

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

SUMMARY OF MAIN FEATURES OF

THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

(Applicable to Students Admitted in 1991-92 and thereafter
except Students of the M.B. Ch.B., B.Med.Sc. and B.Nurs. Programmes)

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The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Preamble

In the first twenty years or so since its inception, the University adopted an undergraduate curriculum structure (except for programmes of study leading to the Medical and Nursing degrees) based on a combination of the credit unit system and the degree examination system. Effective from the intake of 1986-87, the University moved to adopt a new structure solely based on the credit unit system. Starting from the intake of 1991-92, further revisions have been introduced with a view to providing greater flexibility in students' pace of study and selection of courses.

Curriculum Structure

1. Total Course Load

Secondary 6 and Secondary 7 entrants¹ are required to complete 123 and 99 units of courses respectively before graduation. Second-year entrants are required to complete at least 66 units of courses before graduation. To ensure a balanced curriculum which is not overloaded with requirements of one type or another and which allows room for development of General Education courses and leeway for a student to select courses of his choice, the Senate has set minimum and maximum requirements for the various curricular components.

Students of the four-year full-time Bachelor of Education Programmes and students of the Chinese Medicine Programme are required to complete at least 123 units and 173-177 units of courses respectively.

2. Major Requirement

To ensure a solid training in the Major discipline, a full-time Major Programme should require Secondary 6 or Secondary 7 entrants to take at least 51 but no more than 72 units of courses, and second-year entrants up to 64 units (for entrants with associate degrees) or up to 59 units (for entrants with higher diplomas). However, programmes of a professional nature may with permission of the Senate require Secondary 6 or Secondary 7 entrants more than 72 units, and second-year entrants up to 67 units (for entrants with associate degrees) or up to 62 units (for entrants with higher diplomas).

Although a programme is structured within the prescribed range, a student is allowed to take more than the required number of units in his Major Programme, provided that he is able to meet all other requirements.

Once taken, all Major courses at 2000 and above level (at 0200 and above level for STOT courses) will be counted towards the Major GPA for the purpose of degree classification for a full-time student, unless he subsequently changes his Major Programme. However, for some programmes which have the endorsement of the Faculty Boards, only Major courses at 3000 and above level (at 0300 and above level for STOT courses) will be counted. For the Chinese Medicine Programme, all Major courses will be included in the Major GPA calculation. For part-time programmes, all Major courses at 3000 and above level (at 0300 and above level for STOT courses) will be counted. However, a Faculty Board may decide that for a particular programme only Major courses at 4000 and above level (at 0400 and above level for STOT courses) will be counted.

3. Intensive Programme in Putonghua, Cantonese and English

All students in their first year of study are required to complete an Intensive Programme in Putonghua, Cantonese and English. The Programme is non-credit-bearing but students are required to attend an examination for each of the three courses and the examination results will be recorded on academic reports and transcripts.

Intensive Programme in Putonghua, Cantonese and English are not offered to second-year entrants and part-time students.

4. Compulsory Language Requirement

All students admitted in 2004-05 and thereafter have to fulfil the compulsory language requirement. Secondary 7 entrants are required to complete 3 units of English courses, and those who belong to the Faculties of Arts, Education and Social Science also have to complete 3 units of Chinese courses. Students exempted from the Chinese language requirement for admission by the Senate, non-local students admitted to programmes that do not prescribe for them any Chinese language requirement for admission, or those without Chinese language results admitted via JUPAS are required to complete 3 units of English courses and 3 or 6 units of Chinese courses.

Secondary 6 entrants including mainland students who are proficient in Cantonese are required to complete 6 units of English courses, 3 units of expository writing courses and 3 units of Chinese courses, and those who belong to the Faculties of Arts, Education and Social Science have to complete an additional 3 units of Chinese courses. Mainland students who are not proficient in Cantonese are required to complete 6 units of English, 3 units of expository writing courses and 6 units of Chinese courses, and those who belong to the Faculties of Arts, Education and Social Science have to complete an additional 3 units of Chinese courses. Students who are exempted from the Chinese language requirement for admission by the Senate, or non-local (excluding Mainland) students admitted to programmes that do not prescribe for them any Chinese language requirement for admission, are required to take 6 units of English courses, 3 units of expository writing courses, and 6, 9 or 12 units of Chinese courses.

Second-year entrants with higher diplomas are required to complete 3 units of language requirement.

5. IT Competence Requirement

All undergraduate students are required to pass an IT Proficiency Test in their first year of attendance. If they fail the Test, they are required to attend the IT intensive course. Students admitted in 2003-04 and before shall be barred from graduation if they do not pass the Test and yet have not attended the IT intensive course twice (IT Intensive course is discontinued with effect from 2007-08.). Students admitted in 2004-05 and thereafter shall be barred from graduation if they do not pass the Test. Students admitted in 2004-05 and thereafter who have passed the International Computer Driving License Assessment may apply for exemption from the Test.

