

South Africa - IP Academic Bulletin 2015

Introduction

The IP Academic Bulletin (also known as the IP Bulletin) is the International Programs "catalog" and provides academic information about the program in South Africa. This document should be read in conjunction with the Academic Arrangements section in the Participant Guide.

General

In recent years, the academic institutions in South Africa have undergone a restructuring process. Many institutions have merged together to form new universities as part of a government plan for the further development and sustainability of South Africa's higher education system.

The International Program is affiliated with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)

Opened on January 1, 2005, NMMU was the result of a merger of three academic institutions and offers a range of academic, professional and technical programs. NMMU is the largest higher education institution in the Eastern and Southern Cape, with approximately 25 000 students enrolled at six different campuses or delivery sites. The faculties are spread across these six campuses and some programs may be available on more than one campus. The main campus of NMMU, situated in Summerstrand, Port Elizabeth, is where most CSU IP students will be enrolled. Based on academic offerings, some students may take courses at other NMMU campuses except for the Missionvale campus (due to its distance from the Summerstrand campus). The NMMU website is < <http://www.nmmu.ac.za> >.

Academic Calendar

The academic year in South Africa is divided into two semesters. As the seasons are reversed from those in the Northern Hemisphere, the first semester begins in February and runs until mid or late June. The second semester begins late July and ends in late November or early December.

At NMMU, each semester consists of at least 14 weeks of teaching, and has two terms which make up the semester as follows:

Semester 1 classes run from February to June
Semester 1 = Term 1 + Term 2

Semester 2 classes run from July to November
Semester 2 = Term 3 + Term 4

Students take a combination of full semester and term courses.

Academic Culture

Academic expectations are high at the South African universities, particularly at the upper levels. Instruction takes a more independent approach and academic expectations are less well defined than what students usually experience at CSU. Assigned readings and other class requirements may appear deceptively light. Lectures may be less structured than is usual at CSU; normally lectures do not repeat or review the reading material. Students are expected to set their own pace of mastering the subject matter and to incorporate readings and lectures into their schedule without detailed syllabi from instructors. Science courses include strong practical lab requirements and an advanced level of research technique skills.

Students should have good reading, note-taking, and creative-thinking habits. Written work is expected to demonstrate strong writing skills, critical interpretation of oral and written sources, and the clear and cogent expression of understanding of the subject matter. Students should not make assumptions about a lack of academic rigor based on the seeming lack of English language skills by some students in lower-level courses. Former students have reported that some classes require more homework and considerably more reading than their CSU courses. Top grades require evidence of independent learning, originality of insight, familiarity with additional reading, and exceptional formulation and expression of ideas.

Students must make a special effort to find out the requirements and adapt to the pedagogy of their classes and not assume that they will be the same as they are at CSU. Fourth-year courses ("Honours" courses) are taught at a substantially higher level than second- and third-year courses; consequently, the standard of student work is expected to be much higher and students are expected to have mastered academic research and writing skills.

The schedule for class meetings at universities in South Africa is somewhat different than at CSU. Most courses involve four 45-minute lectures each week for the duration of the semester, with additional 45-minute discussion classes (“tutorials”) held on a weekly or biweekly basis. Given the British background of higher education in South Africa, students may find that the relationship between students and instructors is more formal than what they have been accustomed to at CSU. IP participants are encouraged to introduce themselves to their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Advising

The South African system of higher education is similar to the British model in that undergraduate students enroll in a program of study that is relatively fixed and highly focused within the particular subject. Most degree programs take three years to complete. CSU students will enroll in courses within the approved field of study in which they are placed, following the same general plan as their South African counterparts.

Students should be aware that there is a distinction between first, second and third year courses (called “modules”). First year courses are usually introductory courses and taken by students in their first year of university study. Depending on course content, these are generally considered lower division courses with some exceptions. Most second year courses are considered equivalent to upper division courses with some exceptions depending on course content. Third year courses are more advanced and considered equivalent to upper division courses. American students will find that second and third year courses can require more prerequisites and students are expected to have met prerequisites if they wish to take the course.

IP students with junior standing should take first and second year courses while seniors should concentrate on taking second year courses, and possibly third year courses if they have the academic background to take the course. If in doubt about whether the course is a first, second or third year course, students should look at the course description or ask their advisor at NMMU during their academic advising sessions after arrival.

Course Codes, Course Levels and Unit Conversions

At NMMU, each course is given a unique course code number. The numbers represent the following levels (although there will be some exceptions depending on course content):

100 - 1999	first year (level) - lower division*
200 - 2999	second year (level) - upper division*
300 - 3999	third year (level) - upper division
400 - 4999	fourth year (level) / honors - advanced upper division**
500 - 5999	fifth year (level) / Masters - graduate**

*Some exceptions will apply depending on course content.

**Undergraduate students are not permitted to take courses numbered 400 and above unless approved by the OIP and NMMU as these courses are very advanced.

