FREDERICK UNIVERSITY

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ
UNIVERSITY OF CRETE

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

ICTeEfS

Guidelines
on ECTS Student Workload
and a Rubric for Assessing ECTS Integration
in ICTeEfS Course Curriculum

Developed by:

Vassilios Makrakis (Frederick University) &

Nelly Kostoulas (University of Crete)

The purpose of this guideline is to provide peer-reviewers, external evaluators and course leaders at ICTeEfS with tools to better comprehend, calculate and assess student workload when planning, reviewing and revising the ICTeEfS courses.

1. Defining workload

Reaching the learning outcomes of a course and course modules, in particular is directly linked with the *workload* of a course. In the context of ICTeEfS, workload is based on ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). As pointed in the ICTeEfS Toolkit learning outcomes are sets of competencies, expressing what the student will know, understand or be able to do after completion of a course. Workload refers to the expected time an average student might need to complete the required learning outcomes. Student workload covers all educational components of a study

programme such as attending lectures, face-to-face and/or online, seminars, reflections, work placements, dissertations, projects, laboratory work, self-study and examinations. Thus, student workload covers all aspects of learning and is not related solely to formal teaching hours. Each of the four ICTeEfS full-tine academic semesters consists of 30 ECTS. Each ECTS credit stands from 25 to 30 working hours. In a full-time study year,60 ECTS credits, that is 30 credits each semester. It is critical that all involved in course curriculum development and evaluation as well as teaching are expected to develop a good understanding of what the workload for a particular study programme or unit/module may entail and to relate this workload to the learning outcomes to be achieved as a whole and individualy, in the course modules.

2. Defining ECTS and its importance

ECTS is a student-centred approach of describing learning by allocating credits to learning conponents in line with learning objectives and learmning outcomes, based on the workload of the average learner. The allocation of ECTS credits is based on the official length of a study programme cycle. In the case of the MSc in ICTeEfS, the total workload necessary to obtain the MSc degree lasts four semesters for full-time students and consists of 90 credits for course work and 30 credits for writing the thesis, making the total 120 credits. In case of the Professional Master degree applied in Egypt that runs in parallel with the research-oriented degree, students are to take only the courses equivalent to 120 ECTS. Thus, a 10 ECTS credit course amounts 250 to 300 hours student work. The implementation of ECTS is very important, not only for students and instructors, but also for employers as it provides a good and transparent measurement of the student work. Usually, employers require detailed information about the qualification and the student and the results achieved. Verified through ECTS Transcripts and the Diploma Supplement becomes a critical instrument for reflecting the learning outcomes entailed in a study programme leading to a qualification degree.

3. Calculating workload

Calculating workload is a critical learning process in understanding the real learning achievements. To ensure students that are in track of their learning, it is important to list up all activities involved in the course modules in line with the learning outcomes in each module. However, it is woty pointing out that credits are a relative concept and do not express the quality of the academic achievements, but credits express more the quantity of work. The quality of a student's work is assessed through the complation of the learning activities and the outcome is expressed through grades. Calculating the student workload for the whole course components, not only for the teaching hours, is very critical and requires much attention. First, it is essential to identify the learning components that a course consists of, second, to weight each component in line with the learning objectives and outcomes, in total and separately for each course module. Each component should therefore include enough time for deep learning than surface learning. Students should have time to understand the underlying principles, to integrate the learning with previously acquired knowledge and to get a holistic view on the subject. Insufficient time for the course modules components may lead to *surface* learning where students focus on memorizing facts and data. Both the example presented and the rubric provide good means for ensuring proper and effective allocation of the workload.

4. An example

The table below shows the workload calculation for a typical 10 ECTS ICTeEfS course. The calculation method used in the table is based on the whole course and in each course module. The workload is divided into a series of learning components, each involving an estimated number of hours of work (time factor). The total workload should match the learning hours indicated by the credit value of the course and be consistent with the rubric, presented in Table 2.

Table 1: An Example of a 10 ECTS Workload Allocation

Learning Components	No	Time Factor	Workload	Course Modules						Workload
				1	2	3	4	5	6	
Lectures (face-to-face)	10	3	30	3	3	6	6	6	6	30
Online	4	3	12	3	-	4	2	-	3	12
Lab work	6	2	12	2	4	-	2	2	2	12
Reading articles (3 pages per hour)	200	0,3	60	7	8	10	10	12	13	60
Reading book chapters (5 per/h)	150	0.2	30	4	5	6	5	5	5	30
Preparing course activities	6	15 (M)	75	11	20	14	30	-	-	75
Project work	1	20	20					5	15	20
Preparation for exam	1	50	50					20	30	50
Writing the exam	1	3	3						3	3
Total			**292**	30	40	40	55	50	77	**292**

Table 2: ECTS Assessment Rubric

Name of University:		Title of Course:			
Name of evaluator:					
ECTS/Workload Integration Assessment Domains	**Strong Impact (4 points)**	**Good Impact (3 points)**	**Some Impact (2 points)**	**Minimal Impact (1 point)**	**Grade**
Alignment	The allocation of student workload matches up well with learning objectives, outcomes, so students learn what they intend to learn accurately.	The allocation of student workload matches up mostly with learning objectives, outcomes, so students learn what they intend to learn accurately.	The allocation of student workload does not match up well with learning objectives, outcomes, so students learn what they intend to learn accurately.	The allocation of student workload does not match up with learning objectives, outcomes, so students learn what they intend to learn accurately.	
Critical comments: Provide your constructive and critical comments aiming to improve the activity					
Balance	There is strong evidence that the distribution of the working hours is done appropriately between the course modules.	There is not so strong evidence that the distribution of the working hours is done appropriately between the course modules.	There is weak evidence that the distribution of the working hours is done appropriately between the course modules.	There is no evidence that the distribution of the working hours is done appropriately between the course modules.	
Critical comments: Provide your constructive and critical comments aiming to improve the activity					

Coverage	The allocation of student workload matches up well with course activities and assessments.	The allocation of student workload matches up mostly with course activities and assessments.	The allocation of student workload does not matches up well with course activities and assessments.	The allocation of student workload does not match up with course activities and assessments.	
Critical comments: Provide your constructive and critical comments aiming to improve the activity					
Communication	There is strong evidence that the student workload allocation is clearly understood and communicated to students.	There is not so strong evidence that the student workload allocation is clearly understood and communicated to students.	There is weak evidence that the student workload allocation is clearly understood and communicated to students.	There is no evidence that the student workload allocation is clearly understood and communicated to students.	
Critical comments: Provide your constructive and critical comments aiming to improve the activity					
Monitoring	There is strong evidence that the way student workload is allocated makes easier to monitor student progress to see whether workload is actually implemented.	There is not so strong evidence that the way student workload is allocated makes easier to monitor student progress to see whether workload is actually implemented.	There is weak evidence that the way student workload is allocated makes easier to monitor student progress to see whether workload is actually implemented.	There is no evidence that the way student workload is allocated makes easier to monitor student progress to see whether workload is actually implemented.	
Critical comments: Provide your constructive and critical comments aiming to improve the activity					