6. Physical Education Requirement

All Secondary 6 or Secondary 7 entrants of full-time programmes (except Physical Education and Sports Science students) are required to complete 2 units of Physical Education courses in their first year of attendance. Second-year entrants are required to take 1 unit of Physical Education course during their first year of attendance.

7. General Education Requirement

Secondary 6 or Secondary 7 entrants of full-time programmes are required to complete 15 units of General Education courses. Certain programmes of a professional nature may have this requirement reduced by 3 units with permission from the Senate. Second-year entrants are required to complete 7 units (for entrants with associate degrees) or 9 units (for entrants with higher diplomas). Students should take these General Education courses as prescribed by the University, and the College to which he is assigned.

Students admitted in 2003-04 and before should complete at least one course from the required area "Chinese Culture". Students admitted in 2004-05 and thereafter are required to take at least one course from each of the four University General Education curriculum areas, namely, A. Our Own Heritage; B. Nature, Technology and the Environment; C. Society and Culture; and D. Self and Humanity. To fulfil the remaining unit requirements of General Education at University level, students should follow specific course registration criteria and priorities.

For the part-time programmes, the number of units required is 12. However, students having satisfied the special entrance requirement and been granted exemption of 53 to 63 units at the time of admission will only need to complete 6 units of General Education courses.

8. Double Degree

The University starts offering double degree programmes for entrants admitted from 2006-07. Students will have the opportunity to earn the first Bachelor's degree plus, after one additional year on self-financed basis (except as required by individual programmes), the second Bachelor's degree.

9. Double Major Programme

A student admitted in 2004-05 and thereafter can register for a second Major Programme subject to the approval of the two Major Departments concerned. A student who has satisfied the requirements of a second Major may, in the last term of attendance within the minimum period of study, declare and be assessed for a second Major.

10. Minor Programme

Minor Programmes are optional to students. A student can register for one or two Minor Programmes as approved by the Department of his Major subject. A Minor Programme should require at least 15 but no more than 30 units of courses.

Minor Programmes are not offered to part-time students.

11. Elective Courses

In addition to fulfilling the requirements of his Major Programme, Languages, IT, General Education and Physical Education, a student is free to select courses (subject to timetable, course load and study scheme constraints etc.) in meeting the total units required for graduation. For instance, he may complete elective courses in disciplines other than his Major Programme; he may take more Major or General Education courses; or he may opt for a Minor Programme.

12. Foundation Requirements

A Secondary 6 entrant admitted in 2004-05 and thereafter shall complete 24 units of Foundation Requirements including 9 units of language courses, 6 units of General Education courses and 9 units of Major/Faculty requirement.

13. Course Load Per Term/Year

A full-time student shall take at least 12 but no more than 18 units of courses in any term. However, with the prior permission of his Major Department, he may take up to a maximum of 21 units in any term.

A part-time student shall take at least 3 units of courses in any term. He shall take at least 15 but no more than 27 units in any year.

14. Period of Study

Unless otherwise provided, a student must attend the University for at least 3 years before graduation. A Secondary 6 entrant in a full-time programme must complete all requirements for graduation within 6 years, and a Secondary 7 entrant within 5 years. A second-year entrant must complete all requirements for graduation within 4 years. Generally, a Secondary 6 entrant and a Secondary 7 entrant are expected to complete their studies in 4 and 3 years respectively. A second-year entrant is expected to complete his studies in 2 years. A student may, however, apply to the Director of Registry Services for altering his period of study. A student wishing to change the order or period of study for his Major courses must have consent from the Department concerned. No such application shall be accepted after the commencement of his expected term of graduation.

A student of the Language Education Programme or Physical Education and Sports Science Programme is expected to graduate within 4 years and must complete all requirements for graduation within 6 years. A student of the Chinese Medicine Programme is expected to graduate within 5 years and must complete all requirements for graduation within 7 years.

A student of the part-time programme shall normally register for and attend classes for 3 to 6 years before graduation and must complete all requirements for graduation within 5 to 10 years depending on his entrance qualifications.

15. Course and Unit Exemptions

Students with recognized post-secondary qualifications obtained prior to admission to the University or earned through participation in student exchange programmes may apply for exemption of courses and units. The applications should be approved by the Faculty Deans on the recommendation of the Departments concerned.

