Guide for Implementing the Bologna Process in the Universities of the Kurdistan Region

In light of Article Two, Paragraph (Two) of Law No. (10) of 2008 (the Law of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research), and in the public interest, and in light of the recommendations of the First Bologna Process Conference in the Kurdistan Region and the discussions of the Scientific Committee of the Conference, with the participation of representatives of all universities of Kurdistan, this Guide has been drafted.

Part One

Definitions

Article One: The terms used in this procedure have the following meanings:

1. **Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research:** refers to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq.
2. **Student:** refers to a student who has registered in a study programme at a university.
3. **Credit (European Credit Transfer System – ECTS):** refers to a tool for accumulating and transferring units of study, determined on the basis of the study hours of a course, the workload, and the outcomes of the learning process.
4. **Learning Outcomes:** the total of the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student successfully acquires after completing a learning process.
5. **Assessment:** a set of different methods and instruments, such as written and oral examinations, projects, competencies and skills, presentations (seminars), etc., that are used to assess the level of progress of students and to provide assurance about the achievement of the learning outcomes of a given subject.
6. **Attempt:** refers to an end-of-semester examination that a student retakes.
7. **Module:** refers to any course to which a code and a number of credits have been allocated within an academic programme.
8. **Module Withdrawal:** refers to the withdrawal of a student from any module.
9. **Module Replacement:** refers to modules that are exchanged for the student at the time of course registration.
10. **Module Drop:** refers to the exclusion of a student from the final examination of a module.
11. **Module Retake:** refers to modules that the student is required to repeat.
12. **Exam Retake:** refers to retaking the examination of any module.
13. **Prerequisites:** refers to interlinked modules in the study programme.
14. **Module Requirements:** refers to the requirements that a student must fulfil in order to be allowed to sit the final examination of a module.
15. **Credits Earned:** refers to all credits that have been accumulated by the student.
16. **Examination Committee:** refers to the committee appointed by the faculty/college to carry out the work related to examinations.
17. **Final Examinations:** refers to the examinations held at the end of the semester to assess the student.
18. **Regular Duration:** refers to the number of semesters specified in the study guide within which the student is required to complete his/her studies.
19. **Regular Semester:** refers to the fall and spring semesters (excluding the summer semester).
20. **Trimester:** refers to a semester designed for 20 credits, i.e. the year is divided into three three-month terms instead of the fall and spring semesters.
21. **Short Semester:** refers to a semester conducted during the summer holiday.
22. **Student Workload:** refers to the total learning hours associated with teaching and learning activities.
23. **Termination:** refers to the procedure taken against a student to remove him/her from the study process.
24. **Program:** refers to a set of study components that are designed on the basis of learning outcomes.
25. **Learning Pathway:** refers to the study path designed by the student in order to achieve the outcomes of the learning process.

Part Two

Framework of Qualifications according to the Bologna Process

Article Two: The Higher Education Framework based on the Bologna Process.

First: The basic framework consists of the levels of higher education qualifications in the universities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which is based on ECTS credits and in which the definition of Qualifications is determined in terms of Learning Outcomes. In general, the basic framework of higher education in the universities of the Kurdistan Region, other than the polytechnic universities, is determined on the basis of the Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area for each level of study, as presented in Table (1), and is as follows:

a. **Short Cycle:** normally a Diploma Degree of 120 ECTS credits. Graduates of this level are awarded a Diploma in their field of specialisation.
b. **First Cycle:** normally a Bachelor's Degree consisting of (240) ECTS credits, except for those departments determined by the Ministry of Higher Education that require more credits for a bachelor's degree. Graduates of this level are awarded a Bachelor's degree in their field of specialisation.
c. **Second Cycle:** a Higher Diploma Degree normally consists of (60) ECTS credits. Graduates of this level are awarded a Higher Diploma in their field of specialisation.
d. **Second Cycle:** a Master's Degree normally consists of (120) ECTS credits. Graduates of this level are awarded a Master's degree in their field of specialisation.
e. **Third Cycle:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree. No range of ECTS credits has been specified. Graduates of this level are awarded a Doctorate in their field of specialisation.

