

‘Uni has treated me like an ATM’: Sophia’s dreams crushed after course cuts

[smh.com.au/politics/nsw/uni-has-treated-me-like-an-atm-sophia-s-dreams-crushed-after-course-cuts-20250815-p5mncm.html](https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/uni-has-treated-me-like-an-atm-sophia-s-dreams-crushed-after-course-cuts-20250815-p5mncm.html)

Emily Kowal

August 25, 2025



Mullard is enrolled in a bachelor of music at Macquarie but has been taking extra units to be eligible to enrol in a double degree, taking in a bachelor of media and communications majoring in radio, podcasting and audio media.

Despite paying thousands of dollars for the prerequisite units and working over the summer holidays, she was told by lecturers that the radio course was “highly unlikely” to run next year.

“I’m 19 years old and so completely lost,” she says. “This university has treated me like an ATM, and I am so tired of fighting for my future. There is no communication with the university. Even with the double degree cuts last year, I don’t know anyone who knew about those. The university won’t communicate or tell anyone what is happening with our courses.”

Macquarie provided a list of courses and majors set to be suspended and said in a statement: “The university has communicated with students regarding the proposed changes. We are committed to keeping our students informed and will provide further

updates as the academic change proposal, which is related to curriculum changes, progresses.”

Macquarie University majors and courses no longer on offer from 2026

- Bachelor of music
- Bachelor of archaeology
- Bachelor of ancient history (from 2026, new students will be able to study ancient history and archaeology as part of the new bachelor of history)

Majors

- Criminology – note: the university is offering a new bachelor of criminology
- Education studies
- Gender studies
- Geography
- International relations – new international relations and politics major to be developed for 2027
- Music studies
- Performing arts and entertainment studies – new creative industries major to be developed for 2027
- Politics – new international relations and politics major to be developed for 2027
- Radio, podcasting and audio media
- Climate, environment and society
- Work, life and technology

While some universities have named degrees to be cut, students say it is difficult to obtain a clear answer on how majors and units within degrees will be affected.

Labor MLC Dr Sarah Kaine last week announced a parliamentary inquiry into university governance. She said students and staff who contacted her were “very, very concerned about what is going to happen in the future”.



Labor's Dr Sarah Kaine has announced a NSW parliamentary inquiry into university governance.

Credit: Janie Barrett

“Largely they feel like they have been kept in the dark ... It’s been really difficult to get information,” Kaine said. “There should not be this opaque governance of universities. These are public institutions, publicly funded. They’re for the public good. These are not, you know, secret societies run for the benefit of a corporate clique.”

Kaine said she would be “distressed but not surprised” if more universities slashed courses. “I am not sure if we are getting the whole story,” she said. “It’s seeping out quietly, under the radar in some cases.”

Macquarie announced [sweeping curriculum and job cuts in June](#), primarily in the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Science and Engineering, in response to “challenges the higher education sector is facing”.

From 2026, bachelor degrees in music, archaeology and ancient history will not be offered to new enrolments. New students will be able to study ancient history and archaeology as part of a new bachelor of history.

But students and teachers fear there will be more cuts. It has caused a constant state of stress, said a staff member at Macquarie, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to protect their employment.

“They refused to give staff a timeline [to the cuts] or access to the maths behind the decisions. It’s confusing and infuriating. On top of that, many of us are afraid we are about to lose our jobs,” they said.

Internal Macquarie University documents reveal the Faculty of Arts expects further course cuts, stating: “It is anticipated the curriculum catalogue and thus teaching demands will be reduced from 2026 onwards.”

Macquarie University PhD student Chaya Kasif, a representative for ancient history and archaeology postgraduate students, said at least 50 postgraduate research student supervisors’ jobs were at risk in the department.



Chaya Kasif is doing a PhD in ancient history and language, but her degree is now at risk after Macquarie University announced staff cuts. *Credit: Jessica Hromas*

“There is widespread anxiety among all higher degree research students,” she said. “No final decision has been made, so no one is telling us anything. It’s making us feel hopeless.”

The University of Newcastle confirmed it would cut 12 programs but declined to offer details on which degree units and majors would go, noting that “indicating which schools or colleges may be affected could create unnecessary angst and assumptions without context”.

The university’s senior deputy vice chancellor Belinda Tynan said the university “regularly reviews its academic portfolio to ensure programs remain aligned with student demand, ongoing sustainability and the university’s long-term strategic priorities” and maintained “all current students enrolled in these programs will be fully supported to complete their studies”.

At UTS, which suspended new enrolments for 120 of its courses, students say the situation is dire.

Student Mikeli Walker, part of the Faculty of Design and Society, which has borne the brunt of cuts, said the announcement caught many off guard.

“People are disillusioned. There’s no transparency,” she said, revealing she “grieves for the university she fell in love with at open day in high school”.

A UTS spokesperson said “courses that have been temporarily suspended for review were identified based on low student demand over time. We want to make sure our curriculum is relevant to what students and employers want and need.”

Earlier this month, the University of Wollongong updated its restructuring plan to cut between 85 and 118 positions – a reduction from the 155 to 185 estimated in March.

The university said it was “doing a lot of work to transform our curricula, giving students increased flexibility, expanding pathways into university and focusing on curriculum innovation, expansion and new location options to meet community needs”.