

THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

Overview - Graduation from MCLA requires completing 120 credits of academic work. From these 120 credits, 28-40 are college-wide Core Curriculum courses. Students also complete a major. Elective credits, another one-third of the 120 total, may be used to meet the requirements of a second major or minors. Of the 120 credits required for graduation, at least 39 must be in upper-division courses (300-level or higher), and at least 45 credits must be earned in residence at the College. To graduate, students must achieve at least a 2.0 grade point average overall and a 2.0 in their major.

As part of its commitment to improve learning, the College periodically assesses its educational programs. All students are expected to participate in these assessments by the College or departments. Students may be required to prepare portfolios, take tests, write reflective essays, complete surveys, or perform tasks related to assessment. Faculty advisors can inform students about requirements related to departmental assessment programs.

Major Programs - Typically, one third or more of a student's college learning is devoted to a major. A major is a program of courses and learning experiences clustered in a sphere of intellectual inquiry, usually an academic discipline. The major calls upon students to develop proficiency in a particular field of knowledge. It increases the powers of reason and analysis through undertaking structured, cumulative study and using specialized methods of investigation particular to an academic discipline or profession.

The College offers fourteen major programs (see the following pages). Some majors include optional concentrations. All majors consist of a required sequence of courses, with some provisions for electives. Each academic major listed in this catalog includes a description of its particular learning goals.

Minor Programs - The College has many minor programs (see the following pages). A minor is a cluster of courses around an academic discipline, similar to a major but less intensive. Students often major in one field of academic study and minor in another. A minor promotes breadth in intellectual development and expands career possibilities.

Undeclared Student Program - A student may enroll at MCLA not knowing which major he or she wants to choose. For those who wish to explore various areas of academic knowledge and eventual careers, MCLA offers a special program of liberal studies for undeclared students. The Undeclared Student Program is designed to support individuals who wish to experiment with a variety of academic disciplines. By doing so, students may prepare to make informed choices when selecting a major. Each student is assigned an advisor who assists with academic planning. Undeclared students are encouraged to use MCLA's Career Services Office and SIGI PLUS (computerized career decision-making program) to enhance their academic and career choices. The Undeclared Student Program is administered by the Advising Services Office. For further information on this program, please contact the Office of Advising Services at (413) 662-5400.

All MCLA students must declare a major program of study by the time they attain junior status. Transfer students entering the College with junior status have one semester to declare a major. Students already in a major may become Undeclared if they wish to explore other majors. This is usually done within the first two years of college.

Electives - Electives constitute the third segment of a student's curriculum. These are courses that lie outside the credit-hour requirements of core curriculum and the major program. Electives may be taken within the major field to improve competency in the major; they may be taken to complete a second major; they may be used to meet the requirements of one or more minors; or they may be taken in a variety of fields to gain broader knowledge.

Other Components of the Undergraduate Curriculum

Honors Program - The Honors Program consists of courses and events specifically tailored to challenge highly motivated students. The Program promotes a strong bond among students and builds upon their shared interests. More than a set of interesting courses, the Honors Program is a community of scholars who mutually give and receive intellectual encouragement and support. The Honors Center provides member students and faculty their own lounge, library, computers, and seminar room. Honors courses may meet Core Curriculum and some departmental major requirements. To graduate with All-College Honors, students must complete at least six honors courses with a "B" or better and have an overall grade point average of 3.4 or better. Students who complete a capstone senior project may qualify to graduate as "Commonwealth Scholars". For more information about the Honors Program, consult the website (<http://www.mcla.edu/honr/>) or contact Professor David Langston, Honors Program Director, at (413) 662-5371 or dlangsto@mcla.edu.

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Honors Societies

Alpha Chi - Alpha Chi is a national society and a member of the Association of College Honor Societies. Its objective is the stimulation, development, and recognition of scholarship. Alpha Chi encourages students to continue their development through graduate work, awards prizes and stipends, supports scholarship programs, and conducts regional and national conventions where invited students share their research and creative work.

Alpha Lambda Delta - Alpha Lambda Delta is a national society that honors academic excellence during a student's first year in college. Its purpose is to encourage superior academic achievement among students in the first year to promote intelligent living and a high standard of learning and to assist students in recognizing and developing meaningful goals for their roles in society.

Alpha Psi Omega - Alpha Psi Omega is the national honor society in drama. To be eligible for membership, one must demonstrate expertise in all areas of theatre. Founded in 1925, Alpha Psi Omega is the largest honor society for theatre in the United States and Great Britain. Membership is recognized as professional work experience by major theatrical unions.