Below is a table of how NMMU credits convert to CSU units for semester long courses:

Unit Conversion Guidelines	
NMMU Credits	CSU Semester Units
4 - 5	1
6 - 9	2
10 - 14	3
15 - 19	4
20 - 25	5

To calculate the CSU semester unit value for year-long courses, divide the NMMU credit value by 2 and use the unit conversion table above. For example, if a year-long course has a total of 36 units, the course would be worth 4 CSU semester units each semester.

Students are required to take a minimum of 60 NMMU credits each semester which is approximately 15-16 CSU semester units.

Academic Program

All students, regardless of the curriculum they are following, are required to take:

- the equivalent of 15-16 CSU units each semester but no more than 18 units per semester;
- Two Xhosa (isiXhosa) language courses each semester. Students may also take Afrikaans instead of Xhosa for the year, or in the second semester. Note that only letter grades will be reported to CSU campuses. If a student withdraws from these language courses without authorization from the Office of International Programs, a grade of 'WU' will be reported to the student's home campus, which is equivalent to an 'F' in GPA calculations
- the equivalent of at least eight CSU semester units (usually two to three courses depending on the unit value of each course) in the study area for which they were selected each semester.
- CSL100 (Community Service Learning) in Semester 2 for two units of CSU academic credit. This course will be given lower division credit and will be graded.

Students will concentrate their studies in the approved area of study in which they are placed, following the same general plan as their South African counterparts.

Below is an example of the academic schedule for the year in South Africa at NMMU.

Semester 1	CSU Units
LXP 111 - Xhosa for Beginners (Term 1)	2
LXP 112 - Xhosa for Beginners (Term 2)	2
Courses in approved area of study	8
Elective course outside approved area of study	<u>3</u>
Minimum number of units required	15

Semester 2	CSU Units
LXP 113 - Xhosa for Beginners (Term 3)	2
LXP 114 - Xhosa for Beginners (Term 4)	2
CSL 100 - Community Service Learning	2
Courses in approved area of study	6
Elective course outside approved area of study	<u>3</u>
Minimum number of units required	15

Note that units above may vary depending on unit values of courses.

One course outside of the approved area of study may be taken each semester, if desired.

Any exceptions to the above schedule (e.g., dropping below 15 units, taking more than one elective course in a given semester, taking more than 18 units, etc.), must be approved by the Office of International Programs. To request an exception, email the Office of International Programs at: < IPacademics@calstate.edu >.

While in South Africa, IP students are required to take a minimum of 15 CSU units each semester (comparable to the host university's normal load for its own students, which is 60 NMMU credits). Serious financial aid and academic consequences may result if fewer than the minimum required units are undertaken.

Each semester, students are expected to take at courses within the approved area of study in which they are placed (as shown above), following the same general plan as their South African counterparts. The remaining elective units may be in an area outside of their approved area of study if desired.

All courses must be taken for a regular grade.

Most courses are offered during only one semester each year and some courses are not offered every year. Most departments issue or post syllabi, course outlines, reading lists, and assignments. Faculty members are generally available after-class consultation and during posted office hours.

Students are required to complete and sign a Registration Study List, provide information for Course Approval Requests, and otherwise follow instructions regarding academic procedures. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

Assessment and Grading

IP participants are required to meet all academic requirements as determined by the host university departments. They must take all examinations, meet all course requirements, and carry out all laboratory/field work. It is also important that students become familiar with the test-taking policies by reading these policies after arrival at their host university and again before taking exams. CSU students are expected to comply with the policies implemented by their host university as well as the OIP.

Grading systems used in South Africa differ from the system used at CSU, so students should not be shocked by the numerical marks that they receive on their papers and exams. Assignments and exams are given a percentage grade that in most cases is much lower than what would be expected according to the usual CSU scale for comparable work done at home. For example, excellent work, which would earn an A at CSU, may be given a grade of 75 percent. It is quite normal for average work to be marked 60-65, and marks in the 60s are considered indicative of good, solid work.

The numerical grades are converted into CSU equivalent letter grades by the OIP before being reported to student's home campus registrar.

Exams

Most South African universities place considerable emphasis on the final written exam given at the end of each semester course. Permission to take the final exam will require a certain percentage of class attendance and a certain level of achievement on assignments and classroom performance. Final exams are held in designated locations, not in the rooms where classes are held.

The university sets the exam schedule and the exam office publishes it by e-mailing it to all students. Students must take the initiative to check the draft and especially the final schedule of exams; students cannot expect anyone to tell them to do so. **The exam schedule is not flexible.** Exam dates cannot be changed to accommodate travel plans, so students must book their return tickets after the last day of the exam period since the exam schedule is only published a month before the exam commences. Arrangements for early exams are not permissible for any reason. **All exams must be taken at the host university.**

All final exams typically take the form of a three-hour exam in which students are given a set of questions and are required to write essay answers to three or four of them. Some courses use multiple-choice questions for at least part of the exam. The grade obtained on such an exam typically counts for about 60 percent of the final grade for the course; assignments and tests during the semester make up the remaining 40 percent. In other courses, continuous assessment is conducted throughout the semester and takes the place of final examinations.

IP participants are not permitted to retake exams once the academic year at their host university has ended (even though NMMU permits students to retake a final examination after the original examination period has taken place), Also refer to the Academic Arrangements section of the Participant Guide for South Africa.

