

Common Core Curriculum

The Common Core Program is essential to undergraduate education, complementing studies in specialist disciplines and other learning opportunities.

Since its last implementation in 2012, there have been rapid changes in global technology trends and the growing importance of cross-disciplinary studies. To prepare students for future challenges, the objectives, structure, and implementation of the Common Core Program are being revised.

Starting from the academic year 2022-23, all undergraduates admitted from that year and onwards will follow the 30-credit Common Core framework. The new framework adopts a scaffolding structure with 3 tiers of common core groups (i.e. Foundations, Broadening, and Experiencing) which provide students with more interdisciplinary and experiential learning opportunities. It also emphasizes competency education, which help students acquire, develop, and practice essential competencies for their study and future.

The table below shows the common core groups, common core areas, and requirements:

Common Core Groups	Common Core Areas	Required Credits
Experiencing (no prerequisites, but encourage design of courses for Year 3 or above students)	Undergraduate experiential Opportunities Programs (UxOP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP); • Undergraduate Teaching Opportunities Program (UTOP); • Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program (UPOP); • Undergraduate Global Challenges and Opportunities Program (UCOP) 	3 credits (substitutable by courses from the areas of CTDL, E-Comm (Advanced Communication courses only), C-Comm, A, H, S, T, and SA)
Broadening (with specific outcomes)	Arts (A)	12 credits under stipulated program-specific areas
	Humanities (H)	
	Science (S)	
	Technology (T)	
	Social Analysis (SA)	
Foundations (skillsets & mindsets) (preferably taken in Year 1)	Cognitive Foundations of University Education: Critical Thinking and Data Literacy (CTDL) (in any year)	3 credits (substitutable by courses from the areas of E-Comm (Advanced Communication courses only), C-Comm, A, H, S, T, SA, and UxOP)
	Behavioral Foundations of University Education: Habits, Mindsets, and Wellness (HMW) (year-long in Year 1)	3
	English Communication (E-Comm) (at least 3 credits in Year 1)	6
	Chinese Communication (C-Comm) (in any year)	3
	Total Credits Required	30

Foundations Requirement (12 to 15 credits)

The Foundations group includes [Cognitive Foundations of University Education: Critical Thinking and Data Literacy](#) (CTDL), Behavioral Foundations of University Education: Habits, Mindsets, and Wellness (HMW), English Communication (E-Comm), and Chinese Communication (C-Comm) areas. These courses aim to provide students with core skillsets and mindsets training. It is recommended that students take these courses in their first year of study.

Please note that the CTDL area is an elective. Students may take courses from the areas of E-Comm (Advanced Communication courses only), C-Comm, A, H, S, T, SA, and UxOP to substitute for the credits in the CTDL area. However, transferred credits granted in any common core area in the Broadening group cannot be used to fulfill the credit requirement of CTDL area. Students are strongly encouraged to consider taking a course in CTDL area to develop their cognitive skills and enhance their learning experience at the university.

Broadening Requirement (12 to 18 credits)

Each major program at HKUST has designated home common core areas in the Broadening group that correspond to the primary academic disciplines of that program. The home common core area(s) of each undergraduate program are listed below:

- All programs in School of Science (SSCI): Science (S)
- All programs in School of Engineering (SENG), except BIEN, CEEV, CENG, and COSC programs: Technology (T)
- BIEN, CEEV, and CENG programs in SENG: Science (S) and Technology (T)
- COSC program in SENG: Technology (T) and the second home common core area may differ for individual students, please contact SENG
- All programs in School of Business and Management (SBM), except WBB program: Social Analysis (SA)
- WBB program in SBM: please refer to the [program-specific credit requirement](#)
- GCS program in School of Humanities and Social Science (SHSS): Humanities (H) and Social Analysis (SA)
- QSA program in SHSS: Social Analysis (SA)
- EVMT program in Academy of Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS): Social Analysis (SA)
- IIM program in AIS: home common core area(s) may differ for individual students, please contact AIS
- Dual degree programs (DDP) in AIS: home common core areas differ from programs
- Joint-School programs (JS): home common core areas differ from programs

To provide students with a well-rounded education, HKUST requires each student to complete 12 credits of common core courses outside their home area in the Broadening group. Students should take a minimum of 3 credits from each non-home common core area under the Broadening group. If they fall short of the 12-credit requirement, they

may take Broadening courses of any area, including their home common core area(s), to fulfill the requirement.

For example, SSCI majors must complete at least 3 credits from each area in A, H, T, and SA. Similarly, SBM majors (excluding WBB) must complete at least 3 credits from each area in A, H, S, and T.

For students enrolled in an additional major, a dual degree program, or a Joint-School program, their home common core areas consist of the union of all the home common core areas of their individual majors taken. For instance, students in a dual degree program in SSCI and SBM would have home common core areas consisting of the S and SA areas. These students are required to complete at least 3 credits in each of the A, H, and T areas. The remaining 3 credits can be earned by taking courses in any common core area in the Broadening group.

The minimum credit requirement for each common core area in the Broadening group varies across different major programs. In general, students should fulfill the [program-specific credit requirement](#) to fulfill the Broadening requirement, while transferred credits granted in any common core area in the Broadening group cannot be used to fulfill the credit requirement of the CTDL/UxOP areas.

Experiencing Requirement (0 to 3 credits)

The Experiencing group requires students to choose any one of the four structured programs offered as the Undergraduate experiential Opportunities Programs (UxOP):

- [Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program \(UROP\)#](#);
- [Undergraduate Teaching Opportunities Program \(UTOP\)](#);
- [Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program \(UPOP\)](#) and;
- Undergraduate Global Challenges and Opportunities Program (UCOP).

Each UxOP will have a distinct focus, but all of them will be experiential. Please note that the UxOP area is an elective. Students may take courses from the areas of CTDL, E-Comm (Advanced Communication courses only), C-Comm, A, H, S, T, and SA to substitute for the credits in the UxOP area. Similar to the requirement in the CTDL area, the transferred credits granted in any common core area in the Broadening

group cannot be used to fulfill the credit requirement of the UxOP area. Students are strongly encouraged to consider taking a course in UxOP area to enrich their learning experience at the university.

Remarks

The UROP course in the 30-credit Common Core curriculum is different from other existing UROP courses listed at <https://uop.hkust.edu.hk/>; The details of course information and structure will be released in due course. Students are still welcome to take any UROP courses (e.g., UROP 1100 and UROP 1000) under existing UROP program before satisfying the UROP requirement in Common Core Program.