

# **CODE OF PRACTICE**

## **Research Postgraduate Studies**

**July 2023**

**Graduate School**  
**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is a bilingual (Chinese and English) and multicultural institution of higher learning founded in 1963. As a first-class comprehensive research university with both a local and an international outlook, we aim at cultivating quality higher degree graduates to serve the increasingly sophisticated needs of society and making contributions to the pool of human knowledge through research. The majority of our staff teaching on our 134-hectare scenic campus is bilingual and recruited from all over the world. We hold fast to our fundamental goal of aiming for excellence in our intellectual pursuits and strive to achieve high programme quality.

Information and figures given in this *Code of Practice* are valid as of September 2022, unless otherwise specified. The Graduate School reserves the right to make changes without prior notice if circumstances so require.

Graduate School

Address: 7th Floor, Yasumoto International Academic Park  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong

Website: [www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk](http://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk)

Enquiry: [https://www.gradsch.cuhk.edu.hk/helpdesk/enquiry\\_form.aspx](https://www.gradsch.cuhk.edu.hk/helpdesk/enquiry_form.aspx)

# Code of Practice

## Research Postgraduate Studies

This *Code of Practice* sets out the University's guidelines and references for research postgraduate (RPg) studies, i.e., studies leading to the degrees of Ph.D., D.Mus., M.Phil., M.Mus. and M.F.A. It offers practical advice and good practice guidance on procedures handling academic and student matters for RPg students, Supervisors and personnel supporting RPg programmes.

The *Code of Practice* should be read in conjunction with:

- University regulations, in particular the *General Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies*;
- *Guidelines and Procedures for Thesis Submission/Assessment for Research Postgraduate and Taught Doctoral Programmes*;
- *General Information for Thesis Preparation and Submission – A Guide for Research Postgraduate and Taught Doctoral Students*;
- the latest version of the *Postgraduate Student Handbook*; and
- any other guidelines provided by the Graduate School and the relevant Graduate Divisions, Departments and Faculties.

RPg students must familiarise themselves with this *Code of Practice* and the above documents. In particular, the *General Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies* and the *General Information for Thesis Preparation and Submission – A Guide for Research Postgraduate and Taught Doctoral Students* contain detailed information on course load, academic probation, leave of absence, thesis related matters, graduation assessment, etc. These documents can be downloaded from the Graduate School website ([www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk](http://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk)).

The *Code of Practice* is applicable to all current RPg students, unless otherwise specified and is updated annually. Students and personnel concerned are highly recommended to check the latest version of the online *Code of Practice* for any amendments and changes.

While the *Code of Practice* provides the general guidelines on studies at CUHK, students and staff will find it useful to refer to circulars, notices, prescribed forms and notes for applicants, etc., for purposes of their day-to-day academic activities. The Graduate School has prepared a collection of such useful information and documents on its website for easy reference or use by students and staff. Students are advised to visit the Graduate School website regularly to keep themselves well-informed of any latest announcements and activities.

<b><u>Contents</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>1. <u>Role of Stakeholders</u></b>	
1.1 Stakeholders and governance structure	6
1.2 Interaction between student and Supervisor	7
1.3 Graduate Panel	9
<b>2. <u>Basic Information on Programmes and Courses</u></b>	
2.1 Research postgraduate programmes	10
2.2 M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes	10
2.3 Strategic goal statement for research postgraduate programmes	11
2.4 Graduate attributes of research postgraduate programmes	11
2.5 Modes of study	12
2.6 Jointly supervised research postgraduate programmes	12
2.7 Courses	13
2.8 Course code and sequence	13
2.9 Cross-institutional course sharing	14
<b>3. <u>Admissions</u></b>	
3.1 Admission process	15
3.2 Entrance requirements	15
3.3 Quality of students admitted to research postgraduate programmes	15
<b>4. <u>Registration/Residence Requirements/Leave of Absence</u></b>	
4.1 Orientation	17
4.2 Student registration	17
4.3 Course selection	17
4.4 Residence requirements	18
4.5 Normative and maximum study periods	19
4.6 Shortening of normative study period	19
4.7 Programme change or candidature transfer	20
4.8 Leave of absence	22
4.9 Student visa	23
4.10 Employment	24
<b>5. <u>Supervisors</u></b>	
5.1 Assignment of Supervisors	25
5.2 Eligibility requirements of a Supervisor	25
5.3 Induction of new Supervisors	26
<b>6. <u>Progress towards Graduation</u></b>	
6.1 Graduation requirements	27
6.2 Course requirements	27
6.3 Postgraduate students taking undergraduate courses	28
6.4 Research thesis and oral examination	28
6.5 Candidature for doctoral degree	28

<b><u>Contents</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
6.6 Candidacy Examination and Qualifying Examination	29
6.7 Improving Postgraduate Learning	29
6.8 Research Ethics Training	30
6.9 Other requirements	30
6.10 Course and unit exemptions	30
6.11 Study Plan and Progress Report for RPg Studies	31
6.12 Departmental duties and teaching assistance	31
6.13 Language policy	31
<b>7. <u>Assessment and Examination</u></b>	
7.1 Assessment of academic performance	33
7.2 Course grades	33
7.3 Assessment Panel	34
7.4 Examination administration	34
7.5 Grade appeal process	35
7.6 Unsatisfactory performance	35
<b>8. <u>Thesis</u></b>	
8.1 Preparation for research and thesis writing	36
8.2 Research ethics	36
8.3 Procedures	36
8.4 Declaration of intention to submit thesis/portfolio	38
8.5 Thesis Assessment Committee	39
8.6 Thesis proposal and defence of proposal	40
8.7 Submission of thesis/portfolio	40
8.8 Oral examination	41
8.9 Written examination	42
8.10 Thesis/Portfolio grades and follow-up actions	42
8.11 Re-submission	43
8.12 Deferral of submission of thesis/portfolio	43
8.13 Submission of final version of thesis/portfolio	43
8.14 Copyright of theses/portfolio	43
8.15 Confidentiality of thesis/portfolio	44
<b>9. <u>Financial Assistance and Fees</u></b>	
9.1 Postgraduate Studentship	45
9.2 Grants for academic travel and Global Scholarship	46
9.3 Other financial assistance and scholarships	47
9.4 Student fees	47
9.5 Payment schedule of tuition fee	48
<b>10. <u>Academic Honesty and Disciplinary Action</u></b>	
10.1 Academic honesty	49
10.2 Infringement of copyright	49
10.3 Graduate School Disciplinary Committee	50