Grading

Grading is done through a percentage system. Students can get a general idea of the grading scale and grade conversion by viewing the table below.

S. Africa	CSU Grade
75-100	A
70-74	B+
65-69	B
60-64	B-
57-59	C+
54-56	C
51-53	C-
50	D
00-49	F

Academic Reporting

In addition to units and grades, the OIP reports each course attempted to the student's campus by reporting the title of the course taken and the CSU home campus department in which the course is closely related. This method of reporting means that students will need to furnish course descriptions, syllabi, and other course materials to their advisors in order to apply for credit towards specific major, minor, or general education requirements. Students should expect to complete campus-based forms (petitions or course substitution requests) with the assistance of their advisor(s). If courses are not needed for specific degree requirements, then it is usually not necessary to complete any other forms.

Academic Reports for students attending the South African universities can take a minimum of six months to finalize, and sometimes longer. Graduating seniors should take this into account when planning for their graduation and submitting their graduation forms at their home campus.

Course Offerings

Students are advised to consult the university's website for course offerings, keeping in mind that CSU students are limited to the disciplines indicated below, and sometimes to courses for international students.

Admission to courses is subject to availability, approval of the host university and the particular department's prerequisites.

NMMU is in contact with IP students before their arrival regarding the courses they wish to take for their first semester. It is extremely important that students communicate their selection of courses to NMMU to ensure that courses are available and that they meet course prerequisites.

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

In order to search for courses to take at NMMU using their website, you will need to understand the academic terminology used by universities in South Africa, which will be used in the rest of this section.

CSU Terminology	S. African Terminology
bulletin or catalog	prospectus
course	module
degree	qualification
academic division	faculty
major or program of study	course
schedule of classes	timetable

For 2014, CSU students were admitted to study in one of the following areas listed in the left column of the table below. The right column shows the corresponding faculty at NMMU in which students can take modules in their area of study (subject to the conditions stated under "Course Offerings").

Areas of study	Relevant modules can be found in the following faculties (course prefix codes are also listed below)
African Studies	Students can look at various departments to find relevant courses.
Anthropology	Faculty of Arts (SA)
Biology (including Marine Biology and Zoology)	Faculty of Sciences (BC, BCH, BM, BOT, ZOO)
Business and Economics	Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences Faculty of Arts (EB, EBM, EZA, EZB, EZC, EZD, EZE, EZZ)
Computer Science	Faculty of Science, School of Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics and Statistics (WRA, WRC, WRF, WRI, WRU)
Engineering	Faculty of Engineering, The Built Environment & Information Technology, School of Engineering
English and Literature	Faculty of Arts, Department of Literature and Language (LA, LLE)
Environmental Science (including Geography)	Faculty of Sciences (GEN, GEO, GGL, ZOO)
History	Faculty of Arts (SSH)
Kinesiology	Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Human Movement Science (BAS, BSR, HMS)
Mathematics	Faculty of Science, School of Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics and Statistics (MATH)
Music	Faculty of Arts, School of Music, Art and Design, Department of Music (MFP, MGA, MCC, MKS, MSP, MTS)

Philosophy	Faculty of Arts, School of Language, Media and Culture, Department of Journalism, Media and Philosophy (SF)
Photography	Faculty of Arts, School of Music, Art and Design, Department of Art and Design Introductory Studies (KDS, KTD)
Political Science	Faculty of Arts (SLP)
Physics	Faculty of Science, School of Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics and Statistics (F)
Psychology	Faculty of Health Sciences (SP)
Sociology	Faculty of Arts (SS, SSA, SSS)

Module information can be found in a booklet known as a “prospectus.” Each academic division (or “faculty”) publishes a prospectus which can be found in the NMMU website.

Note that students should only select modules offered at the Summerstrand (South) Campus except in some instances when this is not possible and modules in the student’s area of study is not available at the Summerstrand Campus.

Business students: There are numerous codes in the prospectus for Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences so you will have to scroll through the entire section to search for appropriate modules for your business degree.

- Click on link <http://www.nmmu-international.com>
- At the bottom of the webpage, click on Programmes. Then choose the desired Faculty (see above) and click on the desired Faculty or School, e.g., School of Governmental and Social Sciences.
- Each school can have numerous departments. Click on the department that you wish to take modules from, e.g., Department of Sociology and Anthropology.
- A list of degrees offered by each department is then listed on the left hand side of the webpage. Click on the BA degree that relates to modules for the program that you have been selected to study.
- After you have clicked on the degree, scroll down to the bottom of the webpage. Under Curriculum Details, click on the Study Code link, e.g., Study Code13300.
- A pop-up webpage with all the modules offered under the specific degree will appear.
- The modules are listed by semester and level. Click on the module to get a description of the module, to find out at which campus it is offered, and the timetable. Select only modules offered at the Summerstrand (South) Campus.

If you are unable to find modules, please contact Ms. Monalisa Ndwayana at < Monalisa.Ndwayana@nmmu.ac.za >.

Note: Module information for 2014 (prospectus and timetables) was not available at the time that this publication was printed. Students are advised to check the NMMU website periodically for updates.