A student who has obtained such exemptions and has met all other course and unit requirements for graduation must nevertheless satisfy the following conditions for consideration of the award of a CUHK degree:

- (a) he shall have completed at least 60 units of courses at CUHK;
- (b) he shall have completed at least two-thirds of his Major requirements at CUHK;
- (c) he shall have completed at least two-thirds of his Minor requirements at CUHK, if he wishes to graduate with a Minor;
- (d) he shall have attended CUHK for at least 2 years including his final term (at least 3 years for students of the 4-year Education Programmes); and
- (e) his total period of attendance at CUHK and another university or institution of higher learning recognized by the Senate shall have been not less than 3 years (4 years for students of the 4-year Education Programmes).

Assessment of Students

1. Course Examinations

To ensure objectivity, reliability, fairness and confidence in the assessment, course examinations of all full-time courses (both Major and non-Major ones) and part-time Major courses at 4000 or above level will be centrally scheduled, invigilated and monitored by panels of examiners set up by the Departments. However, courses which are practical in nature (e.g. laboratory courses, Physical Education skill courses) and courses which adopt a continuous assessment approach or other forms of term-end assessment (e.g. project, paper) in lieu of course examination may be excluded from central scheduling with the approval of the Examination Panel concerned.

A graduation thesis or graduation project may be prescribed by a student's Major Programme.

2. Visiting Examiner System

A student's performance in the graduation thesis or project and Major courses at 2000 and above level shall be subject to assessment by the Visiting Examiners.

3. Academic Probation and Discontinuation of Studies

There is no promotion from year to year per se. The year designation for a student only indicates his cumulative years of attendance at the University and not his level of study. Academic performance is assessed on a term basis.

A student who has obtained a GPA of below 1.5 in a term shall be put on academic probation in the following term. At the end of that term, if he obtains a GPA of 1.5 or above, probation shall be lifted; otherwise, probation shall continue to apply for another term. He shall be required to

discontinue his studies at the University if he still fails to lift his probation after having been put on academic probation for two consecutive terms of attendance.

A student who has obtained a grade point average below 1.0 or who has failed in more than half of the units of courses taken in a term must apply in writing to and obtain permission from the Major Department concerned within a prescribed period to continue studies. If he fails to obtain permission from the Major Department concerned to continue studies, he shall be required to discontinue his studies.

A student who has obtained a term GPA of below 1.0 or failed in more than half of the units of courses taken per term for two consecutive terms of attendance (for three consecutive terms of attendance for part-time programmes) shall be required to discontinue his studies.

A student who fails to meet the minimum grade requirement in specific courses, if any, as prescribed by his Major Programme after two attempts shall be required to discontinue his study, unless he can obtain transfer to another Major Programme in the next term of attendance or his Faculty Board decides otherwise.

Academic reports and transcripts will show all courses taken and retaken, no matter passed or failed. The same applies in the calculation of all GPA, including GPA for degree classification.

4. Graduation

To qualify for a Bachelor's degree, a student apart from meeting all the relevant requirements must obtain a GPA of not lower than 1.5 for all Major courses taken which are at 2000 and above level (at 3000 and above level for part-time programmes), for STOT courses, at 0200 and above level (at 0300 and above level for part-time programmes), a pass in the graduation thesis/project (if prescribed), and a GPA of not less than 1.0 in his final term.

Notwithstanding the above, a student who has obtained a GPA of below 1.5 but not less than 1.3 in all Major courses taken which are at 2000 and above level (at 3000 and above level for part-time programmes), for STOT courses, at 0200 and above level (at 0300 and above level for part-time programmes), may be recommended by the Undergraduate Examinations Board for the award of a pass degree, subject to his satisfying all other requirements for graduation.

A full-time student who has fulfilled the requirements of a Minor Programme or two Minor Programmes which he has registered for shall graduate with the Minor/s.

Students may graduate upon completion of all requirements at the end of any term in an academic year, although the conferment of degrees is held only annually.

5. Degree Classification

A student shall be awarded a Bachelor's degree with one of the following classifications:

- (a) First Class Honours
- (b) Second Class Honours Upper Division
- (c) Second Class Honours Lower Division
- (d) Third Class Honours
- (e) Pass

Classification shall be based on a student's GPA of all his Major courses taken which are at 2000 and above level or only those at 3000 and above level (at 3000 and above level or only those at 4000 and above level for part-time programmes), for STOT courses, at 0200 and above level or 0300 and above level (at 0300 and above level or 0400 and above level for part-time programmes) as decided by the Faculty Board concerned, subject to his GPA of all courses taken and results of graduation thesis/project reaching the minimum standard set by the Undergraduate Examinations Board.

If a course is used to satisfy both Major and Minor requirements, the grade thereof will count towards the Major GPA.

Course grades earned at another institution and recognized for exemptions from any University requirements shall not be included in any GPA calculation.

Note

- ¹ A Secondary 6 (or 7) entrant means a student who has been admitted to the University after completion of Secondary 6 (or 7) in a school or an equivalent qualification.