

FLIC Policy and Credit Management: Insights from the Industrial Engineering Department at Musi Charitas Catholic University

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 17 Nov 2024	The "Freedom to Learn and Independent Campus" policy, introduced by Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, aims to transform higher education by promoting flexible learning paths. This study explores how this policy is implemented within the Industrial Engineering Department at Musi Charitas Catholic University. The focus is on managing credit equivalency between traditional coursework and alternative learning activities, ensuring academic rigor while offering diverse educational experiences. By analyzing departmental policies and stakeholder feedback, the study identifies challenges. It proposes improvements to the credit recognition process, contributing to the broader discussion on enhancing educational practices in Indonesian universities.
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INTRODUCTION

The "Merdeka Belajar dan Kampus Merdeka," or "Freedom to Learn and Independent Campus" (FLIC) policy, launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, seeks to change Indonesian education. FLIC policy has four important points: 1) automatic re-accreditation for

departments, 2) students' rights to study for three semesters outside their departments, 3) autonomy to establish departments for qualified universities, and 4) freedom for State Universities to become Legal Corporations. (Purwanti, 2021). This policy allows students to replace some of their regular course credits with extracurricular activities, resulting in a more dynamic and comprehensive educational experience. The policy also emphasizes empowering students to take charge of their learning process and encourages innovation and creativity among higher education institutions (Anggara, 2023). Students can choose the subjects they want to study based on their passion, aiming to produce a younger generation in Indonesia ready to face the future and global challenges (Al Fajri, Andarwulan, 2023).

In the context of Indonesian higher education, the Industrial Engineering Department of Musi Charitas Catholic University (IE-MCCU) in Palembang, South Sumatra, presents unique problems when implementing the FLIC course. The credit equivalent between regular coursework and alternative learning activities is one key issue. This is especially important given Indonesia's different educational standards, including quality discrepancies between institutions on Java and elsewhere, among other considerations.

Addressing this issue requires focusing on providing equitable and standardized credit recognition within Freedom to Learn programs. By creating explicit rules and processes for judging credit equivalency, institutions like IE-MCCU may retain academic rigor while allowing students to pursue a variety of learning activities.

This article investigates the specific issues that IE-MCCU faces when maintaining credit equivalency within the FLIC framework. By analyzing the department's rules and practices and soliciting feedback from stakeholders, we hope to explore viable ideas to improve the effectiveness and fairness of the credit recognition process.

The following sections will provide an overview of FLIC national policy, a brief history of IE-MCCU, and an evaluation of the department's approach to credit equivalency. We will also propose solutions to solve these issues in the context of Indonesia's Freedom to Learn programs.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FLIC NATIONAL POLICY

The foundation of the FLIC program is the belief that creativity and innovation are essential for a country's long-term development. As a result, Indonesian students must graduate as individuals who are relevant to current demands and exhibit a strong sense of national identity. Students may study outside of their department for up to three semesters under Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020 (Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. (2013, Juni 10 dan 2020, Januari 24) dan Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi. (2020, April & Agustus). This curriculum enables participants to broaden and improve their real-world insights and competencies while pursuing their personal interests and principles.

The program encompasses a variety of contexts, including towns, industries, enterprises, service centers, research facilities, and community involvement. Participants may engage in one or more of the following nine types of learning activities (Kemendikbudristek, 2024):

1. **Student Exchange:** Students can transition between academic programs within the same university or between different universities.
2. **Internships or Work Experiences:** Partner organizations offer students real-world experience and problem-solving skills. The duration can range from six months to a year, with participation from private and public companies, government agencies, and philanthropic foundations.

3. School-Based Teaching Assistance: Students engage in teaching activities related to their majors at partner schools.
4. Research: Conducted at research institutes or study centers, this activity is suitable for students interested in pursuing a research career. It fosters critical thinking skills essential for various scientific disciplines.
5. Humanitarian Projects: Students participate in domestic and international humanitarian initiatives under the supervision of international organizations.
6. Entrepreneurial Activities: Students identify and develop their entrepreneurial potential, aiming to apply their knowledge in community settings after graduation.
7. Independent Studies or Projects: Students explore innovative ideas or participate in work competitions, drawing inspiration from independent research on topics of interest. This activity often involves multidisciplinary teamwork.
8. Village Development or Thematic Field Work: Students gain firsthand experience living in a community, identifying and addressing local challenges. This activity enhances their soft skills and fosters collaboration between academia and the workforce, contributing to national and regional advancement.
9. State Defense: A newly introduced 2024 FLIC program that fosters patriotism, national defense awareness, and responsible citizenship by involving students in national development initiatives, including humanitarian efforts, environmental conservation, culture, sports, and community empowerment.

