Transforming Student Learning
- 4-year undergraduate curriculum

Curriculum Innovation International Network

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University of Southampton & University of Aberdeen

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Enabling Curriculum Structure

Component (% of total no. of credits)	Courses		No. of credits*
Required for all students **(22.5%)**	Common Core		36 credits
	English		12 credits
	Chinese		6 credits
Specialization: normative **(40% - 60%)**	Major **(30% - 40%)**		72-96 credits
	Minor **(15% - 20%)**		36-48 credits
Electives **(17.5% - 32.5%)**	Electives for all students		Standard: 6-credits;
Total no. of *required* credits			240 credits

*6 credits = 120 – 180 student workload hours
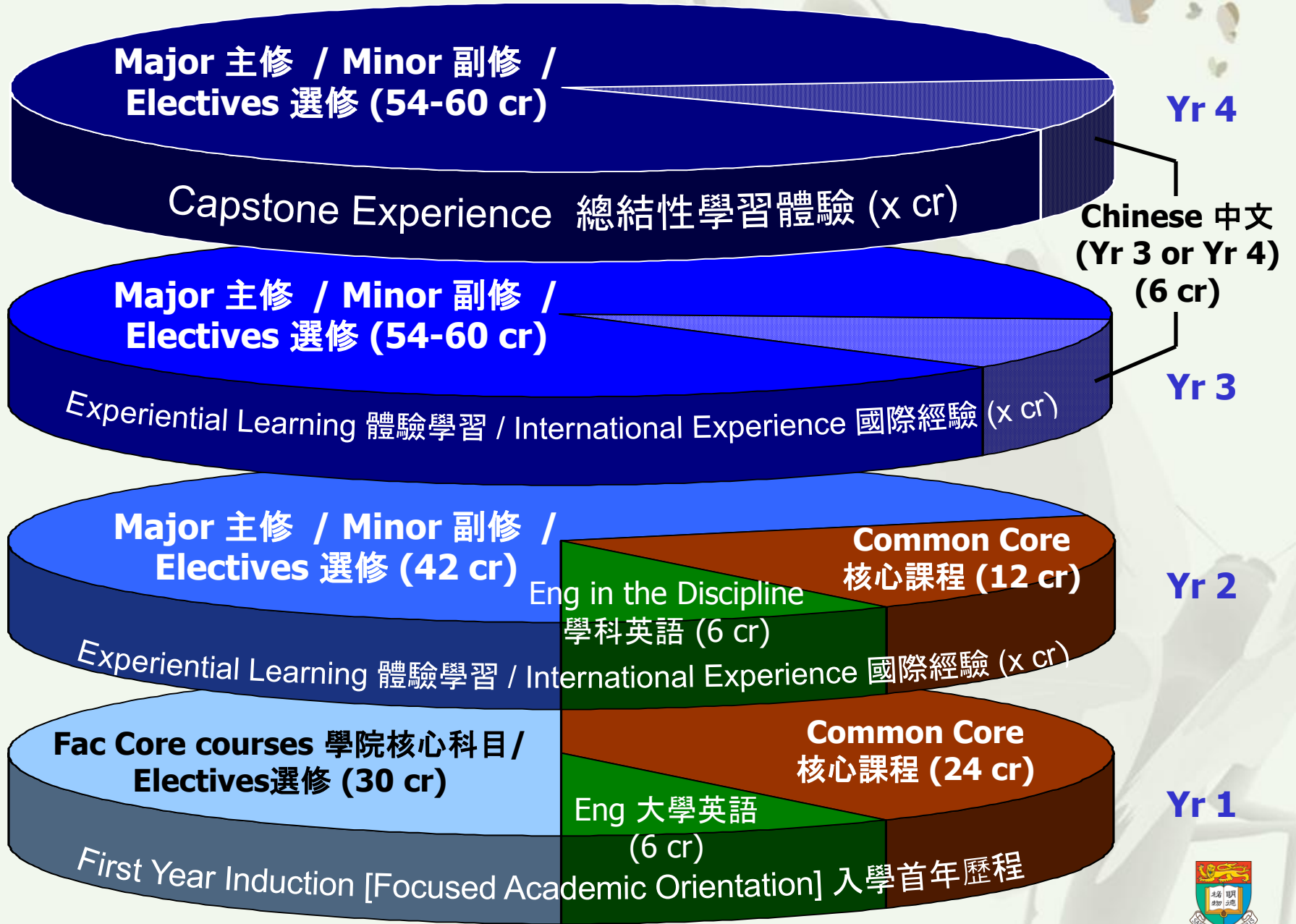
Common Learning Experiences