Table 1: Basic framework of higher education in the universities of the Kurdistan Region other than the polytechnic universities

<table>
<tr><th>EQF Level</th><th>Cycle</th><th>HEQF-KRG</th><th>CREDIT</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="4">Pre-Higher Education</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>Short Cycle</td><td>Diploma Degree</td><td>120 ECTS</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>First Cycle</td><td>Bachelor's Degree</td><td>240 ECTS</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">7</td><td rowspan="2">Second Cycle</td><td>Higher Diploma Degree</td><td>60 ECTS</td></tr>
<tr><td>Master's Degree</td><td>120 ECTS</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>Third Cycle</td><td>Doctor of Philosophy Degree</td><td>Not Specified</td></tr>
</table>

Second: The basic framework of higher education in the polytechnic universities of the Kurdistan Region is determined on the basis of the Technical Vocational Qualification Framework – Iraq for each level of study, as presented in Table (2), and is as follows:

Short Cycle:

1. A Technical Diploma Degree normally consists of (60) ECTS credits. Graduates of this level are awarded a Diploma in their field of specialisation.
2. A Technical Advanced Diploma normally consists of (120) ECTS credits. Graduates of this level are awarded a Technical Advanced Diploma in their field of specialisation.
3. **First Cycle:** a Technical Bachelor's Degree normally consists of 240 ECTS credits, except for those departments determined by the Ministry of Higher Education that require more credits for a technical bachelor's degree. Graduates of this level are awarded a Technical Bachelor's degree in their field of specialisation.
4. **Second Cycle:** a Technical High Diploma Degree normally consists of (60) ECTS credits. Graduates of this level are awarded a Technical Higher Diploma in their field of specialisation.
5. **Second Cycle:** a Technical Master's Degree normally consists of (120) ECTS credits. Graduates of this level are awarded a Technical Master's degree in their field of specialisation.
6. **Third Cycle:** Technical Doctorate Degree. No range of ECTS credits has been specified. Graduates of this level are awarded a Technical Doctorate in their field of specialisation.

Table 2: Basic framework of higher education in the polytechnic universities of the Kurdistan Region

<table>
<tr><th>TVQF-Iraq Level</th><th>Cycle</th><th>HEQF-KRG</th><th>CREDIT</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">Pre-Higher Education</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
</table>

3			
4			
5	Short Cycle	Technical Diploma Degree	60 ECTS
6	Short Cycle	Technical Advanced Diploma Degree	120 ECTS
7	First Cycle	Technical Bachelor's Degree	240 ECTS
8	Second Cycle	Technical Higher Diploma Degree	60 ECTS
9	Second Cycle	Technical Master's Degree	120 ECTS
10	Third Cycle	Technical Doctorate Degree	Not Specified

Part Three

Academic Study

Article Three: The university follows the semester system based on credits, and each academic year of the university is divided into two regular semesters: the Fall Semester and the Spring Semester. The duration of each semester is (20) weeks for carrying out all study activities, registration and examinations, provided that the period of teaching is not less than (14) weeks.

Article Four: Each academic year of the university may be divided into three three-month terms (Trimester). The duration of each term is (13) weeks for carrying out all study activities, registration and examinations, provided that the period of teaching is not less than (10) weeks.

Article Five: Alongside the two (2) regular semesters, the university may, as needed, open a summer (short) semester, which is conducted during the summer holiday. The maximum number of credits that a student may register for in that semester is (12) credits.

Article Five (bis): Academic study begins at the start of month (9) [September] and continues until the end of month (6) [June]. The student must follow the academic calendar specific to each semester of study, which is set by the University Council and approved by the Ministry of Higher Education.

