

STRUCTURE OF THE FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM



THE CREDIT UNIT SYSTEM

A flexible credit unit system is adopted for all undergraduate programmes, with the exception of the Medical Programme. Under the current academic structure, Secondary 7 entrants must complete at least 99 units¹ before graduation. These include the required units of Major courses, General Education courses, Physical Education courses, Faculty Language Requirement, and Minor or elective courses. Some of the professional programmes, for example Chinese Medicine, LLB, Nursing, and co-terminal double degree programmes, may require students to complete more units of courses.

The credit-unit system, however, has no provision for 'promotion'. For the sake of administrative convenience, students are categorised into year-levels based on their year of attendance at the University. Hence a student's 'year' does not indicate the actual stage of completion of his/her studies. Students may, based on individual circumstances and interest, tailor the progress of their studies. Those who complete the required number of course units, and satisfy the graduation requirements of the Major Programme and the University, will be considered for the award of a Bachelor's degree. Unless otherwise provided, a student's total period of attendance at the University must not be less than three years before graduation.

Bachelor's degrees are classified as follows: First Class Honours, Second Class Honours Upper Division, Second Class Honours Lower Division, Third Class Honours and Pass. Degree classification is based on the students' grade point averages for Major courses, grade point averages for all other courses, and the result of the graduation thesis/project. Classification for the Bachelor of Chinese Medicine degree is based also on the results of clinical studies, while that for the MB ChB degree is based on the results of all professional examinations.

MAJOR PROGRAMME

Full-time students are required to complete the minimum number of course units demanded by the Major Programme to ensure adequate training. This can be up to 72 units, except for programmes leading to professional qualifications, as approved by the Senate. Students are also required to pass any graduate thesis/project as prescribed by the Major Programme. Second-year entrants are required to complete up to 64 units (for entrants with associate degrees) or 59 units (for entrants with higher diplomas) in their Major Programmes.

DOUBLE DEGREE

Students admitted in 2006-07 and thereafter can opt to pursue double degree programmes. Students will have the opportunity to earn the first Bachelor's degree plus, after one additional year (except as required by individual programmes) on self-financed basis, the second Bachelor's degree. Including the co-terminal double degree programmes, there are now 12 options for selection.

DOUBLE MAJOR

Students admitted in 2004-05 and thereafter are given the opportunity to take a second Major Programme, subject to the approval of the Departments concerned.

MINOR PROGRAMME

Minor Programmes are optional, allowing for a more flexible curriculum. Students may choose to take up to two Minor Programmes, which require the completion of at least 15, but no more than 30 units, to suit their interests and orientation.

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

To provide a balanced education, the University places emphasis on the 'depth' as well as the 'breadth' of the curriculum. While Major Programmes require students to pursue an in-depth inquiry into a specialised area of study so as to achieve a certain academic standard, the General Education Programme is designed to broaden the interests and widen the perspective of students. It also aims to cultivate the students' abstract and integrated thinking and increase their knowledge of different subjects, outside their Major Programme of study. This will equip them for dealing with the rapid changes so prevalent in modern-day society.

Apart from taking the General Education courses prescribed by his/her college, a student is also required to take at least one course (two to three units) from each of the four University General Education curriculum areas, namely, Chinese Cultural Heritage; Nature, Technology and the Environment; Society and Culture; and Self and Humanity. A student may choose from the rest of the General Education courses in accordance with course selection requirements.

Students are required to complete 15 units in General Education courses. This requirement may be reduced, by three units, for students in professional programmes, as approved by the Senate. Second-year entrants are required to complete seven units (for entrants with associate degrees) or nine units (for entrants with higher diplomas) of General Education.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The compulsory physical education programme emphasises the development of personality and health through team work, fair play, as well as the acquisition of basic motor skills and attitude towards physical activities. Two units of physical education courses are required of all students in their first year of study, except for second-year entrants who are required to complete one unit of physical education courses.

INTENSIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAMME

The University has always maintained a policy of bilingualism and has spared no effort in boosting the language competence of its students. All students in their first year of study are required to complete an intensive programme in Putonghua, Cantonese, and English. The purpose of the programme is to teach students the basic skills of language-learning and to arouse their interests in further language studies.

FACULTY LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

In order to further enhance undergraduates' language skills, the University has established a uniform, coherent system

of compulsory credit-bearing language courses. In general, students are required to complete at least three units of English language courses, and those who belong to the Faculties of Arts, Education, Law and Social Science also have to complete three units of Chinese language proficiency courses. Second-year entrants with higher diplomas have to complete three units of language requirement.

STUDENT IT COMPETENCE

With rapid IT advances, IT literacy has become fundamental to teaching and learning. All students are required to pass an IT Proficiency Test in their first year of study. A training and test package of basic IT skills including the use of application software in electronic communication and data management and information presentation is provided for all students to help them understand the importance of information security and literacy, and the social implications of IT developments.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Students who do not take a Minor Programme may pursue elective courses, both within or outside their Major fields, to broaden their interests and knowledge.

FOUNDATION REQUIREMENTS

Secondary 6 entrants are required to complete 24 units of Foundation Requirements including nine units of language courses, six units of General Education courses and nine units of Major/Faculty requirement.

RECOGNITION OF POST-SECONDARY QUALIFICATIONS

Students with recognised post-secondary qualifications may, according to the prescribed procedure, apply for course exemption. Graduation is still subject to the fulfilment of relevant requirements.

For more detailed information about the undergraduate curriculum, please visit the Academic and Quality Section homepage at www.cuhk.edu.hk/aqs.

¹ Secondary 6 entrants are required to complete 123 units to graduate while second-year entrants are required to complete at least 66 units.