1. English as the medium of learning and *lingua franca* on campus; bilingual proficiency in the workplace

2. Common Core Curriculum for all students

3. Balance between formal curriculum and co-curricula / extra-curricula: Credit unit System

4. Clear learning goals and standards for achievement: Outcomes-based Student Learning and standards-referenced assessment

5. First Year Experience and academic induction: "Dis-orientation" and "re-orientation"

Common Learning Experiences

6. Setting personal and academic goals and drawing road maps: Academic advising

7. Experiential learning: integration of theory and practice, subsuming learning in the workplace and the community (local and global)

8. International experience

9. Capstone experience: final year, integration of knowledge

10. Synergy between formal curriculum, co-curricula and extra-curricula

Debate

- **an additional year vs an opportunity to revamp the Ug curriculum**

- **more (remedial) disciplinary knowledge vs broader outlook, stronger intellectual curiosity and better generic capabilities**

Two-pronged Approach to Curriculum Reform

- **Interactive Approach: bottom-up & top down**
  - **Steering Committee & 7 subcommittees + ad hoc working group**
  - **Faculty visits & consultation**
  - **Consultation with students**
  - **Annual retreat (staff and students), seminars and forums**
  - **Meetings with business and professional communities, alumni, schools**
  - **SC recommendations → Faculty consultation → Senate endorsement**

Two-pronged Approach to Curriculum Reform

- **Evidence-based Approach**

Large scale survey	Frequency	Year of study
Student learning experience (HKUSLEQ)	Annual 2007 onwards	1 & 3
First year experience	Incorporated into SLEQ	1
Expectation of learning at HKU	Alternate years	upon entry
MOI in schools	2007, 2008	2
Broadening courses	2007	1 & 3
Experience of co-curricula	2007	1 & 3

Employers' Survey (EDB) on Publicly-funded First Degree Graduates in Year 2003 (released in 2006)

Attributes rated Important > 4	Importance	Performance
	Mean	Mean
English Language Proficiency	4.15	3.56
Chinese Language Proficiency	4.00	3.71
Technical Skills Required for the Job	4.03	3.45
Numerical Competency	4.12	3.66
Work Attitude	4.37	3.74
Inter-personal skills	4.23	3.58
Analytical and Problem-Solving Abilities	4.14	3.42

N = 1972 (Response rate: 55%)   1 = least important / capable; 5 = most important / capable
Source: EDB Website (http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content_689/executive_summary%20_fd_eng__april_2010.pdf)

HKU Educational Aims

To enable students to develop capabilities in

- the pursuit of academic/professional excellence, critical intellectual inquiry and life-long learning

- tackling novel situations and ill-defined problems

- enacting personal and professional ethics, self-reflection and greater understanding of others

- intercultural understanding and global citizenship

- communication and collaboration

- leadership and advocacy for the improvement of the human condition

How do we achieve these educational aims?

Conception of Curriculum

A curriculum is

the totality of experiences afforded

to students

to achieve specified educational aims.

Steering Committee (2006)
Transforming Student Learning, p. 11

Academic Excellence

and

Enabling Curriculum Structure

Enabling Curriculum Structure

- **Student Choice**

- **Flexible curriculum structure**

- **Academic induction to university learning**

- **Declaration of major at the end of 1st year**

- **Time for intellectual and social engagement**

Action Plan

	Phase I Conceptua-lization	Phase II Exploration & confirmation of key components of new 2012 Curr	Phase III Key components of new 2010 Curr; design & pilot key components	Phase IV Partial implementation of new 2012 Curr : Launch of new 2010 Curr	Phase V Launch of new 2012 Curr
	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2009-2010**	**2010… 2011… 2012… 2014… 2016…**
	5 7 9 11	1 3 5 7 9 11	1 3 5 7 9 11	1 3 5 7 9 …	9 11 … 7 9 … 7 9 … 7 9 … 7 9 …

