, Partnerships and Attractiveness Projects. Regional Cluster: Asia. Survey Results.

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7 Appendix I - Comparison of systems within ASEAN and with Europe (source UNESCO)

Year of implementation	Adopted by UMAP International Board in 2012 - introduced 2013 - Not yet on UMAPs webpage (as of 30.09.15)	2000	2011	1989; ECTS Users' Guide has been revised and new version adopted in 2015
Countries involved	UCTS participating countries	23 Countries: Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Ecuador, Fiji, Guam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Macao, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Samoa, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, USA, Vietnam	ASEAN + partners: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, France (through Campus France), Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.	49 countries in European Higher Education Area (EHEA): Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom
Types of HEIs	UCTS participating HEIs	All public or private HEIs located in UMAP Member Countries/Territories, and recognized in the participating home Country/Territory	33 AUN member and non-member Universities (First-tier / Leading HEIs)	All HEIs in EHEA
Level of Studies	Graduate and Undergraduate	Graduate and Undergraduate	Graduate, Undergraduate, and short course programs	Graduate and Undergraduate, lifelong learning (i.e. work placements)
Type of Credit Transfer	Non-conversion principle	Conversion principle: old UCTS uses the total number of credits required to complete each degree (e.g.: a 4 year program with a total of 120 credits = 31 credits p/year. Old UCTS = 60 credits p/year, hence conversion would be $60/31 = 1.93$; that is 1 credit=1.93 UCTS	Non-conversion principle	Non-conversion principle
Credit definition	1 Academic year = 30 to 35 credits	1 academic year = 60 credits	1 academic year = 60 credits	1 academic year= 60 credits
Student Workload per year	1800 to 2100 hours	1800 hours		1500-1800 hours
Student Workload per credit	38-48 hours (includes 13-16 academic hours of instruction)	30 hours of work	25-30 hours of student workload	25 to 30 hours of work.
Teaching hours	13-16	---	Not applicable	Not applicable
Grading Scale	Dual system where students receive two scores: one based on the host university's regulation and the other based on a common credit system	UCTS Grading Scale used as a conversion scale adopted the grading scale used by ECTS (old) consisting of grades from A to F, with E being the lowest passing grade. Application of the grading scale is not a mandatory element of UCTS	ACTS grading scale will be based on the achievement ranking of a student in a given assessment. Students will be divided into 5: from A (Excellent) to E/F (Fail).	Grade distribution table developed in a standardised format (statistical distribution table of the passing grades awarded in the programme showing how the grading scale is actually used in that programme) in addition to their national/institutional grading scale and an explanation of the scale. The grade distribution table was first introduced in the ECTS Users' Guide in 2009, as a replacement for the previous ECTS grading scales (A, B, C, D, E), which are not used anymore.
Supporting documents	University brochure and homepage for student exchanges to explain the concept of this new UCTS, UMAP Standard Application Form and Study Plan.	UMAP information package, UMAP Study Plan, UMAP Transcript	ACTS Student Application Form, ACTS Learning Agreement, ACTS Transcript of Records for Exchange Semester/s, Academic Record as a copy of official transcript in English, and ACTS Certificate.	Course Catalogue, Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, and Traineeship Certificate, Diploma Supplement.

8 Appendix II - DATA

I. Erasmus Mundus Regional Cluster: Asia Survey¹⁵³

The Erasmus Mundus Asia survey reports that 70% of Asian respondents report their institutions credit study periods abroad. The most frequently used recognition tools include: transcripts of records, credits, and learning agreements. The survey also points to differences in the preferred method of recognition, with European respondents favouring automatic recognition based on learning agreements while Asian respondents favour formal checks¹⁵⁴. The study showed that less than 5% of respondents still find recognition or accreditation as a barrier to cooperation. The issues cited include: the use of different grading scales, the **lack of compatibility of different credit systems** and the fact that Diploma Supplements and a learning outcomes approach are rarely used as recognition tools¹⁵⁵.

Furthermore, the report indicates that fostering the use of the ACTS within Asia would favour recognition at European-Asian level and increase the transparency of the different existing recognition systems given that ACTS is based on the logic and mechanisms of the ECTS¹⁵⁶. The survey also stresses the conservative nature of HEIs as hindering accreditation of study that takes place outside their institutional environment, highlighting the **lack of attention paid to new emerging cooperation practices** such as pilot recognition experiences in Asia like ACTS¹⁵⁷.

