

New Curriculum 2010: FAQs

When is the new curriculum being introduced?

The current programs will cease to be offered at the end of 2009, and a new set of Programs of Study will be offered from 2010. A period of 3 years (up to 31 December 2012) has been allowed for existing students to complete their studies- the Transition period. After this period students who are still enrolled will be required to transfer and complete under one of the new Programs of Study and their requirements.

Why is a new curriculum being introduced?

The new curriculum is being introduced in order to broaden the experience and expertise of Macquarie graduates. In a move away from rigid and inflexible degree structures, the number of degrees available will be significantly reduced and replaced with a system of Majors and Minors to make it easier for students to choose what they want to specialise in as well as making it easier and simpler to manage their enrolment. The new curriculum will introduce students to areas outside of their department and faculty through People and Planet units. The new curriculum will make it easier for the student to identify and select the key pieces of learning they are interested in, whilst having the flexibility to explore other areas.

What are People and Planet units?

To complete your degree, you will have to complete one People and one Planet unit. Both of these units need to be outside of your department and one must be outside of your faculty. A People designated unit is designed to help you to understand the world through learning about the challenges of modern society. A Planet designated unit looks at the physical environment in its fullest sense. A schedule of People and Planet designated units is available, and as these units will be outside of your main area of study their prerequisite requirements will be relatively lax.

What is a Capstone unit?

A capstone unit is completed towards the end of a degree, brings all of the related units that the student has completed throughout their degree together to develop problem solving skills and prepare the student for life as a graduate.

What is a Participation unit?

A Participation unit requires the student to bring their learning out into the community. The student has the opportunity to participate in many different areas, improving the student's expertise whilst making a difference in the community. These units are being piloted now, and will be implemented in the next few years. A Participation unit will be a compulsory component in their degree programs for all undergraduate students who first enrol at Macquarie University from 2012 onwards.

What is a major?

A major is what you choose to specialise in and will be reflected on your testamur. In the vast majority of degrees there will be provision to fit in two majors. It consists of a minimum of 24 credit points and a maximum of 36 credit points, including 12 credit points at 300 level, usually but not always with the same prefix.

What is a minor?

A minor is approximately half the workload of a major and will not be reflected on your testamur, but will be reflected on your transcript.

Are there going to be changes in the number of credit points associated with units?

Yes. All units are being standardised to 3 credit points. From next year (2010) all 100 and 200 level units (with one or two special program exceptions) will be worth 3 credit points. From 2011 the higher level units will also be standardised to 3 credit points. Some departments have already dropped their 300 level units down to 3 credit points for next year (2010). These changes have been implemented to ensure that there is enough room in your degree to complete the extra units associated with the new curriculum. These credit point changes will affect everyone, even if you choose not to move to the new curriculum structure.

Do the departments know now when their 300+ level units will be standardised to 3 credit points?

Yes. You should contact your department directly.

One of the requirements of my current degree is to complete 12 credit points of 300-level units. I have completed 8 credit points so far. Next year the third subject I wish to take will be standardised from 4 down to 3 credit points, meaning that I will only have 11 credit points total upon completion of this unit. Am I going to have to stay an extra semester at university to complete another 3 credit point subject to satisfy the 12 credit point requirement?

No. Every faculty has set up shell units. These are units worth one or two credit points each and will typically involve a reading or research unit that you can tailor to your major. In the above example, the student would simply take on a 1 credit point shell unit to make up for the 1 credit point difference.

I am currently enrolled in one degree and I wish to transfer into a new curriculum degree. How will this affect me?

There are and have always been provisions at Macquarie University that state a student should graduate with the qualification that they have earned. If you are completing the requirements for the degree you wish to graduate with there is no need to officially transfer, as when it comes time to graduate you will notify the Academic Programs Committee who will then compare your results with the requirements for the degree you wish to graduate in. This is the qualification that will appear on your testamur.

There is, however, one very important thing to take into consideration. If you do not officially transfer, your testamur will not match your transcript. The Academic Programs Committee will assess you for what you wish to qualify under, but if you do not formally transfer your transcript will continue to show the degree that you are enrolled in.

The expectation is that students will want to transfer into the new programs because of the opportunities that they offer. On the new Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science, your major will be published on your testamur, and if you are going to complete your studies by 2012 you are not required to complete People and Planet units if you transfer to the new curriculum.

Do these changes apply for postgraduate programs?

No. A review of postgraduate programs is beginning now, but there are no changes for current students at the moment.