<b><u>Contents</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>11. <u>Course Evaluation and Feedback</u></b>	
11.1 Course and Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire	51
11.2 Feedback via Progress Report for RPg Studies	51
11.3 Exit survey (Survey on Research Postgraduate Programmes)	51
<b>12. <u>Credentials</u></b>	
12.1 Academic results	52
12.2 Transcripts	52
12.3 Letter of Certification	52
12.4 Report on Curriculum Details	52
12.5 Graduate Certificate	53
12.6 Replacement of Graduate Certificate	53
12.7 Certified true copy of the Graduate Certificate	53
<b>13. <u>Appeals and Complaints</u></b>	
13.1 Complaint process	54
13.2 Policy against sexual harassment	54
13.3 Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance	55
13.4 Whistleblowing Policy	56
<b>14. <u>Services and Support for Students</u></b>	
14.1 Chinese University Student Information System (CUSIS)	57
14.2 Graduate School Platform	57
14.3 Student Advisory System	57
14.4 University Library	58
14.5 Language training	58
14.6 Independent Learning Centre	58
14.7 Information Technology Services Centre	59
14.8 Student services and student activities	59
14.9 Student hostels	59
14.10 Student association	60
14.11 University Health Service	60
14.12 Other cultural/recreational/sports facilities and services	60
14.13 Safety and environmental issues	61
<b>Sources of information contained in this Code of Practice</b>	<b>62</b>

# 1. Role of Stakeholders

## 1.1 Stakeholders and governance structure

The roles of various RPg stakeholders and their relationships under the prevailing governance structure are described briefly below.

An RPg **student** is one who has been admitted to a programme of studies to pursue a higher degree by research and has registered with the Graduate School. He/She must take timely actions to maintain his/her student status by observing relevant rules and regulations, enrolling for course(s), achieving satisfactory academic performance and progress, and paying fees, according to respective schedules.

An RPg student is expected to be a responsible member of the University community. He/She has the right to take full advantage of the teaching and learning facilities and support provided by the University, and the obligation to take ultimate responsibility of any of his/her academic output.

Each RPg student is assigned a **Supervisor** at the time of admission or later on when the student's field of research is confirmed. A **Co-supervisor** can also be appointed for academic or administrative reasons.

The Supervisor/Co-supervisor is a full-time academic staff of a **Graduate Division** of a specific discipline. Each Graduate Division structurally forms part of a **Faculty**. The **Board of the Faculty** coordinates the activities of the Departments within the Faculty and considers and deals with the recommendations of the Departments regarding the content of courses for the degree(s) and on the details of syllabuses. A **Graduate Panel** is set up for each Graduate Division to take care of matters of postgraduate studies. The roles of a Graduate Panel are discussed below.

A **Thesis Assessment Committee** is set up for each RPg student. The Thesis Assessment Committee acts independently according to a set of well-defined procedures, and makes recommendations to the Graduate School on the final grade of a student's thesis or on other thesis assessment matters regarding the student concerned.

The **Graduate School** coordinates all postgraduate programmes leading to higher degrees and postgraduate diplomas/certificates. The Head of a Graduate Division reports to the Dean of the Graduate School and the Department Chairperson for operations of his/her Graduate Division's postgraduate programmes. He/she also bears the responsibility to ensure compliance of all RPg programmes offered by the Graduate Division with University rules and policies.

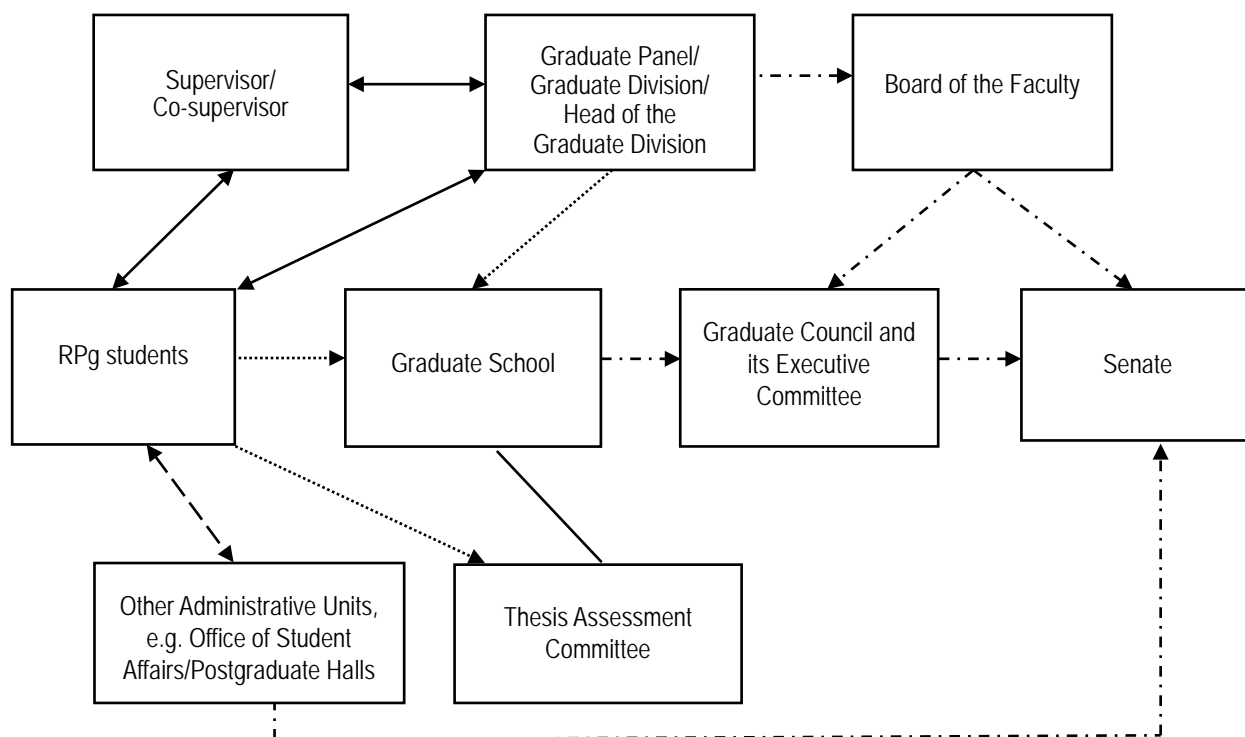
The Graduate School also provides administrative support to the **Graduate Council and its Executive Committee**. The powers and duties of the Graduate Council are (a) to advise the Senate on all graduate programmes of studies; (b) to coordinate the activities of the Graduate Divisions within the Graduate School; and (c) to consider and deal with the recommendations of the various Graduate Divisions on the content of courses and on the details of syllabuses.