II. Campus France and EP-Nuffic Survey on ASEAN Students and HEIs mobility experience

The survey by Campus France and EP-Nuffic (2015) was carried out among students and HEIs in the 10 ASEAN Member States, in July to August 2015 through online participation. The purpose of the survey was to capture the experience of students who participated in mobility programmes in the ASEAN region. The survey also identified problems and obstacles that students faced before, during and after they participated in the mobility programme. For the HEIs, the survey identified the obstacles in managing mobility programmes either as a home or host university.

- **Student Survey**

The student survey was sent to 1714 students/graduates, a total of 217 responded with valid answers. Results from the students' survey indicate that the top destination countries for intra-ASEAN mobility programmes are Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand. In terms of students going abroad, only 6% of the respondents come from the CLMV countries. Regarding their motivation to study abroad, three factors are considered important for students in choosing their host university: building international network (97%), quality of studies (96%) and availability of scholarship (95%). Destination country and city, requirement

¹⁵³ EACEA (2012). Erasmus Mundus Clustering Masters Courses, Doctoral Programmes, Partnerships and Attractiveness Projects. Regional Cluster: Asia. Survey Results. Online at:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/clusters/documents/asia/em_asia_cluster_survey_report_final.pdf

¹⁵⁴ EACEA, 2012, p.57

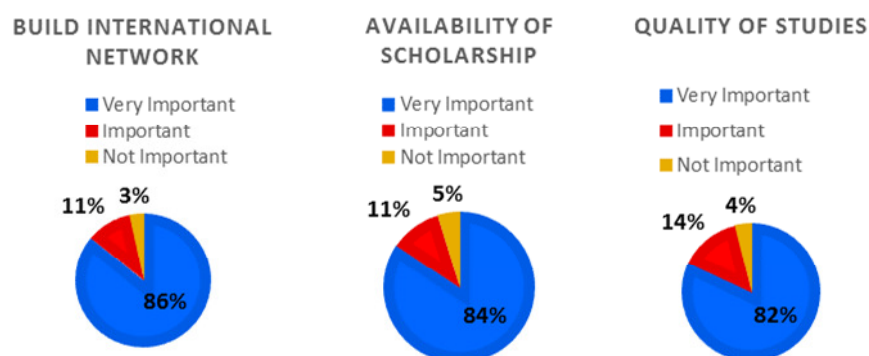
¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 58

¹⁵⁷ EACEA, 2012. P. 58

by their study programme and agreement between home and host universities received less importance.

Figure 2 - Student motivation to study abroad



In relation to the application process, 67% of respondents were very satisfied with the support they received from the International Relations Office staff, while 65% were very satisfied with the navigation system and information provided on the online application system. However, they also feel that there is room for improvement, the survey cited that almost half of the respondents (43%) believe that approval from the host university and approval from home university (37%).

On their personal developments while studying abroad, a majority of students (90%) felt that they became more independent. However, their utmost concern from their study abroad is the need to prolong their studies and missing out on specific courses at their home university.

- ***Institutional Survey***

The results of the institutional survey illustrate that intra-ASEAN mobility is still low. The survey indicated that more than half of the universities (62%) only received up to 5 students and/or sent up to 5 of their own students to study abroad in the ASEAN region.

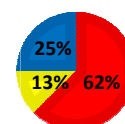
Although students considered that printed media such as flyers, posters, newspapers and magazines are not important sources of information on mobility programmes, more than half of HEIs use these sources as promotion material for mobility programmes (75%). Additionally, some HEIs (25%) face obstacles in raising students' awareness, as most students show little interest in intra-ASEAN mobility mainly due to the lack

of information on universities in ASEAN. In relation to support given to their outbound/inbound students, the results complement that of the student survey. More than half of the students' survey respondents indicate positive support from their home university's International Relation Office (IRO) (60%) and 57% indicated their satisfaction with pre-departure

Figure 3 – Numbers of student mobility

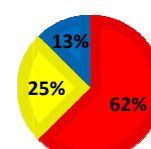
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF INCOMING ASEAN STUDENT(S) IN THE LAST YEAR

0 to 5 10 to 20 Over 20



ESTIMATED NUMBER OF OUTBOUND STUDENT(S) TO ASEAN MEMBER STATES IN THE LAST YEAR

0 to 5 10 to 20 Over 20

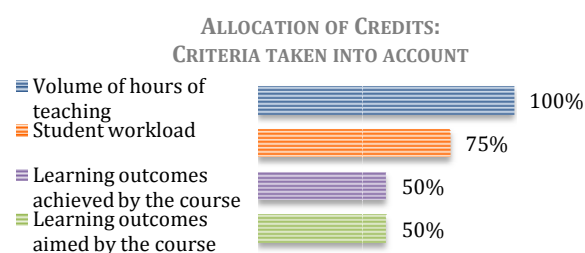


arrangements by their home university. In relation to this, most HEIs (88%) support students with regard to providing documents and pre-departure arrangements. While 88% of HEIs as host universities provide students with information on course content. Corresponding to this, students' three highest satisfaction rate for support from the host university's IRO are information on the course content, language preparation class and help with problems in general, in which more than 70% of respondents were very satisfied.