Part Four

Credit System

Article Six: Each course has its own credits, which are determined by the departments. Credits are calculated on the basis of several criteria in accordance with the Bologna Process.

Article Seven: Workload: Workload is the time that a student needs to learn a module and complete the activities of that module. The workload covers all activities of the student's attendance inside and outside the classroom (reading, self-preparation, report writing, homework, questions, examinations, seminar presentations, etc.).

Article Eight: ECTS Credit: The workload and effort of the student are measured in ECTS credits. In the universities of the Kurdistan Region, each ECTS credit is calculated as 27 hours of learning, except for programmes implemented jointly with universities outside the country.

Article Nine: Credit Transfer:

1. A student who takes modules in a transferred programme that is accepted at another university must submit an application to the Faculty/College Council for credit transfer.
2. Universities are responsible for drawing up a Learning Agreement for the transfer of the student's credits.
3. Approved transferred credits are measured according to the Grade Conversion System by comparing the Grade Distribution Tables of both universities.

Part Five

Academic Program

Article Ten: The academic study programme includes all modules that belong to the semesters of study and are designed on the basis of the Learning Outcomes for each Cycle of the programme. The curriculum of all programmes consists of two parts:

1. Core Modules
2. Elective Modules

Article Eleven: Study programmes are designed by the departments in such a way as to be aligned with the capacity of the department and the needs of the labour market.

Article Twelve: Each department must prepare a catalogue of its programmes in a form that is accessible to all lecturers and students.

Article Thirteen: The details of the distribution of the number of credits for each component of the programme are set by the department on the basis of the hours of the Student Workload.

Part Six

Registration for a Degree Program

Article Fourteen: A new student must register for the academic programme offered by the university within the specified period.

Article Fifteen: A student who, without any permitted reason, does not comply with the self-registration deadline is not allowed to begin studying in that semester and may register at the beginning of the following semester. The semesters that precede the student's registration for the programme are counted against the student's study ceiling (maximum duration).

Article Sixteen: Registration for the programme is carried out by the university registry or the faculty/college for new students.

Part Seven

Registration for a Module

Article Seventeen: The student must register for the modules offered in each semester of study.

Article Eighteen: Registration for modules must be completed before the start of the study semester.

Article Nineteen: The maximum number of credits that a student may register for in each fall or spring semester is (30) credits. The student is allowed to register (6) additional credits in each semester after approval by the scientific department.

Article Twenty: The maximum number of credits that a student may register for in each trimester is (20) credits. The student is allowed to register (4) additional credits in each trimester after approval by the scientific department.

Article Twenty-One: A student may register for interlinked modules in the study programme provided that all activities related to the prerequisite module have been completed in previous semesters and the final examination has been taken (it is not required to have passed the final examination).

Article Twenty-Two: Within a specified period set by the department, a student may change or withdraw from the registration of modules.

Article Twenty-Three: The student must replace those modules that, for any reason, have been suspended by the department after registration.

Article Twenty-Four: A student who does not register for modules within the specified period will have that semester counted against his/her study ceiling.

Article Twenty-Five: A student who does not register for any module for four semesters will have his/her enrolment cancelled (deregistration) and will be removed from university study (except in cases of official deferment).

Article Twenty-Six: The student is responsible for any error made at the time of module registration.

Article Twenty-Seven: Fees of the Parallel Study Programme:

1. The amount of the fee for the study programme is determined on the basis of the number of credits of the study programme.
2. The student must pay the fee for the number of credits registered at the time of module registration in each semester.
3. A student who, for any reason, enters parallel status is subject to the same provisions of paragraphs (1, 2) of this Article.
4. The amount specified for each credit is collected by the faculty/college from the parallel student.
5. If the student changes or withdraws from a registered module during the module registration correction period, the fee for that module is refunded according to the number of credits.
6. A student who withdraws from any module after the specified period will not be refunded the fee for that module.
7. When transferring credits, the student pays the credit fees to the university in which the credits are registered.