The **Senate** is in control of and regulates (a) instruction, education and research; (b) the conducting of

examinations for students; and (c) the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions of the University.

RPg students are also supported by various CUHK service units, such as the **Postgraduate Halls** and **Office of Student Affairs (OSA)**.

The following diagram describes in general the relationships and interactions among various stakeholders.



Key to relationships in general:

- Teaching, learning and academic advice
- - - - - Administrative governance and policies
- ..... Progress and assessment
- . - . - Non-academic advice, services and support

Among these stakeholders, the relationships and interactions between a student and his/her Supervisor are of prime importance in RPg studies. Their roles and that of the Graduate Panel are described in more detail in the following sections.

**1.2 Interaction between student and Supervisor**

The student-Supervisor relation is the crux of high-quality postgraduate student management. Yet the situation for each student is unique, Supervisors tend to adopt a great variety of supervising styles, and there are differences in culture from discipline to discipline.

While individuality of each student-Supervisor relation should be fully respected, there are some general



principles that students and Supervisors could observe in order to make the most out of the relationship.

For an RPg student:

- (a) The responsibility of producing a quality thesis lies ultimately with the student, not the Supervisor.
- (b) Since professors have to manage many tasks simultaneously in addition to supervising research students, it is advisable for a student to take the initiative in establishing an effective and practical work plan with his/her Supervisor. Normally, this implies requesting regular meetings with the Supervisor, providing timely and accurate updates to the Supervisor on ongoing research progress, and seeking feedback and advice on a regular basis.
- (c) A good student-Supervisor relation is based on mutual respect and trust. Thus, the academic judgment and supervisory recommendations of the Supervisor should be duly respected. Following this guideline does not imply critical reasoning and objectivity is to be encroached upon, but rather that in case of academic disagreement, frank and respectful communication is always the best approach to take. In the rare instance of serious and prolonged disagreement with one's Supervisor, a student could bring the matter to the attention of the Head of the Graduate Division or the Department Chairperson for resolution.
- (d) It is important for a student to understand the expectations of his/her Supervisor. The annual research progress report is set up for this purpose. Conversely, it is also important to know the role and responsibilities of a Supervisor as well as his/her limitation. A student should always remember that while a Supervisor is expected to provide guidance and advice on research direction, no one can guarantee success in any meaningful research endeavour. In addition, while a Supervisor is expected to offer advice during the thesis writing process, there is no responsibility for the Supervisor to edit or rewrite a thesis for the student. It is the obligation of a student to submit a well-edited thesis for examination and there should be enough lead time before the deadline to allow for comments and further revision if necessary.

For a Supervisor:

- (a) A research student is not a research assistant. Provision of education to the student should be the primary goal.
- (b) As it takes a significant amount of time to supervise a research student, there is a limit on the number of RPg students that a Supervisor may supervise at any one time. A Co-supervisor can offer additional support and input to the students and is encouraged. If a Supervisor is planning to take a leave of absence, a Co-supervisor must be appointed to ensure provision of continuous supervision.
- (c) A student-Supervisor relation based on mutual respect and trust is more efficient and effective. In particular, the rights of the student should be fully recognised and protected, including rights protected under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and all the ordinances under the purview of the Equal Opportunities Commission in Hong Kong.

- (d) A Supervisor should only assign tasks to research students that are directly related to students' research studies. Duty assignments related to postgraduate studentship (PGS) are limited to 12 hours per week on average. Under no circumstances should a student be asked to perform duties unrelated to the University. Beware of issues that may give rise to a conflict of interest.
- (e) Communicate expectations clearly to the students. Review their progress frequently and do provide timely feedback and advice. Document any unsatisfactory performance of students in detail. The concerned student should be given sufficient warnings so that he/she can take necessary remedial actions.
- (f) As the staff in frequent contact with students, a Supervisor is expected to provide invaluable support to the students' overall educational experience at the University. Supervisors can offer advice to students facing difficulties in their adjustment to the university life or sound early warning signals for potential problem cases. A graduating student on the other hand can benefit tremendously from the first-hand knowledge and connections availed by the Supervisor.

### **1.3 Graduate Panel**

A Graduate Panel is set up for each Graduate Division with the Graduate Division Head as the Chairperson and at least two other members to be nominated by the Graduate Division Head. Its responsibility is to endorse or decide on:

- the courses of study to be offered;
- the research field for each student;
- the Supervisor/Co-supervisor for each student;
- the selection of applicants for admission; and
- any other matters related to the Graduate Division.

Regarding the research field and supervision, the Graduate Panel acts as follows:

- (a) Each student selects his/her intended field of studies within his/her Graduate Division at the time of application.
- (b) The appointment of Supervisors for each student, if possible, is made as soon as the student is admitted. If this appointment is not made at that time, the Graduate Division may arrange to have an advisor or the Graduate Division Head to serve as temporary Supervisor for the student.
- (c) The student may inform the Graduate Panel of his/her preference for Supervisor; but the final decision rests with the Graduate Panel.
- (d) A Supervisory Committee may be set up for each student consisting of one to three persons, including the Supervisor, the Graduate Division Head and/or another teacher in the Graduate Division.

## 2. Basic Information on Programmes and Courses

### 2.1 Research postgraduate programmes

The Graduate School offers through 60 Graduate Divisions a total of 97 research programmes as of September 2022, namely those examined by scrutiny of an extended research dissertation and an oral examination and are leading to the degrees of Ph.D., D.Mus., M.Phil., M.Mus. and M.F.A, with details below:

Doctoral programmes	Ph.D.	25
	D.Mus.	1
Master's programmes	M.Phil.	26
	M.F.A.	1
	M.Mus.	1
"Articulated" M.Phil.-Ph.D. programmes		43
Total		97

New programmes may be proposed by Graduate Divisions/Faculties or initiated by the University in accordance with its strategic development. Such initiative may be triggered by intellectual pursuits, international and societal developments, academic advancement, technological breakthrough or available resources. Graduate Divisions may also propose changes to existing programmes/courses to refresh or revitalise them. There are well-defined guidelines and procedures and a schedule for submission of programme proposals which are available on the Graduate School website.