Conceptual Framework (Draft) (May 06)	▲ Sent to Faculties for discussion
	▲ **Faculty Visits & Seminars**
1st CR Retreat (Jun 06)	▲ >60 staff
Teaching Commons (Sep 06)	▲ (Replaced by launch of CR website)
	▲ **Conceptual Framework Finalized**
2nd CR Retreat (Jun 07)	▲ >80 staff
Prototype of 2012 Curr	▲ **Discussion & Consultation**
OBASL (Oct 07)	▲ **Articulation of ILO, PLO, CLO (on-going)**
ADP for 2009-2012 (Jan 08)	▲ **Incorporation of the new 2010 curriculum**
Key components of 2012 Curr	▲ ▲ **Recommendations endorsed by Senate (Apr, Jun 08)**
3rd CR Retreat (Jun 08)	▲ >180 participants
Prototype of 2010 curr	▲ **Discussion & Consultation**
Key components & credit unit requirements for 2010 Curr	▲ **Endorsed by Senate (Dec 08)**
Common Core Curriculum	▲ ←→ ▲ **CCC Design and Development**
IT Support System	▲ **Design of new SIS system**
4th CR Retreat (Jun 09)	▲ 198 participants
Blueprint of 2010 Curr (Sept 09 – Jun 10)	▲ **Preparation for implementation by Facs (Sept 09)**
Implementation of 2010 Curr Str & Common Core Curr	▲ (Sept 2010)
IT Support System	▲ SIS launched (Oct 2010)
Blueprint of 2012 Curr	▲ (Sept 2011)
Launch of 2012 Curr	▲ (Sept 2012)
Interim Review	▲ (Jun 2014)
Comprehensive Review	▲ (Jun 2016)

Induction to University Learning: Critical Intellectual Enquiry

- To ask questions instead of looking for right or wrong answers

- To see things from multiple perspectives

- To see things as connected

  "The student who can begin early in life to think of things as connected … has begun the life of learning." (Mark van Doren, 1943, p. 115)
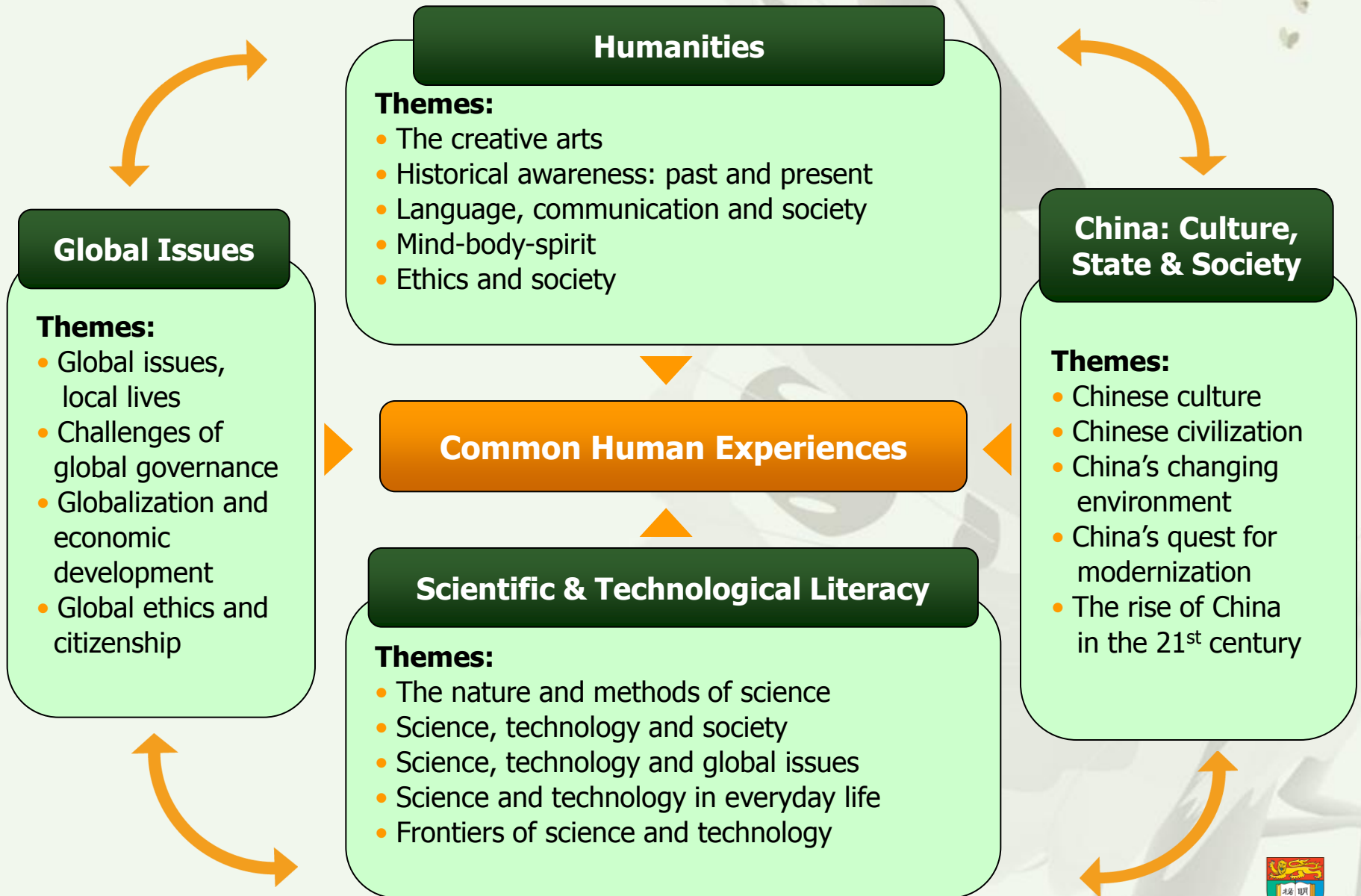
HKU Common Core

