

CREDIT CONVERSION SCHEME FOR THE B.SC. DEGREE PROGRAMMES OFFERED THROUGH DISTANCE AND FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING METHODS IN SRI LANKA

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Introduction

In a conventional University a natural definition of a credit involves student-teacher contact time. The *student hour*, also known as the *semester hour*, widely used by conventional universities in the USA, is defined as 12 hours of lecture time.

In open and distance learning, it is customary to define a credit using study time as the basis. For example, a credit of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) is defined as the academic work load which involves 450 hours of study by a student. A credit in the Indira Gandhi National Open University involves 30 hours of study. In The Open University of Malaysia, and in The Open University of United Kingdom one credit requires 40 and 10 hours of study respectively. It is evident that there is a variation in the definition of a credit among open and distance learning institutions. Recognising this, the SAARC Consortium on Open and Distance Learning has recommended a system of credit hours for distance learning institutions.

To bring about uniformity in the BSc degree programmes conducted by the Universities in Sri Lanka, University Grants Commission (UGC) has recommended that the Faculties of Science of conventional universities of Sri Lanka implement a common credit system. In this scenario, it is essential that the Faculty of Natural Science at OUSL workout the equivalence between the Conventional University Credit (CUC) and the Open University of Sri Lanka Credit (OUC).

Objectives of the present study are 3 fold.

- (i) To establish a relationship between CUCs and OUCs.
- (ii) To establish a set of reference points that could be used in developing curricula and course material.
- (iii) To study the compliance of existing course material with the reference points mentioned above.