### 2.2 M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes

Any Graduate Division that has an M.Phil. and a Ph.D. programme may choose to convert to the articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes. New programmes can be created directly in this mode.

The framework of articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes introduces more flexibility in the entry requirement for Ph.D. programmes, and at the same time imposes formal candidacy requirements. It also brings more uniformity in the programme structure and requirements in order to enhance quality assurance.

Students applying for admission to articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes should state their intention to pursue either an M.Phil. or a Ph.D. The minimum requirement for admission to an articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programme is the same as that for an M.Phil. Programme. Graduate Divisions will steer applicants into the appropriate stream, according to their academic qualification, research ability, potential and interest.

More information about the articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programme can be found in Section 6 of this document.

### **2.3 Strategic goal statement for research postgraduate programmes**

As a comprehensive research university, the University places special importance on the RPg programmes offered through different Graduate Divisions. RPg programmes should be pursued with the following strategic objectives:

- (a) RPg programmes aim to deliver scholarly values at the quality level of a first-class university. They should be fully in line with the strategic goals of the University as well as the Faculty and Department.
- (b) RPg programmes have the objective to train first-class researchers who attain national and international leadership positions in their respective fields and who advance scholarly knowledge with the ultimate goal to serve the society.
- (c) RPg programmes should serve as a two-way link between the University and society. They are expected to incorporate knowledge gained through research conducted at the University and at other places. At the same time, they should disseminate knowledge developed and advanced at the University so as to improve the reputation and the standing of the University locally, regionally and internationally.

Policies and plans for RPg programmes should be formulated with these objectives in mind.

### **2.4 Graduate attributes of research postgraduate programmes**

The University has clear expectations of the attributes of its graduates. The RPg programmes aim to educate researchers to embark on careers that will allow them to become world leaders in their fields, working as university professors, principal investigators in research institutes, senior managers in enterprises, or experts in other professions related to the pursuit and application of knowledge.

Doctoral degree graduates are expected to have acquired in-depth knowledge in a number of major areas of an academic discipline while maintaining a broad understanding of other related fields. They should have accumulated enough educational experience and background learning to be capable of performing independent research to advance scholarship, with global standards. In particular, they should have the ability to identify research trends and opportunities, venture into new research areas when appropriate, define long-term research objectives, formulate original research problems, and originate and develop solution methodologies. They should be capable of producing research output at a level that can lead to publications in high-ranking scholastic venues, or to novel applications in relevant industrial, commercial, or other public sectors, or to other forms of useful knowledge transfer to society. They should have gained proficiency in techniques of knowledge dissemination through presentation and writing and some teaching experiences through student tutoring.

Master's degree graduates are expected to have acquired advanced knowledge in major areas of an academic discipline while maintaining a broad understanding of other related fields. They should have gained enough background knowledge to enable them to perform research with minimal supervision. In particular, they should have the ability to formulate individual research tasks and develop solution methodologies under minimal supervision. They should also be capable of producing original,

innovative research output, some of which may lead to publication in well-respected scholastic venues. They should have gained proficiency in techniques of knowledge dissemination through presentation and writing.

For graduates of both research doctoral and master's programmes, communication and language skills at a level appropriate to university graduates are expected already at the time of admission. In particular, fluent communication skills are expected in the language(s) essential to their research areas. In general, a high level of proficiency in English is expected as it is commonly regarded as the default international research language. Ability in a second language is encouraged. They are also expected to attain appropriate life-long self-learning skills.

Postgraduate students are expected to possess attributes of holders of first degrees obtained from the University or other leading tertiary institutions in domains such as academic honesty, personal integrity, critical and independent thinking, communication and language skills, global vision, desire to serve the society, and others. Whole-person development therefore does not form part of the formal educational objectives of most postgraduate programmes offered at the University.

## **2.5 Modes of study**

The mode of study of a postgraduate programme may be full-time or part-time. Unless otherwise specified, classes of part-time programmes may be scheduled in day time as for full-time programmes. Part-time students have to make their own arrangements to attend day-time classes.

Application for change of study mode is allowed only within the student's normative period of study and must be recommended by the Graduate Division and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

The remaining normative and maximum periods of study for students who change the study mode are computed based on the following principle of ratios of time spent by part-time students as compared with full-time equivalents:

- (a) 2/3 for M.Phil. students during the normative study period;
- (b) 3/4 for Ph.D. students during the normative study period.

Conversion tables are published in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for easy reference. Continuing students, i.e., students beyond the normative study period, are not allowed to change their study mode.

## **2.6 Jointly supervised research postgraduate programmes**

Committed to providing world class education and training to researchers, the CUHK Departments and Faculties are keen on forming jointly supervised research programmes with strategic research partners outside Hong Kong. Such collaborative programmes are proposed or formed based on, amongst a number of driving factors, the strength and reputation of the partner institutions, alignment of strategic goals, and availability of resources. Some features of these collaborative programmes are described below:

- (a) The partner institutions are research organisations of distinguished standing and of strategic alliance value to CUHK.
- (b) Such programmes are for Ph.D. students only.
- (c) Each student should have a CUHK Supervisor and a Co-supervisor from the partner institution. Researchers from the partner institution could not serve as external examiners for the student's thesis.

Students who wish to find out more about these collaborative programmes may inquire with their Supervisors/Graduate Divisions.

## 2.7 Courses

An RPg programme is made up of courses on specific topics. Courses could be lectures, tutorials, laboratory work, seminars, studio-based, field studies, meetings on research progress, etc., which carry a different number of units. Although research programmes emphasise mainly research and laboratory activities, there are not less than 12 units of course requirements for students of articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes.

Courses are broadly divided into taught courses and research courses. A typical 3-unit taught course is made up of a two-hour lecture and a one-hour tutorial per week throughout a teaching term (the number of hours students spent on out-of-class self-studying is not included). For research courses, arrangements on duration, meeting frequency and venue are usually made between the student and his/her Supervisor. The general rule is that each unit of course is regarded as equivalent to approximately three hours of study/research per week by the student.

The fundamental concepts and key principles covered by each course are listed in the course outline. The content specification is not exhaustive. Learning outcomes, i.e., capabilities, knowledge and skills students expected to have developed during the course, are clearly specified in the course outline.

