

To: All Graduate Students at Polytechnic University

Date: March 7, 2007

Re: Conversion from Units to Credits in Fall 2007

Conversion from Units to Credits

Polytechnic University will switch to a new system of academic load at the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester. This change is being implemented to conform to the standard definition of credit adopted by the New York State Department of Education. The current system of Graduate Units will be replaced by Graduate Credits as summarized below.

Currently each graduate unit at Poly equals 625 minutes of contact per semester while the New York State definition of a credit requires 750 minutes of contact each semester. This New York State credit definition will be adopted by Poly.

Under this change the following equivalencies are defined:

$$\begin{aligned} 3.0 \text{ New Credits} &= 3.6 \text{ Current Units} = 2,250 \text{ contact minutes per semester} \\ 2.5 \text{ New Credits} &= 3.0 \text{ Current Units} = 1,875 \text{ contact minutes per semester} \end{aligned}$$

This document presents the general overview of the changes and the transition plan for the University. Details related to the specific academic programs will be available from the respective departments.

MS Degrees

The total length of the MS degree is 22,500 minimum contact minutes, and will not change. Under the new system, using the definition of New York State credit, the minimum number of credits for the MS degree will be 30.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total MS} &= 30 \text{ New Credits} = 10 \text{ Full Courses (of 3 New Credits Each)} \\ &= 36 \text{ Current Units} = 12 \text{ Full Courses (of 3 Current Units Each)} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total MS} &= 30 \text{ Credits} \times 750 \text{ minutes/credit} = 22,500 \text{ contact minutes} \\ &= 36 \text{ Units} \times 625 \text{ minutes/unit} = 22,500 \text{ contact minutes} \end{aligned}$$

Transition Plan

Each department will develop and have available its own transition plan of required courses and approved electives. Below are some of the items that are common for each department:

- Each department will offer a variable credit course (or courses) available in increments of 0.5 credits between 0.5 and 2.5 to ensure that students will meet the 30 credit total exactly (please see the Appendix for some illustrative examples). This variable credit course will be offered for 2 academic years only (i.e., 2007-08 and 2008-09). Thus students needing to adjust their total in new credits to be in multiples of 3 should take this course at their earliest convenience and not wait until their last semester at Poly. Individual departments may offer additional and/or alternate methods to satisfy the variable credit requirements as they see fit.
- Each graduate course taken by the student under the present system until the transition date will count towards the student's degree, provided the courses were approved for the program under current rules and graduation requirements.

Examples of the number of courses required by students presently enrolled at the University and transitioning to the new system in Fall 2007 are presented in the Appendix.

Exceptions

Some programs may elect not to conform to the new 30 credit requirement needed to keep the total contact hours the same and may require more than 30 credits. Such programs will have more contact hours for the MS degree relative to the current. Students presently enrolled in such MS degrees will be allowed to graduate with 30 credits, and the higher credit requirements will be imposed only on new students starting in Fall 2007 or later.

PhD Degrees

PhD degrees will change from a total of 90 current units to minimum of 75 new credits. Details of the changes will be conveyed by individual departments to their respective students.

Full-Time Load

Full time status for graduate students will be conferred to those students taking 9 new credits per semester. For doctoral students who have passed all the qualifying exams as specified by their department, the full time load will be 3 new credits per semester.

Cumulative GPA Calculations

Cumulative GPA calculations will not consider the fact that current units have fewer contact minutes per semester than the new credits. Thus the cumulative GPA will be

$$GPA = \frac{\sum_i (course\ units \times grade\ point)_i + \sum_j (course\ credits \times grade\ point)_j}{\sum_i (course\ units)_i + \sum_j (course\ credits)_j}$$

Here the first summation in both the numerator and denominator is for all courses prior to the beginning of Fall 2007 and the second is for courses taken from Fall 2007 onwards.

Tuition

The tuition rate of each new credit will not change from that of the current unit (other than the annual inflationary increases, slated to be 4% for the 2007-08 academic year). Thus for new students who start in Fall 2007 or later in a 10 course MS program, this change translates to savings of 16.66% compared to the total MS tuition if the changes had not been implemented (new MS tuition cost = 5/6 of the current total MS tuition cost in constant dollars).

Appendix

The following conversion table shows how many courses (full, 3 credit courses, plus 1 variable credit course if needed) a student would have to take to complete the MS degree as a function of the number of units completed until the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester:

At Start of Fall 2007					
Full (3-Unit) Courses Completed	Current Units Completed	Current Units Remaining	New Credits Remaining	Full (3-Credit) Courses Remaining	Variable Credit Remaining
0	0	36	30.0	10	0.0
1	3	33	27.5	9	0.5
2	6	30	25.0	8	1.0
3	9	27	22.5	7	1.5
4	12	24	20.0	6	2.0
5	15	21	17.5	5	2.5
6	18	18	15.0	5	0.0
7	21	15	12.5	4	0.5
8	24	12	10.0	3	1.0
9	27	9	7.5	2	1.5
10	30	6	5.0	1	2.0
11	33	3	2.5	0	2.5
12	36	0	0.0	0	0.0

The above chart reinforces the fact that because of the variable credit course all students will have completed exactly the same program length in terms of contact hours before and after the change.

The following table offers some examples for students who have taken a combination of ePoly and regular courses, where currently each ePoly course carries an academic load of 3.6 units and will remain unchanged in the new system, i.e., each will carry an academic load of 3 credits (ePoly is effectively following the new system since its inception):

At Start of Fall 2007		Current Units Completed	Current Units Remaining	New Credits Remaining	Full (3-Credit) Courses Remaining	Variable Credit Remaining
Full Courses Completed						
Reg	ePoly					
1	1	6.6	29.4	24.5	8	0.5
2	1	9.6	26.4	22.0	7	1
2	2	13.2	22.8	19.0	6	1
2	3	16.8	19.2	16.0	5	1
3	1	12.6	23.4	19.5	6	1.5
3	2	16.2	19.8	16.5	5	1.5
3	3	19.8	16.2	13.5	4	1.5
4	1	15.6	20.4	17.0	5	2
4	2	19.2	16.8	14.0	4	2
4	3	22.8	13.2	11.0	3	2
4	4	26.4	9.6	8.0	2	2
5	1	18.6	17.4	14.5	4	2.5
5	2	22.2	13.8	11.5	3	2.5
5	3	25.8	10.2	8.5	2	2.5
6	1	21.6	14.4	12.0	4	0
6	2	25.2	10.8	9.0	3	0
6	3	28.8	7.2	6.0	2	0
6	4	32.4	3.6	3.0	1	0

Note that to convert from current units to the new credits, the following convenient formula can be used:

$$\text{New Credits} = (\text{Current Units} \div 3) \times 2.5$$

Remember that for current students 30 new credits are needed obtaining a MS degree.