Australian National University

ANU Cantonese Language Program

Ranked

#1

ANU is ranked #1 in 12 Academic Disciplines in Australia

*QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025

Why study Cantonese ?

Cantonese is a Chinese variety with over 83 million speakers globally. It is a dominant vernacular in Guangdong and part of Guangxi Province (mainland China), and the de facto official language of Hong Kong and Macau.

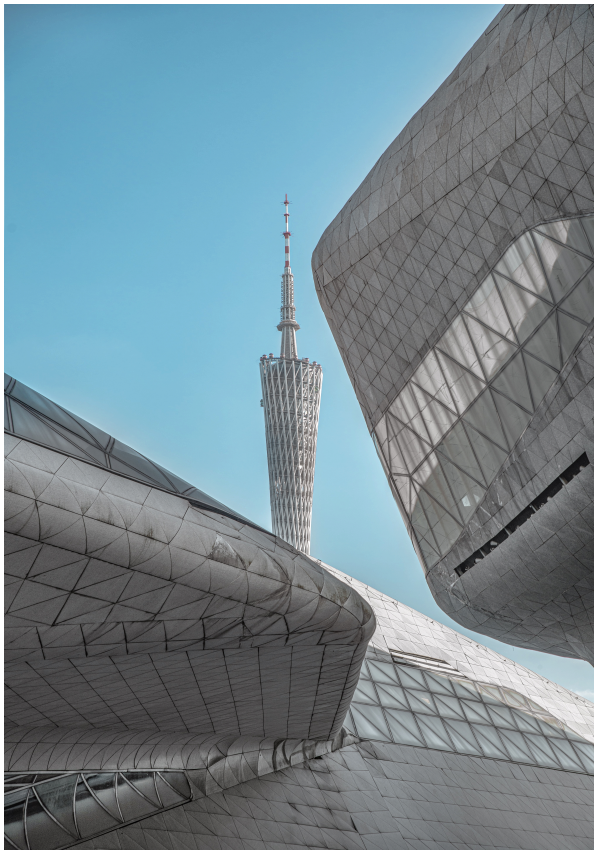
Historically, Cantonese was the ethnolect of the first Chinese immigrants and it continues to be the main community/heritage language of the Chinese diaspora worldwide. Cantonese has had a lasting cultural influence across Asia and beyond, as exemplified by Hong Kong's vibrant film, television, and music industries and by the heritage cultural products and traditions inherited by the Chinese diaspora worldwide. Cantonese preserves abundant linguistic relics of Classical Chinese and retains phonological and lexical features often lost in other Chinese varieties, making it particularly valuable for historical and linguistic studies.

Studying Cantonese is beneficial for students of various disciplines including, but not limited to, business and commerce, international relations, social science, history, linguistics, cultural studies and education.

"I am impressed by how Cantonese can be somewhat similar to Mandarin and yet they have their own unique features in various aspects."

— JING ROU LAI, BACHELOR OF COMMERCE

School of Culture, History and Language
ANU College of Asia and the Pacific



Study Cantonese at ANU

ANU is the only university in Australia that offers Cantonese as a credited language course. The Cantonese program is designed to develop communication skills with a particular focus on proficiency in speaking and listening. The program supports the development of bilingual competency in both Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese - an increasingly valuable asset in a globalised world.

Language instruction is integrated with cultural learning through a culturally contextualised approach. Students are encouraged to apply their language skills in discussions on key cultural and social issues relevant to Cantonese-speaking societies. Completion of Cantonese courses can partially fulfil the requirements for a major or a minor in the Chinese language.

- ANU students: Choose to study Cantonese as an elective or part of a minor (24 units / 4 courses) as part of your ANU degree.
- Non-Award: Enrol in individual courses for professional development or personal interest without pursuing a full degree.
- Advanced offerings: Courses on language studies: Cantonese 1, Cantonese 2 and Advanced Chinese Language courses.

Students with prior language experience must take a Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) for proper level placement. For details, see the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific (CAP) language proficiency assessment site.

Study Cantonese language and culture at the Australian National University.

Further Information

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