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COURSE CREDIT SYSTEM; IT'S APPLICATION IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROGRAMME

By
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Abstract
The paper discusses the meaning and general application of course Credit System (CCS) in Nigerian Universities. The paper went further to demonstrate its application in Library and Information Science programme of the Department of Library and Information Science, A.B.U. Zaria.

Introduction

The Course Credit System (CCS) was introduced into the Nigerian University System in 1989 in compliance with the National University Commission (NUC) minimum academic standard, Jinada (1999:2) stated that the CCS is an American System of Education in which subject areas are broken down into course units that are weighted accordingly. The system is an open one that allows effective measurement and evaluation. All stakeholders-students, lecturers, examination officers, etc are involved in the measurement and evaluation process. The system also allows students to effectively and efficiently learn according to their capability, ability and in their own paces.

Although the system has been in existence for the past two decades in the Nigerian Universities, it appears that students are still not so much conversant with the details components and working of the system. Hence the need to continue orientating the students, especially the new students on this system. This is because knowledge on this system is the first step toward students successes in academic pursue. Similarly, Nkeonye (1997:iii) rightly pointed out that there is every evidence that student who understand the system early enough tend to be more serious and business-like right from the first year, and hence graduate with better grades.

Structure Of The Course Credit System (CCS)

The CCS is conveniently run on a semester basis. Two semesters make one academic year. Thus a 3-year degree programme like library and information science requires a minimum of 3 x 2 i.e. 6 semesters to be completed. In this system, also classes are graded in levels of 100. therefore, a 3-year programme will be 100 – 300 levels.

According to National University Commission (NUC) minimum standfard, each semester should at least covers 15 weeks of lectures and examination. So, for one academic year there should be at least a total of 30 weeks of academic contacts.

Courses in credit system are weighted in term of credit units. The credit units of courses vary, it ranges from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 12 units. Each unit represent a student – lecturer-learning contact of 1 hour or 60 minutes. By this it means that student-learning process clan be weighted, measured and evaluated. These are achieved through the fact that since students are required to spend a minimum of 15 weeks in a semester, for 1 credit unit course, the student will have 1 x 15 hours learning contacts. For 2 credit units, it will be 2 x 15 hours = 30 hours learning contacts, etc. apart from this, the students' performances can also be weighted, measured and evaluated.

The Library And Information Science Programme (LISP)

The department of library and information science provides fully professional graduate and postgraduate programmes in librarianship and information science. The

programmes are designed to produce middle, top and professional manpower needed for the different types of libraries – academic, public school and special and information and media resource centers.

Application Of Ccs In Library And Information Science Programme (LISP)

Like its counterparts, the department of library and information science had since 1989 fully converted its programmes into the CCS. The department now runs a 3-year and a 4-year degree programme. This means that some students are admitted at 200 levels while others at 100 levels. Students admitted at 200 levels will spend 3 x 2 = 6 semesters and those admitted at 100 levels will spend 4 x 2 = 8 semesters.

Minimum Credits Requirement For Graduation In Lisp

It is very important for students to know right from day one the minimum credits they are required to earn before they could graduate. Knowledge of this will definitely guide them in spreading out through the 8 or 6 semesters courses they need to register per semester.

In library and information science programme, students admitted at 100 levels are required to earn a minimum of 120 credit units, while those entering at 200 levels need minimum of 90 credit units.

Courses In Course Credit System (CCS)

Courses in CCS are generally divided into 2 broad categories: The core courses and the elective courses. Sometimes, the elective courses are further sub divided into cognate, restrictive and unrestrictive courses. The core courses are those courses, which the department consider very essential to the field of library and information science. The core courses form the backbone of the profession without which an individual cannot function. Example of core courses are information organization (cataloguing and classification), Reference and information services, Introduction to Information Science, Collective Development, etc.

Core courses are spread out through out the duration of the programmes, so that in each semester, a student is required to register those core courses designated for that semester. These courses are made compulsory and a student cannot graduate unless all the core courses in the various level of study are passed. A total of 50 and 52 credit units are designated as core courses for students admitted at 200 and 100 levels respectively.

The elective courses are courses systematically mapped out by the department to enhance the student's overall knowledge and understanding of the programme. Some electives are so important that students are strongly advised to offer them in their own interest. These are called restrictive electives, like core courses, restrictive electives are also compulsory. Unrestrictive electives are optional.

To meet up with the challenges of information glut in all the subject fields, the department has of recent required candidates to take academic subjects in specified subject area. This is done in order to strengthened their subject background and to make them subject specialist. Therefore, the courses student offers in their individual subject area of specialization are called cognate courses.
Nkeonye (1997:2) noted that the number of electives which can be registered by a student in any particular semester depends on the:

a. number of credit units short of the permissible maximum, after deducting the total CU for the core courses registered.
b. Credit units of the particular elective being registered.
c. Maximum credit load allowed by the department for the semester

d. Existing rule in the faculty regarding electives.