Aim: To help students to see the interconnectedness and the interdependent nature of human existence through exploring some common human experiences

Goals

To enable students to

(a) have a broader perspective and a critical understanding of the complexities and interconnectedness of the problems and issues that they are confronted with in their everyday lives;

(b) have a deeper understanding of their own cultures and other cultures, and to appreciate the interrelatedness and diversity among cultures;

(c) see themselves as members of local as well as global communities and to play an active role as responsible individuals and citizens in these communities;

(d) develop the critical intellectual capabilities that will be further enhanced in their disciplinary studies.

Humanities

Themes:
- The creative arts
- Historical awareness: past and present
- Language, communication and society
- Mind-body-spirit
- Ethics and society

Global Issues

Themes:
- Global issues, local lives
- Challenges of global governance
- Globalization and economic development
- Global ethics and citizenship

Common Human Experiences

China: Culture, State & Society

Themes:
- Chinese culture
- Chinese civilization
- China's changing environment
- China's quest for modernization
- The rise of China in the 21st century

Scientific & Technological Literacy

Themes:
- The nature and methods of science
- Science, technology and society
- Science, technology and global issues
- Science and technology in everyday life
- Frontiers of science and technology

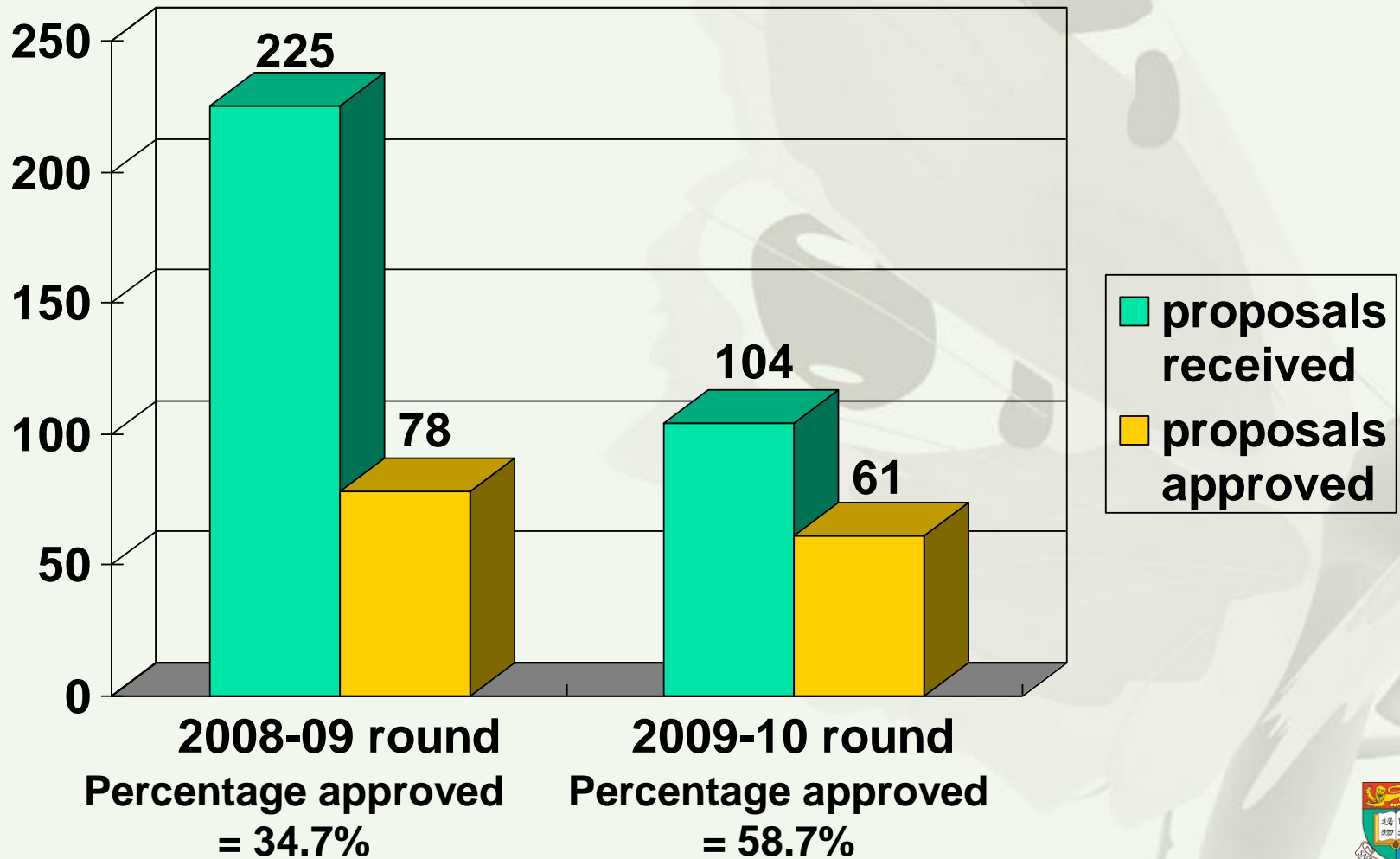# HKU Common Core Curriculum

Required of ALL students

- **6 courses (6 credit each, total: 36 credits)**
- **one course in each Area of Inquiry (AoI) + 2 courses from any AoI**
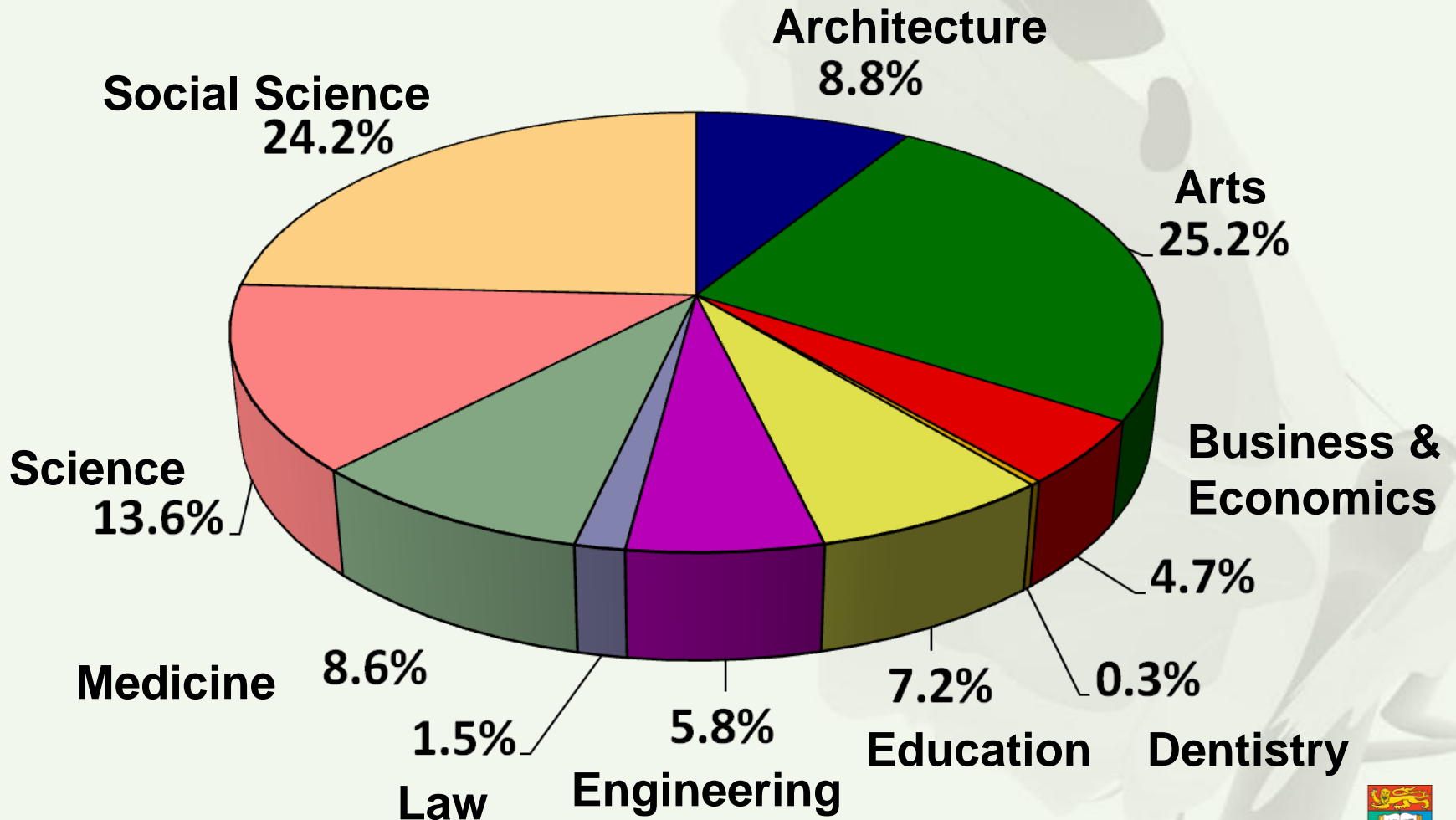- **No more than 2 courses in each AoI**

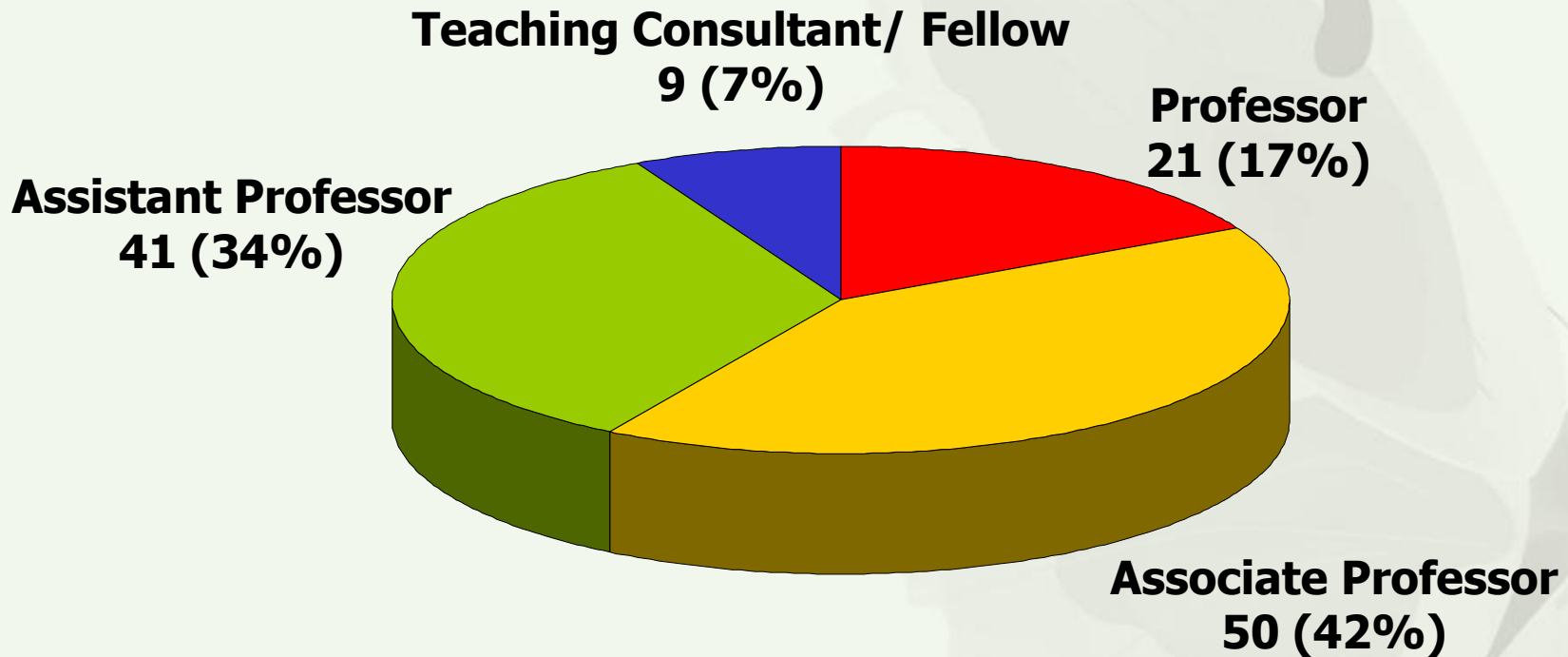**2-hrs Lectures/ seminar + 1 hr small group tutorial per week**