## 2.8 Course code and sequence

Since 2010-11 the course code comprises four letters and four numerals. The first four letters stand for the subject (e.g., BIOL for Biology) and the first numeral stands for the level of study. Undergraduate courses are coded 1000 to 4000 while postgraduate courses are coded 5000 to 8000. Details are given below:

<u>Level</u>	<u>Definition</u>
5000	Postgraduate Diploma/Master's courses
6000	Advanced Master's courses
7000	Doctoral courses
8000	Thesis Monitoring courses, e.g., Thesis Research courses for articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes or Thesis Monitoring courses for other M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes.

Lower level courses should normally be taken before upper level courses. However, some flexibility is allowed through opening most courses to students of all years subject to satisfactory fulfilment of prerequisite and co-requisite requirements, unless otherwise stipulated by the Programme.

As resolved by the Senate, double-coding of a single course is not allowed.

## **2.9 Cross-institutional course sharing**

In order to enhance RPg students' access to educational resources available elsewhere in Hong Kong, local universities funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) have entered into collaboration to share RPg courses. Students from UGC-funded universities are able to benefit from the exposure gained from the joint teaching offered by collaborating universities and interaction with students from other institutions. There are two such collaborative schemes:

### **(a) Cross-Institutional Course/Subject Enrolment Scheme**

Participating universities are CityU, CUHK, EdUHK, HKBU, HKU, HKUST, LU and PolyU. Students who are interested in taking courses offered by other local universities through this Scheme may visit the Graduate School website for announcements regarding courses available for enrolment for each term.

### **(b) Joint Centre for Advanced Study**

The Joint Centre for Advanced Study (JCAS) is a joint effort among CUHK, HKU and HKUST in developing greater and deeper collaboration in response to UGC's initiative in the development of strategic alliances and deep collaboration in higher education. The first initiative under this umbrella is the joint offering of courses for RPg students. Courses in Chemical Pathology, Chemistry, Molecular Medicine, and Mathematics have been offered.

Students in these research areas who are interested in taking courses available under this Scheme may consult their Graduate Divisions.

## 3. Admissions

### 3.1 Admission process

Postgraduate admissions are coordinated by the Graduate School, which invites applications in September each year. Starting from the 2022-23 intake, there are two admission rounds for research postgraduate admissions, i.e. Main round with an application deadline in December, and Clearing round with an application deadline in March of the following year. Applications are considered based on their merits. Local and non-local applications are handled fairly and equally. Successful applicants are normally admitted to the following Fall Term (beginning in August). Applications for deferred admission to the Spring Term (beginning in January) or the next academic year will only be considered if students are unable to take up the study due to illness or an unavoidable cause. The maximum period for deferred admission is one year. Applications for deferred admission should be made to the Graduate Division Head before the start of the academic year.

Each year the Graduate School arranges a briefing on postgraduate admission for staff members of the University. The *Manual on Postgraduate Admissions* will be updated and distributed to guide them through the exercise. The admission and notification processes are summarised in the diagram on the following page.

### 3.2 Entrance requirements

Entrance requirements of different RPg programmes are set out in the *General Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies* ([www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk](http://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk)). Graduate Divisions may set additional programme-specific requirements, such as a subject test, or waive such requirements for some special cases. Applicants are also required to fulfil the University's minimum English Language requirement for admission to our RPg programmes. Details are available on the Graduate School Admissions website ([www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/admissions](http://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/admissions)).

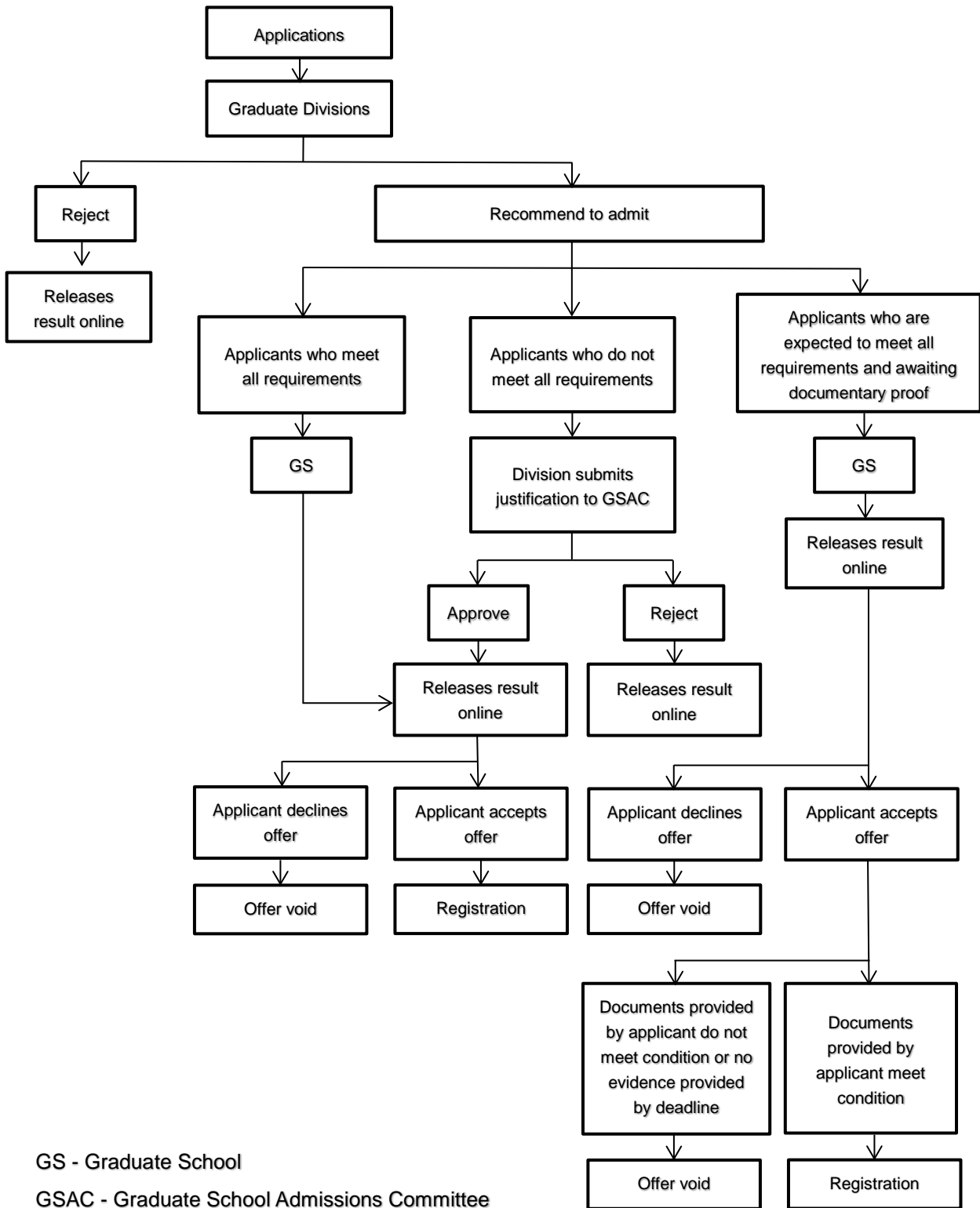
Applicants holding academic qualifications by completing programmes which differed substantially from "traditional" curricula may be required to provide evidence or objective assessment from accreditation bodies, e.g., Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), for further consideration.