Alpha Sigma Lambda - Alpha Sigma Lambda is the national honor society for non-traditional students. Founded in 1946 to recognize adult students who accomplish academic excellence while facing competing interests of family, community, and work.

Delta Mu Delta - Delta Mu Delta is a national honor society for business administration majors, with membership in chapters at fully accredited private and public colleges and universities across the country. To be eligible for MCLA membership, students must 1) be majors in business administration; 2) have successfully completed 60 credits toward the baccalaureate degree with a minimum 3.25 cumulative average.

Lambda Iota Tau - Lambda Iota Tau is an international literature honors society. To belong, a student must major or minor in literature with at least six semester hours completed, achieve a 3.0 cumulative GPA or higher, and be in the top 35% of one's class.

Phi Alpha Theta - Phi Alpha Theta is a professional society for promoting the study of History through the encouragement of research, good teaching, publication, and the exchange of ideas among historians. It brings students, teachers, and writers of history together both intellectually and socially. The Alpha Beta Omega Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta honors students who have completed 12 credit hours of history courses and maintained a 3.0 cumulative average in their other collegiate studies.

Pi Lambda Theta - Pi Lambda Theta is the honor society for outstanding professionals in Education. Organized in 1910, Pi Lambda Theta provides leadership development for its members, promotes academic excellence at all educational levels, encourages an environment for professional growth, and fosters leadership for the profession. Membership in this select organization is open to undergraduate education majors who have achieved a 3.5 average, to individuals who have completed a master's degree or 30 hours of graduate credit, or to those who have completed a bachelor's degree and have five years of professional experience and have made distinguished contributions to education.

Psi Chi - Psi Chi is the National Honor Society in Psychology, founded in 1929 for the purposes of encouraging, stimulating, and maintaining excellence in scholarship, and advancing the science of psychology. Psi Chi is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies and is affiliated with both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society, the professional societies for psychologists in the United States.

Society of Physics Students - The Society of Physics Students (SPS) is a member society of APS, The American Physical Society, which is the primary professional society for those interested in Physics. A member society of SPS is $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$, the National Physics Honor Society. Induction into $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ is by election and based on grades and other achievement in the study of Physics. The MCLA chapter of SPS is open to all Physics majors and others who have an interest in Physics and the study of physical phenomena.

Independent Study - Most academic departments offer opportunities for independent study in areas not covered by their normal course offerings. The intent is to provide a valuable experience of independent research, analysis, and reporting that will enhance the student's grasp of a subject and develop the motivation, skills, and discipline of independent work.

Independent Study proposals must be approved *before or during the first week of each semester*. Proposals are developed jointly by the instructor and student and require approval of the Department Chairperson and the Dean of Academic Studies. Students are limited to a maximum of 12 credit hours of independent study during their four years of college; freshmen and, under most circumstances, sophomores are excluded from the option. The number of credits to be earned in any independent study course is

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determined by the instructor at the time the proposal is submitted and may vary from one to three credits, depending on the project objectives, difficulty, or complexity.

Study Abroad - As a member of the College Consortium for International Studies (CCIS), Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts offers students of all majors the opportunity to study throughout the world for a semester or an entire year. Programs are available in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Students must have a minimum 2.5 GPA in sixty credits before applying. For more information, contact Ms. Sharron Zavattaro, Director of Study Abroad at (413) 662-5332 or szavatta@mcla.edu.

Internships -The College recognizes the value of internship as an educational experience. To this end, each academic department may establish an internship program in accordance with College policy. Applicants must be matriculated juniors or seniors with a minimum GPA of 2.0. Some departments may have higher GPA requirements. Students may earn up to 15 credit hours of internship experience during their four years of college.

Students should consult with individual academic departments or Career Services for more information about internship programs.

Travel Courses - Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts offers interested students one- and two-week travel-study courses during January, March, or Summer. Previous trips have included travel to England, Mexico, Russia, and China. This year MCLA will offer a trip to Australia.. MCLA's travel courses are academic courses that also meet regularly on campus before and following travel. They include a normal academic experience of reading, research, and reporting. The courses are typically junior-level, carry three upper-level credits toward graduation, and are an excellent opportunity to combine travel and study. For more information, contact the Dean of Academic Affairs at (413) 662-5242 or mjoslin@mcla.edu.