

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

HKU Common Core Curriculum

CREDIT UNIT STATEMENT

The HKU Common Core Curriculum consists of a range of courses categorized under four Areas of Inquiry (AoIs). To fulfil the requirements of the Common Core Curriculum, undergraduate students need satisfactory completion of 36 Common Core course credits, unless otherwise prescribed in the curriculum regulations and syllabuses. Common Core courses are either 6- or 3-credit courses. Students need to complete at least 6 credits in each of the four AoIs and 36 credits overall, with not more than 12 credits in any one AoI. Students should complete Common Core courses in the years as recommended by their respective home Faculties with not more than 24 credits of courses being selected within one academic year.

Each 6-credit course consists of 120-180 hours of student learning activity (including both contact hours and all other forms of student learning activity and assessment) and each 3-credit course consists of 60-90 hours of student learning activity. These courses span a range of disciplinary areas and employ a variety of teaching/learning and assessment modes.

The teaching/learning mode of the majority of 6-credit courses is lecture and tutorial, supplemented by directed activities and private study. Such courses normally have 36 hours of contact, with a 2-hour active learning class/lecture and a 1-hour tutorial per week over a period of 12 weeks. Some courses may use other teaching/ learning modes such as e-learning, laboratory work, fieldwork, seminars, workshops and internship. Consequently, they may have fewer contact hours but no less than 24 contact hours.

For 3-credit courses, the teaching/learning mode is primarily project-based inquiry designed in a compressed format normally consisting of 20 hours of contact, with the remaining hours for student preparation and organized learning activities such as fieldwork and formal assessments.

The method of assessment is at the discretion of the individual course teachers who are encouraged to use diverse assessment tasks with a view to ensuring that student performance in relation to the stated learning outcomes of their course is effectively assessed. Such tasks typically include individual or group projects, group presentations, videos, analytic or reflective essays, in-class tests, small research projects, and portfolios of student work. The assessment ratio of the majority of courses is 100% coursework with continuous assessment to allow for a sequence of feedback. A very small number of courses, with an educational rationale provided, involve an end-of-semester examination that makes up for not more than 50% of the overall course assessment.

Given the diversity of assessment methods, it is difficult to quantify and standardize the output. As a general guide, regardless of the method used, the total output should be 2,500-5,000 words or equivalent for a 6-credit course and 1,250-2,500 words or equivalent for a 3-credit course. Teachers are required to provide grade descriptors for their course to students and are strongly encouraged to construct marking rubrics for each assessment task.