

Lesson 02- “The LMD (BMD) System”

The **LMD (License–Master–Doctorate)** system, also known as **BMD**, is a major educational reform introduced in Algeria in **2004** and fully implemented by **2010**. It was designed to modernize Algerian higher education, make it compatible with international standards, and respond to the global demands of quality, flexibility, and employability.

1. Definition and Structure of the LMD System

The **LMD system** follows a three-cycle structure modeled after developed countries' educational systems:

- **License (Bachelor):** 3 years of study after the Baccalaureate (Bac+3), requiring **180 credits**.
- **Master:** 2 additional years after the License (Bac+5), requiring 120 credits.
- **Doctorate:** 3 additional years after the Master (Bac+8).

Each degree is internationally recognized and based on semester organization—two semesters per year, each lasting **16 weeks**.

Courses are grouped into **Teaching Units (Unité d'Enseignement, UE)**, which are capitalizable and **transferable**, meaning credits earned can be accumulated or transferred between programs and institutions.

2. The Objectives of the LMD System

The reform aims to create a learner-centered educational environment that promotes:

- **Autonomy and active learning:** Students become responsible for their learning through continuous assessment and personal work.
- **Competency-based education:** Focus shifts from rote learning to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and attitudes.
- **Formative assessment:** Replaces summative testing by evaluating students continuously to enhance learning progress.

The main objectives include:

- Improving the quality of university training and aligning it with global standards.
- Encouraging individual and independent work among students.
- Enhancing mobility and flexibility through credit transferability.
- Offering diversified and adaptable training programs that respond to students' needs and labor market demands.
- Strengthening the link between universities and the world of work to improve employability.
- Promoting lifelong learning and international cooperation.
- Providing globally recognized degrees that facilitate both academic and professional integration.

3. The Credit System

Credits represent the student's workload for each course, including lectures, practical work, homework, internships, and personal study.

- *One credit* equals **20–25 hours** of work per semester.
- *One semester* equals **30 credits**, and **one academic year** equals **60 credits**.

Distribution of credits per teaching unit:

- **Fundamental Unit:** 60% of semester credits (core subjects)
- **Methodological/Main Unit:** 30% (applied and specialization modules)
- **Discovery and Transversal Units:** 10% (broadening and complementary skills)

Total required credits for each degree:

- **License:** 180 credits
- **Master:** 300 credits (180 + 120)
- **Doctorate:** 480 credits (180 + 120 + 180)

Credit Capitalization and Transfer:

Credits are capitalized when a student successfully completes a course or unit with a grade $\geq 10/20$. They are transferable between institutions and programs, allowing students to continue studies elsewhere without losing achievements. Credits obtained by compensation (overall average $\geq 10/20$) are capitalizable but not permanently transferable.

4. Success Criteria at University

Academic progression is semester-based:

- Students automatically move from Semester 1 to Semester 2 within the same year.
- Progression from one year to the next (e.g., from first to second year) requires validation of the previous year's credits.

Validation of units and progression:

- A unit is validated if the student's average in that unit is $\geq 10/20$.
- Compensation is allowed:
 - Between components within the same unit.
 - Between different units of the same year, weighted by their coefficients.

A student passes the year if:

- The overall average of all course units is $\geq 10/20$, or
- Compensation between units results in a general average $\geq 10/20$.

5. The Four Teaching Units

- 1. Fundamental Unit:**
Includes the essential, discipline-specific courses forming the foundation of the student's field of study.
- 2. Methodological (or Main) Unit:**
Focuses on methodological, technical, and practical skills directly related to the discipline.
- 3. Discovery Unit:**
Aims to expand students' general knowledge and enable flexibility for reorientation to other fields if needed.
- 4. Transversal Unit:**
Involves courses such as foreign languages, communication, and computer skills—designed to improve overall competence and employability.

6. Pedagogical Implications

The LMD reform requires a shift in teaching philosophy:

- Teachers act as facilitators and guides rather than sole knowledge providers.
- Learning emphasizes student performance, participation, and outcomes.
- Continuous assessment and formative feedback replace the traditional end-of-term exams.
- The system values mobility, flexibility, and international compatibility, preparing students for a globalized job market.

Conclusion

The *LMD system* represents a transformative step in Algerian higher education, aligning it with international standards and focusing on student-centered, competency-based learning. It promotes lifelong education, enhances employability, and facilitates academic mobility through a structured credit system. By emphasizing autonomy, continuous assessment, and global recognition, the LMD system aims to produce graduates who are better prepared for both academic and professional success in an interconnected world.