
NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Free online IMAS course passes 10 000 student mark

IMAS is celebrating a milestone for its free online course about Marine and Antarctic Science, with more than 10 000 people around the world enrolling over the last two years.

The Marine and Antarctic Science MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) went live in December 2013 through Open2Study, an online portal backed by Open Universities Australia.

IMAS Professor Craig Johnson, who organised and co-presents the MOOC, said the course covers a wide range of topics, including marine life and food webs, ecosystems such as the Antarctic and kelp forests, climate change, the impact of human activities like fishing, and marine stewardship.

“The MOOC is a great introduction to marine and Antarctic science and we’re delighted that so many people in Australia and around the world have taken an interest,” Professor Johnson said.

“Just over one-third of the MOOC’s students have been Australian but there has also been strong interest from the United States, UK, India, Spain and New Zealand.

“More than 60% of those taking part have been female, and while people aged from 18-34 account for more than half of the uptake we’re also pleased to be making a contribution to lifelong learning, with more than 10% of those interested aged 55 and over.

“The course takes four weeks to complete and is suitable for a wide range of people – from potential students and future scientists to people who are just curious to learn more about our oceans.

“We’ve had wonderful positive feedback from many of the 10 000 people who’ve enrolled, with a comparatively high success rate for MOOCs resulting in 2300 students completing all of the assessments required to receive a Certificate of Achievement.”

The online course is taught through a series of online videos, quizzes and assessments, and was written and presented by Professor Johnson and Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas from the Australian Antarctic Division and the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre.

The IMAS MOOC builds on the success of the University’s Understanding Dementia MOOC, provided by the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre.

As with the dementia course, IMAS is exploring the option of allowing those who complete the MOOC in future to gain credit towards a Bachelor or Associate Degree.

The IMAS MOOC starts every four weeks, with the next course commencing 21 March, and can be found at: <https://www.open2study.com/courses/marine-and-antarctic-science>

IMAS Media Contact: Andrew Rhodes (03) 6226 6683 or 0417 239 537, email: ajrhodes@utas.edu.au

Information released by:

Communications and Media Office, University of Tasmania

Phone: 61 3 6226 2124

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au