Common Core Curriculum: Proposals received and approved (2008-2010)

2008-09 round
Percentage approved
= 34.7%

2009-10 round
Percentage approved
= 58.7%

Legend:
- proposals received
- proposals approved

Values: 225, 78, 104, 61

Common Core Curriculum: Faculty share of teaching (2010-11 to 2012-13)

Architecture 8.8%
Social Science 24.2%
Arts 25.2%
Business & Economics 4.7%
Science 13.6%
Medicine 8.6%
Law 1.5%
Engineering 5.8%
Education 7.2%
Dentistry 0.3%

Profile of Teaching Staff on Common Core Courses

Teaching Consultant/ Fellow
9 (7%)

Professor
21 (17%)

Assistant Professor
41 (34%)

Associate Professor
50 (42%)

Common Core Curriculum: No. of courses on offer (2010-11 to 2012-13)

2010-11
N = 67
Target = 50
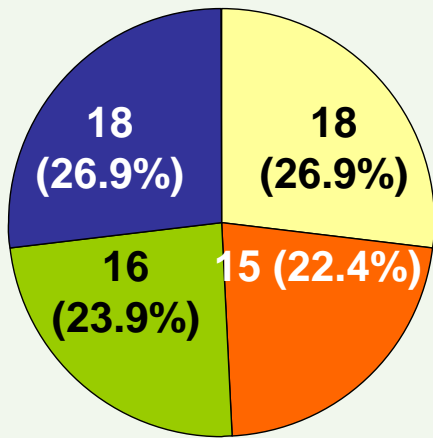
2011-12
N = 86
Target = 50
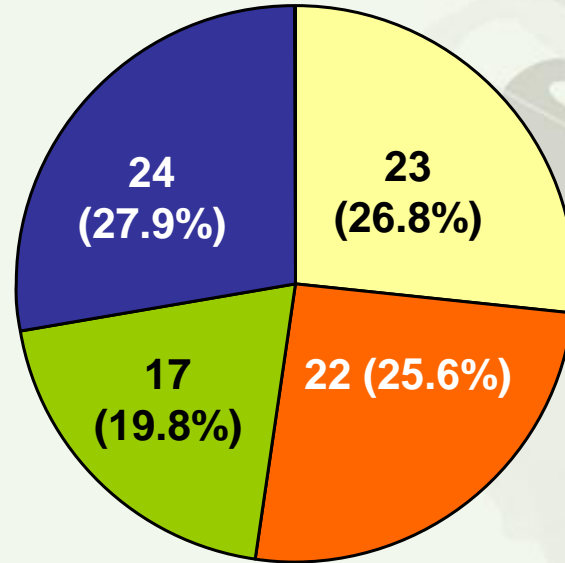
2012-13
N = 139
Target = 150 (11 outstanding)
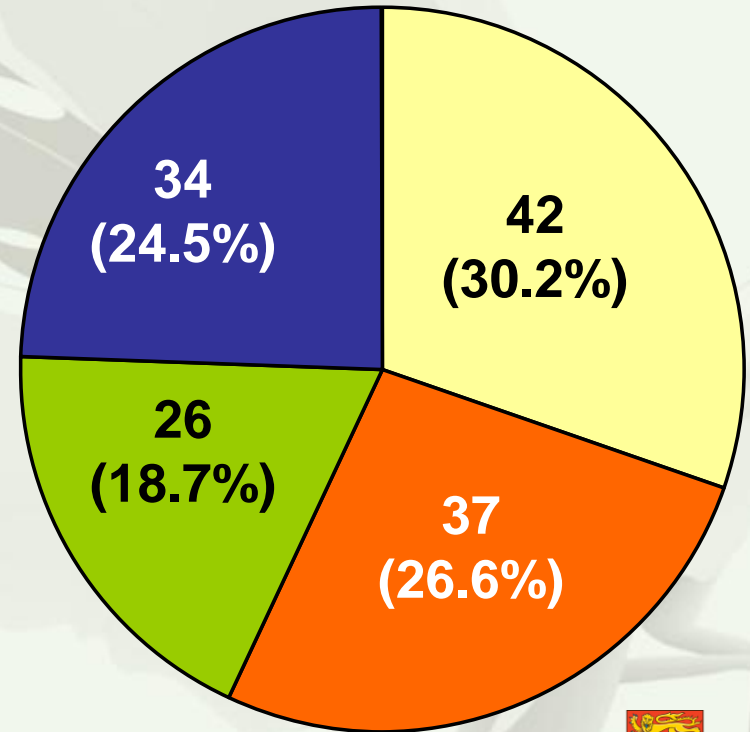
- **Science and Technological Literacy**
- **Humanities**
- **Global Issues**
- **China: Culture, State and Society**

Tackling novel situations and ill-defined problems: Experiential Learning

Learning in authentic work environment

- **Unfamiliar situations**
- **Problems are not well-defined**
- **Need to consider many contextual factors and the interconnection between them**
- **No perfect solution – live with dilemmas**
- **Synergy between theory and practice**

Experiential Learning:
Mingde Project in Guangxi, PRC (Civil Engineering)

**Mingde Lou
– a primary school**

**Gewu Lou
– a dormitory**

Working in unfamiliar situations

The lot did not have a detailed map; students had to carry out survey to determine the size of the plot and its level.