A fifth point, which Nkeonye did not mention, is the issue of pre-requisites. There are some elective courses that are made as pre-requisite to other electives courses. This means that a student cannot offer the elective courses unless he had offered the pre-requisites.

In library and information science programme, a minimum of 20 and 44 credit units are allocated for cognate courses for students starting at 200 and 100 levels respectively.

At thos point in time if the total credit unit for core courses is added to the total credit units for cognate courses for students beginning at 100 and 200 levels, His expected that the students would have met more than 90% requirement for graduation e.g.

	100 level	200 level
Core course	=54	= 50
Cognate	=44	=20
Total:	=98	=70

Minimum total credit

Unit for graduation	=120	=90
Less credit unit for graduation	= 22	=20

In addition to the total number of credit units of core and cognate courses mentioned above, the students of library and information science are expected to offer 7 credit units of restrictive elective designated by the department and another 7 credit units of general courses NUC designated as restrictive electives. These courses are made compulsory for all the students in Nigerian Universities by NUC. Again for example:

	100Level	200 Level
Core course	=54	=50
Cognate	=44	=20
GENS Courses	=07	=07
Restrictive Elective	=07	=07
Unrestrictive Electives	=08	=06
Total:	=120	=90

Registration For Courses

Armed with this knowledge of the minimum credit units for graduation, students could then decide on the number of credit units they should register for each semester. For example a student beginning at 200 level that needs a minimum of 90 credit units before graduation can offer in each semester 15 credit units so that 15 credit units x 6 semesters will give him 90 credit units.

However, it is very important to note that the senate of Ahmadu Bello University has fixed a minimum and a maximum number of credit units that students could register for a semester. 12 credit units is minimum while the maximum is 24 credit units. It is always advisable to register above the required minimum per semester in order to increase the chances of earning the required minimum credit units for graduation.

Examinations And Tabulation Of Results

Examinations for courses registered are held at the end of each semester. Two types of examinations are usually conducted for each candidate; Internal and external examinations. The internal examination is the one that takes place at the department or anywhere the candidate's department may determine. The external examination covers the moderations, defenses, etc done outside the departments and the university or by somebody outside the departments and the university or by somebody outside the departments and/or the university. After these 2 examinations, students performances are then graded as follows:

70 and above	=	A
60-69	=	B
50-59	=	C
45-49	=	D
40-44	=	E
39 and below	=	F

Calculation Of GPA And CGPA

Before a student can effectively calculate his/her GPA and CGPA, he/she has to understand the following terminology:

i) TCUR – total credit units registered. This is the sum total of credit units of all the courses registered by a student from the first year of study to either particular semester under consideration or the end of a programme

ii) TCUE – total credits units earned. This is the sum total credit units of all the courses passed by a student

iii) GP – Grade point. This means the actual percentage raw score for a given course converted into a letter grade and a grade point as follows:

Mark range %	Letter Grade	Grade Point
0 – 39	F	0
40-44	E	1
45-49	D	2
50-59	C	3
60-69	B	4
70-100	A	5

iv) TCP – total credit point. This is the product of the GP and the number of credit units carried by a course. Hence WGP or TCP = Grade point x number of credit units

v) GPA = Grade Point Average: this means the average of weighted grade points earned in the courses taken during a semester. This is obtained by multiplying the GP attained in each course by the number of credit units assigned to that course, summing these up and dividing by the total number of credit units registered in the semester.

$$GPA = \frac{\text{Total points scored}}{\text{TCUR}}$$

$$= \frac{\text{Total WGP or TCP}}{\text{TCUR}}$$

iv) CGPA = cumulative grade point average. As the name suggests, it is the up-to-date mean of the GP earned by the student in a program of study. This stand for the students overall performance at any point in the programme of Istudy. This is obtained by totalling GP multiplied by the respective credit units for all semester todate and dividing by the number of credit units for all semester to-date and dividing by the number of credit units completed.

$$CGPA = \frac{\text{Total points so far scored}}{\text{TCUR}}$$

OR

$$\frac{\text{Previous TCP + present GP}}{\text{Precious TCUR + Present TCUR}}$$

To calculate GPA and CGPA, this presentation will hypothetically use the result of two students, X and Y. the calculation will be done for 1st and 2nd semester of 200 level. The essence for covering 2 semesters is to be able to monitor the effect of unnecessary over registration. The calculation is thus:

STUDENT X

S/No	Course	CU	Score %	L./Grade	GP
1.	LIB 201	(3)	52	C	3
2	LIBS 203	(3)	68	B	4
3	LIBS 205	(2)	60	B	4
4	LIBS 207	(2)	59	C	3
5	LIBS 211	(2)	60	B	4
6	GENS 107	(1)	63	B	4
7	POLS 215	(2)	61	B	4
8	POLS 217	(2)	58	C	3
		17			

STUDENT Y

S/No	Course	CU	Score %	L./Grade	GP
1.	LIBS 201	(3)	54	C	3
2	LIBS 203	(3)	61	B	4
3	LIBS 205	(2)	65	B	4
4	LIBS 207	(2)	57	C	2
5	LIBS 213	(2)	63	B	4
6	GENS 101	(1)	60	B	4
7	MCOM 201	(2)	68	B	4
8	MCOM 203	(2)	52	C	3
		17			

$$GPA = \frac{9+12+8+6+8+4+8+6}{17} \quad \frac{9+12+8+6+8+4+8+6}{17}$$

$$\frac{61}{17}$$

$$= 3.59 \qquad \frac{61}{17}$$

3.59

First semester X and Y students have the same GPA = 3.59. Now, observe the effect of over registration

STUDENT X

S/No	Course	CU	Score %	L./Grade	GP
1.	LIBS 202	(3)	50	C	3
2	LIBS 204	(2)	55	C	3
3	LIBS 206	(2)	53	C	3
4	LIBS 210	(2)	51	C	3
5	LIBS 212	(2)	58	C	3
6	GENS 102	(1)	45	D	2
7	POLS 204	(2)	49	D	2
8	POLS 208	(2)	51	C	3
		16			

GPA = $\frac{9+6+6+6+6+2+4+6}{16}$ = $\frac{45}{16}$ = 2.81

STUDENT Y

S/No	Course	CU	Score %	L/Grade	GP
1.	LIBS 202	(3)	50	C	3
2	LIBS 204	(2)	49	D	2
3	LIBS 206	(2)	50	C	3
4	LIBS 210	(2)	50	C	3
5	LIBS 212	(2)	45	D	2
6	LIBS 218	(2)	50	C	3
7	GENS 102	(1)	51	C	3
8	MCOM 202	(2)	38	F	0
	MCOM 206	(2)	40	E	1
	MCOM 208	(2)	50	C	3
		20			

GPA = $\frac{9+4+6+6+4+6+3+0+2+6}{20}$ = $\frac{46}{20}$ = 2.30

STUDENT X

CGPA = $\frac{61+45}{17+16}$ = $\frac{106}{33}$ = 3.21

STUDENT Y

$\frac{61+46}{17+20}$ = $\frac{107}{37}$ = 2.89

Degree Classification And Academic Standing

S/N	CGPA	CLASS OF DEGREE
1	4.50-5.00	First Class
2	3.50-4.49	2nd Class Upper Division
3	2.40-3.49	2nd Class Lower Division
4	1.50-2.39	3rd Class
5	1.00-1.49	Pass
6	0.00-0.99	Fail

Degree is classified base on the CGPA at the point of graduation. However, it is important for a student to consider, at the end of each semester, that the CGPA he/she gets stand for the classification of his/her final degree. The table below shows the degree classification.

Other Important Information On The Course Credit System (CCS)

Deferment Of Semester

For any good reason backed with supporting documents, a student can defer a semester. But before a student is allowed to do so, the student must have fully participated in one or two semesters. A student is considered withdrawn if he/she

is absent, without permission, for two consecutive semesters.

Repeating

It is very important to remove from the students the notion that there is no repeating in CCS. Student will repeat if he/she fails to earn certain minimum credit units at a particular year of study. Below are the minimum for which a student must attained before he/she moves to the next level

100 level	=	24 credit units
200 level	=	48 credit units
300 level	=	72 credit units
400 level	=	96 credit units

From the above table, it means that a 200 level student that failed to earn 48 credit units will not be allowed to proceeds to 300 levels.

Withdrawal

Students that have as their academic standing a CGPA of less than 1.00 could be withdrawn from the programme of study. However, before such an unfortunate decision is taken, such students would first of all be given verbal warning, after which the students would be placed on probation. A student is placed on probation if the GPA of the student drops below 1.00 for two consecutive semesters.

Communication

There should be effective communication between the students, course adviser, Examination officer and the department. Whenever students have course to leave the university, their academic freedom should not bar them from informing the appropriate authority. May God forbid, in case of accidents, illness; etc the student should immediately write or ask their relation inform the department. It should not be forgotten that supporting evidence should back all correspondences.

Conclusion

I will like to conclude by way of emphasizing on the issue of CGPA. This CGPA should be the watchword of the students. It should be the business of the student being in the university. The students should religiously guard and monitor it right from day one.

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