### 3.3 Quality of students admitted to research postgraduate programmes

For quality assurance purposes, the entry qualifications of admitted RPg students are closely monitored. The Executive Committee of the Graduate Council (GCEXCo) resolved in November 2011 to entrust Faculties with the responsibility of monitoring the quality of RPg admissions. The entry qualifications of RPg students will be reported to UGC through the annual data collection exercise. Supervisors and staff members responsible for RPg admissions should uphold the standards for student admissions, as one of the quality assurance measures.



## Admission and Notification Processes



## 4. Registration/Residence Requirements/Leave of Absence

### 4.1 Orientation

Each year in August, OSA arranges an orientation programme for new postgraduate students. The programme covers matters relating to academic study and campus life. Some of the topics are listed below:

- Postgraduate Studies at CUHK
- Improving Postgraduate Learning
- Honesty in Academic Work
- Using Your Library for a Successful Study at CUHK
- Mental Wellness and Postgraduate Studies
- Career Planning and Development
- Diversity and Inclusion@CUHKCampus
- Crime Prevention and Road Safety
- Tips for Non-local Students

New students are strongly advised to participate in the orientation programme to get acquainted with life in CUHK and - for non-local students - also with life in Hong Kong.

### 4.2 Student registration

An applicant who has been offered admission to a course of study at the University shall pay the fees and register at the University by the respective deadlines. Anyone who fails to pay fees and register by the specified deadline shall be considered to have declined the offer. An applicant who has been offered admission but wishes to defer registration, i.e. deferred admission, should submit an application before the start of the academic year to the Head of the Graduate Division for approval.

A student shall not be registered simultaneously for another programme of studies leading to the award of a degree, diploma or certificate at this University or at any other tertiary institution unless an application has been submitted in advance to the Graduate Division, endorsed by the Faculty and approved by the Graduate Council. A student in breach of this regulation shall be required to discontinue studies at the University.

### 4.3 Course selection

The Graduate School announces schedules for course selection and course add/drop on its website. Students are able to complete course selection and course add/drop where applicable through CUSIS. All relevant materials, such as study schemes and teaching timetables, are available at CUSIS. If students wish to register course(s) outside their own study schemes, they should make an application to obtain prior approval from the Supervisors and the offering department of the course(s).

Students are able to check their own course register at CUSIS during and after the course selection period. The course register is tentative until approval has been obtained from the Graduate Division after the add/drop period. Students will be informed when the final course register is available. Enrolment of courses with limited quota is subject to the Graduate Division's confirmation. Students are therefore advised to check their final course register before attending classes.

Courses of each programme listed in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* will be offered according to resources available each year and are subject to approval by respective Faculty Boards. Students should refer to the "Teaching Timetable" on the Graduate School website for information of course offerings in the current academic year.

According to the Regulations, a student should take at least one course in each term, unless otherwise stated in the study scheme or approved by the Head of the Graduate Division. Students who have already submitted their theses are not required to take any courses.

Only under special circumstances may a student apply for permission to withdraw from a course or enrol in another course after the add/drop period. Such an application with justification and supporting documents, if any, should be submitted to the Supervisor and Graduate Division Head for endorsement and the Dean of the Graduate School for approval. A student who does not complete a registered course without approval to withdraw from it will obtain a failure grade for the course. Students are not allowed to withdraw from a course after the end of the term concerned.

#### **4.4 Residence requirements**

Residence requirements as defined below are applicable to all full-time and part-time RPg students:

- (a) A student is classified as being in residence if he/she is attending courses as prescribed by his/her programme and receiving supervision on a regular basis.
- (b) A student who is in Hong Kong except for absences not exceeding three weeks continuously and not exceeding one month aggregate in any one academic year is deemed to be receiving regular supervision, and is regarded as in residence provided that he/she is also attending courses, if required.
- (c) A student who is not in Hong Kong is normally deemed to be not receiving supervision, and is regarded as not being in residence. In cases where the student would nevertheless receive adequate supervision on a regular basis while away from Hong Kong, or where the absence from Hong Kong is related to an academic purpose, an application should be made beforehand via the Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division for approval of the Dean of the Graduate School in order to regard the student as being in residence during that period of absence.
- (d) A student may also be regarded as being in residence while being away from Hong Kong if the programme of studies approved by the Graduate Council and the Senate so provides.

Except for periods of approved leave, and except as provided in (b) to (d) above, all students are required to be in residence during their period of study. Residence requirements may be waived for

part-time students for up to six months in any academic year, upon the written approval of the Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division.

#### 4.5 Normative and maximum study periods

An RPg student is required to submit his/her thesis and complete all other graduation requirements by the end of the normative study period unless an extension has been granted. Beyond the normative study period, students will be classified as Continuing Students. A student must complete the graduation requirements within the maximum study period, which shall include any periods of leave of absence and any suspension of studies. A student who cannot complete all requirements within the maximum study period shall be discontinued from studies at the University.

The normative and maximum study periods of different research programmes are tabulated below:

Degree	Normative Study Period		Maximum Study Period	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Ph.D., D.Mus. - Students with a research master's degree - Students without a research master's degree	36 months 48 months	48 months 64 months	84 months 84 months	96 months 96 months
Ph.D. (M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes) - Students with a research master's degree - Students without a research master's degree	36 months 48 months	48 months 64 months	72 months 84 months	84 months 100 months
M.Phil.	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
M.Mus.	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years
M.F.A.	2 years	--	4 years	--

More details of the study periods can be found in the *General Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies* on the Graduate School website. Students may check their own normative study end date and maximum study end date via CUSIS (<https://portal.cuhk.edu.hk>).