Part Eight

Registration for Final Exam

Article Twenty-Eight: The student must register to participate in the end-of-semester examinations of the

registered modules.

Article Twenty-Nine: The student is free to self-register for the final examination of those modules that he/she failed in previous semesters.

Article Thirty: The student is responsible for any error made at the time of registration for the end-of-semester examinations.

Article Thirty-One: Universities are free to conduct and organise the process of registering students for the end-of-semester examinations.

Part Nine

Assessment

Article Thirty-Two: Attendance: The student must attend all face-to-face learning activities (lectures, practical sessions, fieldwork, etc.) of each module. A student is barred from participating in the final examination of those modules in which his/her absence rate exceeds 10% of the face-to-face learning activities, and this is not counted as an attempt.

Article Thirty-Three: Assessment:

1. Module assessment is based on the calculation of the Module Workload, the final examination and the other various forms of assessment during the semester of study, in the manner determined by the faculty/college.
2. Assessment for training, practice and the final-year project is carried out in the manner determined by the faculty/college.
3. The passing mark for each module is 50 out of 100, provided that the student participates in the end-of-semester examination in all of its theoretical and practical parts.
4. The student is permitted to retake the final examination of those modules that he/she failed up to four (4) attempts in addition to the first examination (except for the final project and training/practice), provided that there are no more than two attempts in any academic year.
5. After failing in four (4) attempts, the student retakes the module that he/she failed on a parallel basis.

Article Thirty-Four: Final Examinations:

1. The lecturer has the right not to allow a student to participate in the end-of-semester examinations if the student has not completed all activities related to the module; this is not counted as an attempt, and the student must retake the module (Module Retake).
2. The student has the right to submit a complaint to the head of department if the module lecturer does not allow him/her to participate in the end-of-semester examinations.
3. The student has the right to withdraw from the final examination within a specified period, determined by the department, before the start of the final examination, and this is not counted as an attempt.
4. When a student withdraws from the end-of-semester examination, if he/she has completed all activities related to the module, there is no need to repeat the module and the student only participates in the final examination in the following semesters.
5. A student who was unable to participate in the final examinations for a sudden reason beyond his/her control is, upon obtaining official leave, subject to the provisions of both paragraphs (3 and 4) of this Article.
6. The lecturer, through the Examination Committee, is responsible for preparing and conducting the end-of-semester examinations.
7. The Examination Committee is responsible for announcing the final results of the semester examinations.

Article Thirty-Five: Cheating in Examinations:

1. If it is proven that a student cheated in the in-semester (continuous) assessment or the end-of-semester assessment, he/she is considered to have failed all modules registered in that semester.
2. The student must register for and retake those modules in subsequent semesters.
3. For those modules in which the student participated in previous semesters but had registered in that semester to sit the final examination, in the event of cheating those modules are also counted as failed; however, in subsequent semesters the student only takes the examination without repeating those modules.
4. If the student cheats for a second time in the in-semester or end-of-semester assessments, the student's enrolment is cancelled (deregistration).

Article Thirty-Six: Appeals against the Final Results of Semester Examinations:

1. The student has the right to lodge an appeal against the final results of the semester examinations within the specified period determined by the Examination Committee.
2. If the student is not satisfied with the examination result, he/she may submit an application to view his/her examination script within the period determined by the Examination Committee.

3. After the expiry of the specified period for appeals under paragraphs (1 and 2) of this Article, the student no longer has the right of appeal.
4. The fee for reviewing the examination of any module is determined by the universities and is borne by the student.

Article Thirty-Seven: The ranking of students after the completion of the examinations is determined on the basis of the semester grade average for those students who have earned the full credits of that semester.