Departments and universities that implement the FLIC initiative play an active role in national and regional success by developing symbiotic linkages between academics and the workforce. The FLIC national policy has the potential to promote greater collaboration between higher education institutions and industry partners. (Anggara, 2023)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The Industrial Engineering Department of Musi Charitas Catholic University traces its roots to the Musi College of Engineering, which Palembang Catholics and the Palembang Diocese established on June 1, 1992, through their collaboration. Initially, the college offered architectural and industrial engineering programs, which expanded to include informatics engineering and information systems in 2004 and 2006.

In 2014, the Musi College of Engineering merged with the School of Health Nursing Perdhaki Charitas and the College of Health Sciences to create Musi Charitas Catholic University. The new university began full operations by the 2015–2016 academic year, with the IE-MCCU becoming part of the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST).

IE-MCCU joined the Indonesian Association of Industrial Engineering Higher Education on July 9, 1996. The organization is dedicated to maintaining high standards in education, research, and community service, and IE-MCCU has actively contributed to this mission. The department served as the Coordinator for Education in the Sumatra-2 Region from 2017 to 2020 and as the Coordinator for University Cooperation from 2020 to 2023, significantly advancing industrial engineering education in Indonesia.

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RESULTS

The FLIC program at the Industrial Engineering Department of Musi Charitas Catholic University (IE-MCCU) is designed to give students the flexibility to participate in diverse learning activities outside their department. This flexibility is achieved without altering the graduate profile or reducing the total number of required credits. The curriculum is grounded in the principles of Outcome-Based Education, which focus on achieving competencies that align with industry and societal demands.

Curriculum Development

The FLIC curriculum at IE-MCCU is structured to allow students to engage in various learning activities, such as student exchanges, internships, entrepreneurship, research, and independent study. These activities are fully integrated into the program's curriculum, ensuring that the credits earned are equivalent to regular coursework. This approach balances the achievement of core competencies established in the department curriculum with the need for students to gain broader and more practical experiences.

Types of FLIC Learning Activities

Students at IE-MCCU have several options for engaging in FLIC activities. They may participate in exchange programs within Musi Charitas Catholic University or with other universities, earning credits equivalent to courses like *Production Systems* or *Engineering Ethics*. For those who gain hands-on work experience, internships lasting one to two semesters provide practical skills relevant to the industry, with credits equivalent to courses like *Supply Chain Management*.

Entrepreneurship activities are another option. Students can earn up to 19 credits in a semester, which may be applied to courses like *Industrial Psychology*. This program encourages the development of critical entrepreneurial skills. Additionally, students can engage in short-term research within the Industrial Engineering Department, where the credits earned can be equivalent to thesis courses. Independent study activities or department-recognized projects are also available, allowing students to delve deeply into specific topics, with credits equivalent to courses such as *Engineering Ethics*.

Credit Equivalence

Each FLIC learning activity is assigned a specific credit equivalence, calculated based on Bloom's taxonomy, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This ensures that students meet the necessary competencies set by the program, even when participating in learning activities conducted outside the campus or department.

Curriculum Structure and Course Distribution

The curriculum at IE-MCCU is structured to support core learning and FLIC activities. During the first two semesters, students focus on mastering the fundamentals of industrial engineering through core courses totaling 19-21 credits per semester. Students can engage in FLIC activities in the third and fourth semesters while continuing their regular coursework. These semesters offer a combination of in-program and out-of-program learning, maintaining 19-21 credits per semester.

From the fifth to the eighth semesters, the focus shifts to implementing FLIC learning activities, with a reduction in program-specific courses based on the FLIC activities undertaken. This allows students to engage more deeply in internships, research, or entrepreneurship, which are recognized as part of the curriculum.

Collaboration and Roles of Stakeholders

The successful implementation of the FLIC curriculum at IE-MCCU relies on close collaboration among the department, faculty, students, and external partners. The department is responsible for developing a curriculum that aligns with the FLIC program and offers relevant learning activity options. The faculty provides essential support, including facilities and coordination with external partners. Students, in turn, are responsible for planning their FLIC activities with their academic advisors, ensuring that these activities meet the academic guidelines and credit requirements.

CONCLUSION

Implementing the Freedom to Learn and Independent Campus program at the Industrial Engineering Department of Musi Charitas Catholic University presents both opportunities and challenges. While the program offers students flexibility and a more dynamic educational experience, it also necessitates careful management of credit equivalency to maintain academic standards. By establishing clear guidelines, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and continuously refining curriculum strategies, IE-MCCU can ensure the successful integration of FLIC into its academic framework. The department's proactive approach to addressing these challenges not only aligns with national educational objectives but also strengthens the department's commitment to producing graduates who are both competent and adaptable in a rapidly evolving world.

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