#### 4.6 Shortening of normative study period

A student who wishes to graduate before the normative study end date may apply to the Graduate Council via the Graduate Division to shorten the study period, provided that the application is in line with the following principles:

- (a) For students who are receiving PGS, the award period will be shortened according to the new end date;
- (b) The application must be endorsed by the Graduate Division;
- (c) The student must complete all programme requirements by the new end date; and
- (d) The student should have passed his/her thesis without the need for major revision.

In any case, the minimum normative study period is 12 months for master's programmes and 24 months for doctoral programmes.

A student who is approved to shorten the normative study period should settle the full tuition fee for the term (or the 6-month period for Ph.D. students) that he/she has partially attended.

#### 4.7 Programme change or candidature transfer

Students may apply to change programme or transfer candidature. Different scenarios and the respective approval procedures are described in the following table:

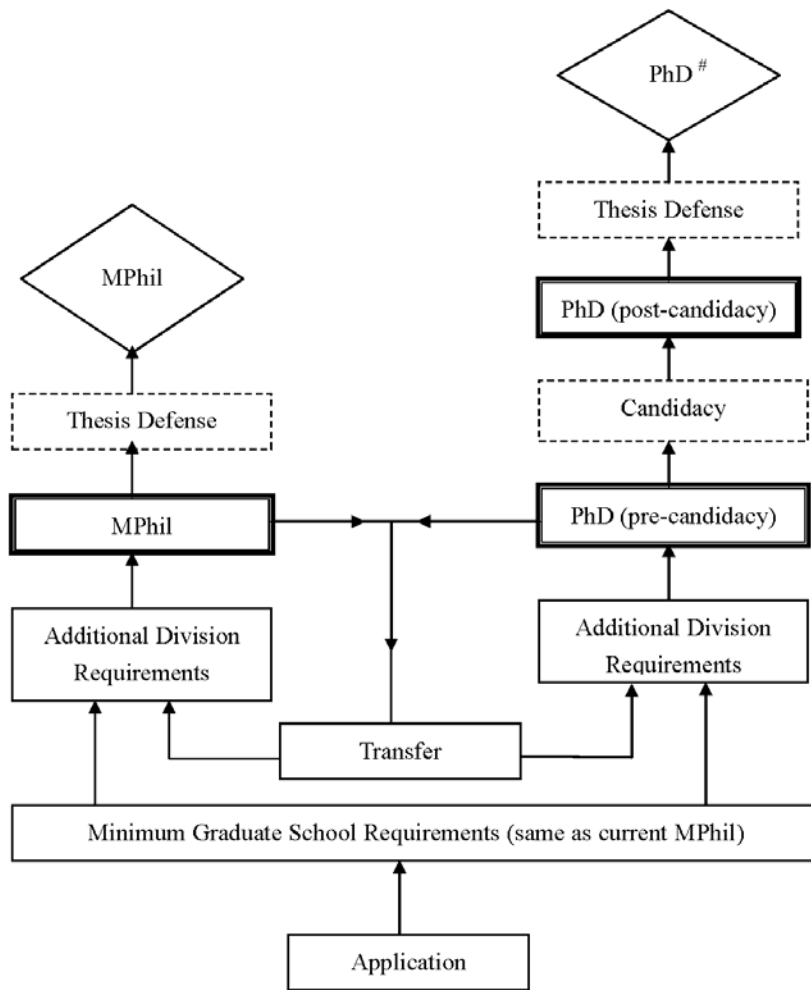
Scenarios	Approval Procedures
1. Change to another programme of a different Graduate Division	1. Heads of both Graduate Divisions to endorse 2. GCExCo to approve
2. Change from one master's programme to another master's programme in the same discipline (e.g., from MSc to M.Phil. of the same Graduate Division), where period of study carried over <u>is equal to or NOT more than 50%</u> of the normative period for the new programme	1. Supervisor/Programme Director to endorse 2. Graduate Division Head to approve and report to GS 3. GCExCo to note
3. Change from one master's programme to another master's programme in the same discipline (e.g., from MSc to M.Phil. of the same Graduate Division), where period of study carried over is <u>more than 50%</u> of the normative period of the new programme	1. Supervisor/Programme Director and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. GCExCo to approve
4. Change of the mode of study (full-time/part-time)	1. Supervisor/Programme Director and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. Dean of GS to approve
Non-articulated M.Phil./Ph.D.	
5. Transfer of candidature (from M.Phil. to Ph.D.): straightforward cases	1. Supervisor to endorse 2. Graduate Division Head to approve and report to GCExCo to note
6. Transfer of candidature (from M.Phil. to Ph.D.): for cases not meeting entry requirements but with publications	1. Supervisor and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. Dean of GS to approve
7. Transfer of candidature (from M.Phil. to Ph.D.): other special cases	1. Supervisor and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. GCExCo to approve
8. Transfer of candidature (from Ph.D. to M.Phil.)	1. Supervisor and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. GCExCo to approve
Articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D.	

Scenarios	Approval Procedures
9. Transfer of candidature (from M.Phil. to Ph.D. (pre-candidacy) or vice versa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor to endorse</li> <li>2. Graduate Division Head to approve</li> <li>3. GCExCo to note</li> </ol>
10. Transfer of candidature (from Ph.D. (post-candidacy) to M.Phil.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor and Graduate Division Head to endorse</li> <li>2. GCExCo to approve</li> </ol>

For Scenario 1, the protocol for handling student's request for change of a different RPg study programme is below:

1. Changing to a different RPg study programme refers to change of programme for instance from Physics to Chemistry. Transfer of candidature (e.g. from M.Phil. to Ph.D.) is covered by other current codes.
2. The new Division should evaluate if the student has met the additional admission requirement, if any, to the new programme.
3. Study Period under the new programme should count from the admission date of the original programme.
4. The new Division should evaluate whether the courses and grades obtained from the original programme could be accepted to the new programme and prescribe the requirements the concerned student should undertake for instance additional courses for fulfillment of the programme-specific and the university's graduation requirements.
5. Student passed a candidacy requirement should not automatically be assumed to have fulfilled the candidacy requirement of the new programme.
6. If the student is required to sit for the candidacy examination in the new programme, and happens to be beyond the deadline after the change (where PGS may be suspended), Division/student may submit a request for extending the PGS suspension deadline and the candidacy fulfillment deadline, as appropriate. And if the change happens after the normative study period, no PGS will be provided.

