WHY THE CORE?

Australian Catholic University has high hopes and great expectations of its graduates. An ACU education aims to teach students to think critically and ethically, and to be guided by social justice principles in their personal and professional lives. The University’s Core Curriculum lies at the heart of this vision. The goal of the Core is not just to pass on knowledge, but to raise some of the most fundamental questions about human experience and meaning, and equip students to address them with intelligence, compassion, and a heightened ethical awareness.

What are the qualities that humans need to flourish? What does it mean to be both an individual and part of a community? How is merely surviving different from thriving? How is human dignity defined and what difference does it make to our decisions? The Core Curriculum units emphasise critical judgment, clear expression, ethical decision-making and concern for others, as individuals and as a community. They are academic units and do not presume any particular religious belief.

The Core units also provide a common learning experience for students at ACU. Undergraduates together address the same topics and tackle the same problems, bringing their own views and experience to bear on complex ideas and contemporary social issues.

In Latin, cor means ‘heart.’ ACU has a Core because we firmly believe that education is as much about your heart as your head.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CORE

THE CORE CURRICULUM IS COMPRISED OF FIVE UNITS:

- two University Core Curriculum (UNCC) units that are common to all undergraduate programs;
- two program Core Curriculum units that are specific to each particular course and build explicitly on the University Core Curriculum units; and
- a Core Curriculum Community Engagement unit that is also specific to each program, serving to draw the Core Curriculum experience together and offering students an opportunity to live the Core Curriculum in action.

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THE TWO UNIVERSITY CORE UNITS

UNCC100: OUR WORLD: COMMUNITY AND VULNERABILITY
This unit explores the elements of life that contribute to human thriving in community and the vulnerability that is part of the human condition. It focuses on interdependence and social justice as building blocks of dynamic communities, local, regional and global. The unit engages with a fundamental commitment to social justice and advocacy on behalf of the vulnerable, drawing on the Catholic intellectual tradition and other sources.

UNCC300: UNDERSTANDING SELF AND SOCIETY: CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES
Beginning with questions of personal identity and values, in this unit, students will consider various questions of human existence, meaning and purpose as they arise in the contemporary world. How we answer such questions shapes all our interactions—personal and professional—and governs our responses to the situations we encounter. Drawing on the arts, science, history, culture and the perspectives of the Catholic intellectual tradition, students will explore issues of personal identity and community in a digital age, through the guiding lens of the fundamental dignity of all human beings.

THE INTERNATIONAL CORE
Australian Catholic University offers students the opportunity to study one University Core Curriculum unit overseas. These options currently include:

THE CORE IN PARIS
In partnership with the Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP) and St. John’s University (NYC, Paris Campus), ACU is offering UNCC300 Understanding Self and Society in a three-week study program led by ACU faculty that includes classes undertaken in Paris, France. This unit is offered during the ACU winter break.

THE CORE IN LONDON
In partnership with Heythrop College, University of London, ACU is offering UNCC300 Understanding Self and Society in a three-week study program led by ACU faculty that includes classes undertaken in London, UK. This unit is offered during the ACU summer break.

THE CORE IN FLORENCE
Fairfield University, an ACU partner, offers ACU students the opportunity to complete one of its units in Florence, Italy, for credit towards the Core Curriculum. This four-week program is offered during the ACU winter break.

FAQS
1. How do I find out what the Core Curriculum entails and how it is structured for my course?
Information on how the Core Curriculum fits into individual programs is available in course enrolment guides in the Current Students section of the website.

2. Who teaches the Core Curriculum?
Staff members from across all faculties at ACU teach the Core Curriculum. One of the distinctive features of the Core is that classes are made up of students from a range of different programs and are taught by people from a range of academic backgrounds. For example, a law academic might be teaching a group of nurses and teachers together with students from media studies and physiotherapy.

3. How many hours are required to complete the Core units?
Like other academic units at ACU, each Core Curriculum unit involves an average of 150 hours of focused learning. The two University Core Curriculum units (UNCC100 and UNCC300) normally require 10 hours of attendance. In addition to the tutorials, students work on an extensive suite of online resources and activities designed to support the tutorial activities and the completion of assessment tasks.

4. Does the Core Curriculum extend the length of a course or add to the cost of a degree?
No. For most courses, three of the units contributing to meeting Core Curriculum requirements have come from existing components of the degree. Courses have been revised to fit in the two University Core units (UNCC100 and UNCC300).

5. Can credit be granted for previous study to cover the UNCC units?
Because of the distinctive nature of the Core units and their relation to the mission and vision of ACU as an institution, it is highly unlikely that previous study will meet the particular learning outcomes of these units.

6. How do I find out more about studying the Core overseas?
Go to the ACU website and watch for announcements on the International webpage about information sessions, or contact the International office directly.