

# Student Workload – Planning & Calculation Tool

Centre for Teaching and Learning (ZLL) | LehrePlus (Offers for members of the teaching staff)  
Curriculum Development Lab | AddInno (Integrated Approach to Digital Innovation in Teaching and Learning)

## Student Workload

The Bologna reform to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) implemented, among other things, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), a unit of measurement for the workload associated with a study programme or a single study course. Within the **ECTS**, a pre-defined number of working hours results in credit points.

The student workload to reach the intended learning outcomes in each module is thus deposited with 6 ECTS/CPs or with approximately 180 working hours. That means approx. 39 working hours per week in total. **Attendance time** refers to the amount of work that is bound to a specific place and time. The period of **self-study** includes all other periods of time invested besides the attendance of courses. This includes preparation for and follow-up on courses and examinations, as well as time spent participating in or preparing work relevant to examinations.

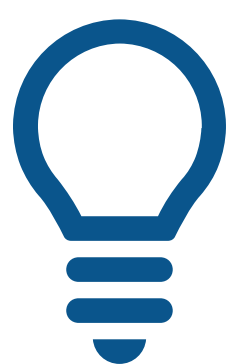
Figure 1 provides an overview of possible workload specifications.

## Tool for Workload Calculation

To facilitate the planning of student workload, the **Curriculum Development Lab** has created a planning tool for workload calculation for instructors and programme managers:

An **Excel template** is used to record the workload in the individual semester weeks for a module. The entries are totaled per week and per semester for this single study module, thus creating an overview of the weekly work distribution in the module. Information for several modules can be entered on several spreadsheets. The final spreadsheet adds up the entries and shows the workload within a programme (per semester). This makes it easier, for example, to identify peaks of workload and to redistribute work, if necessary.

Regardless of whether the planning tool is used in just one module or in an entire study programme, it can encourage revision of the module or programme structure in terms of study ability.



In practice, calculating the student workload is not always easy. Especially the hours spent in the period of self-study are difficult to quantify clearly.

Therefore, it is important to ask the students about the current working hours and to adjust the workload data again and again.

### HOURS OF ATTENDANCE

- attending courses
- attending mandatory consultation hours
- exams
- practical training
- ...



### ACTIVITIES OF SELF-STUDY

- literature research, reading and managing literature
- exercises and assignments
- setting up and conducting experiments or interviews
- preparation of presentations
- E-learning units
- ...



### CONCLUSION & BENEFITS

- ✓ for students: planning their own learning and everyday life
- ✓ for teachers: support in the design of individual elements of their course or module
- ✓ for course management: basis for clarification and structured planning of the curriculum

Figure 1: overview of possible workload specifications (examples)