Article Thirty-Eight: Students in the scientific departments of the universities are allowed, after completing the first year, to transfer to a related higher department in accordance with the applicable instructions, under the following conditions:

1. To have earned at least 60 credits in the first year of study in his/her own department.
2. To have passed at the first attempt.
3. To be ranked first among the students.
4. To have a grade average of not less than 80%.
5. To be in his/her first year of study at the university.

Part Ten

Quality Assurance

Article Thirty-Nine: The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research shall draw up the necessary instructions for quality assurance in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG).

Part Eleven

Grading System

Article Forty: The Level of a student in a module is determined on the basis of the Mark obtained in that module. The relationship between marks and levels is shown in Table (3).

Table 3: Relationship between marks and level

Marks	Level	
90 – 100	Excellent	(Nayab)
80 – < 90	Very Good	(Zor Bash)
70 – < 80	Good	(Bash)
60 – < 70	Medium	(Nawand)
50 – < 60	Pass	(Pasand)
0 – < 50	Fail	(Kawtu)

Article Forty-One: Universities may work on establishing a reliable grading system compatible with the Bologna Process, in addition to the numerical points referred to above.

Part Twelve

Degree Award

Article Forty-Two: A student is eligible for the award of a degree only when the following conditions are met:

1. Accumulation of the credits required for the Cycle of study.
2. Passing all required modules.
3. Having applied for the degree and having been approved by his/her faculty/college.
4. Any other condition that may be specified in the applicable laws and instructions.

Article Forty-Three: Graduation degrees are awarded at the end of every regular semester, and a graduation confirmation is issued to the student at the end of each semester.

Article Forty-Four: Ranking is based on the student's grade average for the total credits that he/she has taken and passed during his/her studies at the university, and is arranged according to the following formula:

[Translator's note: the formula is not reproduced in the source document.]

Part Thirteen

Duration of Study

Article Forty-Five: The duration of study for the programmes of each Cycle is one and a half (1.5) times the

regular duration of study of the programme.

Article Forty-Six: If a student exceeds his/her study ceiling within the period specified for any Cycle, he/she may continue studying on a parallel basis for up to half (0.5) of the regular duration of study of the programme.

Article Forty-Seven: The student has the right to defer a semester of study, and the period of deferment for Short Cycle and First Cycle programmes is half (0.5) of the regular duration of study of the programme.

Article Forty-Eight: Deferment of study for Short Cycle programmes for one semester is not counted against the student's study ceiling.

Article Forty-Nine: Deferment of study for First Cycle programmes for two (2) semesters is not counted against the student's study ceiling.

Part Fourteen

General Provisions

Article Fifty: Each of the following matters shall be issued by special instructions:

1. Financial instructions related to the Bologna Process.
2. Instructions on the transfer and mobility of students.
3. Examination instructions.
4. Instructions on Life Long Learning.
5. Any other matter that requires special instructions.

Article Fifty-One: All parts of this Guide (except Parts Five and Ten) shall be implemented, for undergraduate study, by the Directorate of Study, Planning and Follow-up, and, for postgraduate study (Higher Diploma, Master's, Doctorate), by the Directorate of Research and Development.

Article Fifty-Two: Parts (Five and Ten) of these instructions, for undergraduate and postgraduate study, shall be implemented by the Apparatus of Supervision and Quality Assurance.

Article Fifty-Three: All universities and higher education institutions in both the public and private sectors in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq are bound to implement the paragraphs and articles of this Guide.

Article Fifty-Four: For the implementation of the Bologna Process, after the circulation of this Guide, no previous instruction, decision or circular shall be applied.

Article Fifty-Five: This Guide has been drafted in light of the discussions of the Scientific Committee and the discussions and recommendations of the First Bologna Process Conference in the Kurdistan Region, drawing on the content of the ECTS Users' Guide of (2015).

Article Fifty-Six: The universities of Kurdistan may, for further details, make use of the content of the ECTS Users' Guide of (2015).

(This procedure enters into force in the academic year (2022–2023) after its circulation by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.)

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