Learning to cope in adverse conditions

Students consulting local residents on building design

- **Communication and collaboration**
- **Understanding people from different cultural backgrounds**

A school in Qinmo Village in need of a face-lift

The school provides a new community space for the village.

Community participation is encouraged by having the villagers and children paint the individual bricks for the façade

Experiential learning & Global Citizenship

In order to operate effectively we need to understand the conflicting goals and agendas of various groups and individuals, ..., NGOs from Hong Kong and Mainland China, local governments, villagers and other universities.

Our goal is not to make buildings which exist in communities but rather buildings that strengthen a community of people.

**John Lin
Assistant
Professor
Dept of
Architecture**

Experiential Learning

Graduation Requirement

Soc Sciences Faculty Graduation Requirement (2007-)

- **Social innovation: 12 credits**
- **Global citizenship: 12 credits**

Science Faculty Graduation Requirement (2008 -)

- **Experiential Learning: 6 or 12 credits (undergraduate research; industrial internship; field work)**
- **Service Learning: non-credit bearing (2010 -)**

Architecture Faculty requirement (2008 -)

- **One semester placement in Shanghai**

Engineering Faculty: new form of internship – graduation requirement

Credit bearing

- **Arts Faculty (e.g. Japanese Studies, Linguistics, European Studies)**

Non-credit bearing

- **All Faculties**

Online resources

Teaching and Learning
http://tl.hku.hk/

Common Core Curriculum
http://commoncore.hku.hk/

Experiential Learning
http://tl.hku.hk/tl/experiential-learning/