

# New set of core modules for NUS engineering, design students

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Seven interdisciplinary courses for those enrolling from this year to cover topics such as AI, project management

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Engineering and design and environment students entering the National University of Singapore (NUS) from this year will find out more about net-zero buildings and electric cars, as part of a new common curriculum to be rolled out in August.

They will also take a new compulsory module to help them communicate, for instance, in situations where they have to work in teams

## 1,800

Estimated number of new undergraduates enrolling in NUS' School of Design and Environment and Faculty of Engineering this year who will take the new set of seven core interdisciplinary modules.

or market their technologies.

About 1,800 new undergraduates enrolling in the School of Design and Environment and the Faculty of Engineering this year will take a new set of seven core interdisciplinary modules, the university announced yesterday.

NUS officials said at a briefing that both fields have increasingly seen a convergence in skills and knowledge required for work.

Two of the modules – Sustainable Futures and Creating Narratives – are new, while others cover topics like artificial intelligence, project management and design thinking.

Some of these are currently available only at either school, but will be extended to students from both schools in the new academic term.

For instance, existing modules such as in project management and design thinking at the School of Design and Environment will be open to engineering students.

Professor Aaron Thean, dean of

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**MORE FLEXIBILITY** continued on B2

## More flexibility to pursue second majors

### FROM B1

the engineering faculty, said previous batches of students had given feedback that they needed skills for project management.

Professor Lam Khee Poh, dean of the design and environment school, said: “(Students) can gain a much broader exposure to the various elements that contribute to design, beyond just the traditional notion of aesthetics and beauty. There are practical and managerial aspects to delivering the end product.”

Students from both schools will also undertake an interdisciplinary project that is worth two modules.

They will have more flexibility to pursue second majors and minors, without having to extend the length of their studies or increase their workload, with lower major and minor academic requirements.

NUS senior deputy president and provost Ho Teck Hua said that while the major requirements will be lower, some of the content is weaved into the common curriculum. Students can also take up more major modules to specialise further.

The engineering faculty, which has an undergraduate intake of over 1,500, has 10 majors, including electrical engineering.

The design and environment school takes in about 330 undergraduates yearly and offers four majors – architecture, landscape architecture, industrial design, and project and facilities management.

Students from both schools graduate with a direct honours degree in four years.

The latest announcements come after NUS’ launch of its new College of Humanities and Sciences in December. The college’s incoming students will take 13 common interdisciplinary modules in areas such as design thinking and scientific inquiry.

Prof Lam said: “The practice of architecture and engineering is thousands of years old, ever since human beings began building.

“If you look back into history, there was really no such differentiation (between both fields). We need to learn from that to see how civilisations of the past accomplished great breakthroughs.”

Students are not expected to be masters of all disciplines, he added.

“However, the spirit of collaboration and teamwork requires all of them to have a basic understanding (of) and at least have the ability to communicate the problem statements and ultimate solution.”

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# From Aug, community projects compulsory for NUS freshmen

From August, about 7,000 incoming students of the National University of Singapore (NUS) will need to take up community projects and be graded for them.

Under a new semester-long Communities and Engagement module, they can opt for projects related to topics of their interest, like climate change or access to health-care.

Professor Ho Teck Hua, NUS' senior deputy president and provost, said the idea is to get students started on a cause which they could continue in their own time, and develop in them a sense of social responsibility and empathy.

The module comprises in-class assignments and working with community partners, while guided by faculty experienced in community engagement, he added.

Professor Bernard Tan, NUS senior vice-provost (undergraduate education), said students have al-

ready been taking part in service learning projects for years.

"We are not starting from scratch... it's important for us to extend this experience to all NUS undergraduates," he said.

The module is part of NUS' general education curriculum to expose students to knowledge and skills outside their specialisations, and prepare them for work and society. It was last revamped in 2015.

Under the refreshed general education offerings, students will have to take modules from six "pillars", one of which is the new community engagement project.

The other five pillars are cultures and connections, Singapore studies, critique and expression, data literacy and digital literacy. These cover topics such as computational thinking and Singapore's relationships with Asean and the world.

**Amelia Teng**