

Fee-free entry to post-secondary marine studies

A free online course on tropical coastal ecosystems is now open to anyone with internet access and high school science knowledge.



Credit: scienceimage/Robert Kerton

The University of Queensland's world-leading marine and ecology experts will offer the course from 28 April 2014 through [edX](#), a world-leading consortium of [massive open online courses \(MOOCs\)](#).

UQ Global Change Institute Director Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg said [the seven-week course](#) would explore challenges facing tropical coastal ecosystems and solutions needed for their preservation.

‘Offering this course is a great opportunity as coastal ecosystems are vital to the livelihoods of over 500 million people worldwide,’ he said.

‘We hope that we can assist countries all over the world to understand and preserve these critically important ecosystems.

‘We know the course will be of interest to science students and anyone who dives or loves marine environments, but we’re hoping that resource managers and people who build their livelihoods from the oceans will enrol – and be empowered with a greater understanding of how the environment can be protected,’ he said.

Online video lectures presented by a line-up of field experts will cover issues such as overfishing, coastal pollution, ocean warming and acidification.

Course participants can become citizen scientists on virtual ecology projects.

‘The course is ideal for professionals involved in coastal conservation issues, as well as the interested public, divers and hobbyists,’ Professor Hoegh-Guldberg said.

Participants can choose to work through all material, discussion and assessment to earn a certificate of completion, or can simply follow some or all of the course material and complete any tasks they choose.

Professor Hoegh-Guldberg said the emergence of MOOCs marked a new era for education.

‘These courses allow millions of people who for various reasons are excluded from quality education, access to education from some of the finest institutions the world has to offer,’ he said.

UQ is one of two Australian universities in the not-for-profit edX enterprise, founded by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

You can register for the course [here](#).

Source: UQ Global Change Institute

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC14018>