A peculiar characteristic of the institutional survey is that only 13% of the HEIs answered the section on credit transfer, which may reflect a low level of familiarity of the administrative staff with credits and credit transfer in general; administrative staff were found to be one of the major obstacles for functioning of the credit system.

Figure 4 – Allocation of Credits

The answers received indicate the majority of respondents include recognition of credits as part of conventions with partner institutions, and 75% participate in the AUN and/or the AIMS mobility platforms. When it comes to credit design all institutions mentioned having criteria defined at the study program level, 75% indicated having both pedagogic and administrative



criteria designed within the institution and 25% mentioned having only administrative criteria. In terms of mobility only a quarter of respondents reported to take mobility into account through the accumulation of credits. It is important to note that the majority of the institutions that answered do not provide information to students on recognition and credit mobility (75%). A transcript of records is the most frequently used supporting document that facilitates credit recognition of mobility periods (75%), followed by learning agreements (25%). In order to facilitate the process of credit accumulation half of the institutions reported having a computerized procedure in place. Financial resources and, as mentioned earlier, the administrative staff were found to be two major obstacles in the implementation and functioning of the credit system, while political support, material resources and students were signalled as presenting the least amount of difficulty.

III. Case study: Free Movers - Asia Exchange Programme (AE)

Source: <http://www.asiaexchange.org/>

Established in 2007 in Finland, AE offers students opportunities to take part in study abroad semesters at selected partner universities in Asia, including 3 ASEAN member countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Partner universities are among the top universities in their respective countries. Students from over 200 universities have participated in study abroad semesters, so far. Universities represented by AE are ideal for students who are interested in Asia but aren't able to find suitable study abroad options via their own universities or are left outside the placement quotas. As the students organize their study abroad semesters independently via AE, no official agreement with the host university and the students' home university is needed. Students have a 'free mover' status while attending AE's programs. The home universities make decisions about transfer of credits. With some exceptions, conversion of credits earned in partner Universities in Asia into ECTS is usually determined by the relationship

between the scope of a local degree program in credits and the time it takes to complete it, set against the European standard attainment of 60 credits per academic year. The university of Helsinki (QS World Ranking place 69), for instance, follows this conversion method.

Examples:

- **Malaysian credits:** In Malaysia, 40 hours of study time (outside class) is valued as 1 credit. A completed course often converts to 5 ECTS credits. Accordingly, 136 (the scope of a Malaysian degree in credits) / 4 (the length of the program in years) = 34 credits = local yearly goal. Dividing the European yearly goal of 60 ECTS by the local yearly goal of 34 credits gives the coefficient 1,77. The scope of a 3 credit course multiplied by the coefficient is 5,3 ECTS.

- **Thai credits:** The credits of the different universities are determined as follows:
 - **Kasetsart University:** 130 (the scope of a degree in credits) / 4 (the duration of a degree in years) = $32,5$ credits = local yearly standard attainment. Thereby, 60 ECTS (yearly standard attainment in Europe) / $32,5$ credits (local yearly standard attainment) gives the coefficient 1,85. The number of local credits gained from an individual course (3) multiplied by 1,85 results in 5,5 ECTS.
 - **Siam University:** 135 (the scope of a degree in credits) / 4 (the duration of a degree in years) = $33,75$ credits = local yearly standard attainment. Thereby, 60 ECTS / $33,75$ credits give the coefficient 1,77. The number of local credits gained from an individual course (3) multiplied by 1,77 results in 5,3 ECTS.
 - **Prince of Songkla University:** 185 (the scope of a degree in credits) / 4 (the duration of a degree in years) = $46,25$ credits = local yearly standard attainment. Thereby, 60 ECTS / $46,25$ credits give the coefficient 1,3. The number of local credits gained from an individual course (4) multiplied by 1,3 results in 5,2 ECTS.

- **Indonesian credits:** In the case of Indonesian credits (at Udayana University) they are currently granted directly as ECTS credits. Each course is worth 5 ECTS credits.