Regarding scenarios 10 above, transfer from the Ph.D. (post-candidacy) stage to M.Phil. stream is normally not permitted; exceptions will be considered by GCExCo. The transfer process of articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes is shown in the diagram below:



□ Student status    □ Stages/requirement

# The Thesis Assessment Committee may recommend the award of an M.Phil. degree to a Ph.D. student. In this case full justification is requested for the consideration of the Graduate Council.

#### 4.8 Leave of absence

In case of illness necessitating absence exceeding three weeks, a student should submit an application together with a medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner to obtain endorsement from the Graduate Division and permission from the Dean of the Graduate School.

Applications for leave of absence for non-medical reasons are handled as follows:

Leave of Absence	Approval Procedures
Annual Leave (i.e., 14 working days with pay per academic year)	Department Chairperson to approve

Leave of Absence	Approval Procedures
<p>Academic Leave</p> <p>(i) In-residence leave (for conference and other academic purposes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• within 20% of the normative study period</li> <li>• exceeding 20% of the normative study period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division to endorse</li> <li>2. Department Chairperson to approve</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor, Head of the Graduate Division and Department Chairperson to endorse</li> <li>2. Dean of GS to approve</li> </ul>
<p>Non-Academic Leave</p> <p>(i) No-pay leave (i.e., leave with PGS suspended)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• up to one year cumulatively</li> <li>• exceeding one year cumulatively</li> <li>• exceeding two years cumulatively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division to endorse</li> <li>2. Department Chairperson to approve</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor, Head of the Graduate Division and Department Chairperson to endorse</li> <li>2. Dean of GS to approve</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor, Head of the Graduate Division and Department Chairperson to endorse</li> <li>2. GCEXCo to approve</li> </ul>

A student who has been absent without approved leave of absence or who is in breach of the residence requirements for a continuous period exceeding one month will be considered as having withdrawn from studies.

#### 4.9 Student visa

As of 30 September 2022, CUHK's enrolment of postgraduate students is 14,372, including a substantial portion of international students from around the world, who must first obtain a student visa or other forms of permission by the Immigration Department of the Government of HKSAR for studying in Hong Kong. Under the refinement measures implemented in March 2014 in relation to Hong Kong's development as a Regional Education Hub, the length of stay for non-local students studying full-time locally-accredited post-secondary local programmes will be aligned with the normal duration of programmes, subject to a maximum of six years. All non-local students must comply with the conditions and requirements attached to their student visa.

The following are some highlights of the immigration arrangements applicable to non-local RPg students:

- (a) Full-time students may take up study-related internships as arranged or endorsed by institutions, as well as part-time on-campus jobs for up to 20 hours per week, and off-campus summer jobs during June to August. All students, local and non-local, are required to comply with the CUHK policy on taking up of part-time jobs and internships.



- (b) All non-local students will be allowed to pursue short-term studies in programmes offered by Hong Kong higher education institutions with degree-awarding powers, provided that the cumulative duration of short-term studies should not exceed 180 days within any 12-month period. All students, local and non-local, are required to comply with the CUHK policy on concurrent registration.
- (c) Non-local fresh graduates who wish to apply to stay and work in Hong Kong after graduation are not required to secure an offer of employment upon application. They may be granted a 12 months' stay without other conditions of stay provided that normal immigration requirements are met, and during which they are free to take up or change employment in Hong Kong.

Up-to-date information and further details about student visa can be found on the Hong Kong Immigration Department website at [www.immd.gov.hk/](http://www.immd.gov.hk/).

#### **4.10 Employment**

According to the University Regulations, all full-time students are not allowed to take up any full-time employment, paid or unpaid, during term time. Moreover, PGS holders are not allowed to take up full-time or part-time employment. However, there are still chances of employment during their studies:

- (a) Taking up of part-time on-campus employment by PGS holders – PGS holders may take up part-time engagements of up to 50 hours per academic year. If the engagement concerned was requested by the students' Graduate Division, the ceiling would be relaxed to a total of 100 hours per academic year. The approval authority rests with the Head of the Graduate Division. However, applications that exceed the ceiling should be submitted to GCEXCo for prior approval. Students who fail to obtain the said prior approval will be punishable by a fine that is equivalent to 50% of the pay for the first 50 hours in excess of the ceiling and to 80% of the pay for the subsequent segment. Repeated violators during the normative study period will in addition be sent to the Graduate School Disciplinary Committee for possible disciplinary actions. The fine will be deducted from the student's PGS or collected from the student in whichever way the University deems fit.
- (b) Taking up of remunerative engagements (full-time or part-time) by PGS holders – PGS holders may take up research or studies related remunerative engagements within their normative study period. Students are required to seek prior endorsement from their thesis Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division, and approval of GCEXCo before taking up the engagement. Subject to the approval of GCEXCo, the students will need to take in-residence leave and relinquish or deduct the PGS during the period concerned. Students who repeatedly fail to obtain the said prior approval will be sent to the Graduate School Disciplinary Committee for possible disciplinary actions.

(c) Taking up of full-time employment by full-time students – students who are approaching the end of the normative study period may take up a full-time employment if the student concerned already completed all programme requirements and submitted the thesis for examination, subject to the endorsement of the Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division, and approval of GCExCo.

Non-local students should also refer to the previous section on student visa.

## 5. Supervisors

### 5.1 Assignment of Supervisors

A Supervisor is a full-time academic staff of a Graduate Division who is assigned by the Graduate Panel to provide training to students and guide them through their studies. The topics/areas available for thesis research, together with the names of the teachers who can supervise these topics/areas are made known to students by the Graduate Divisions. The student, on the other hand, should make his/her preference known to the Graduate Panel.

A Supervisor is supposed to:

- (a) be familiar with the rules and regulations of the University, in particular those concerning postgraduate studies;
- (b) participate in activities as requested by his/her Graduate Division in support of the running of programmes of studies;
- (c) identify eligible and appropriate applicants for admission to his/her programme of studies; and
- (d) identify problems and difficulties encountered by his/her students and offer advice.

The Graduate Panel has the responsibility and complete authority to appoint and to reassign academic staff for supervision of students, provided that the Supervisor/Co-supervisor(s) meet the eligibility requirements. There should be only one academic staff designated as Supervisor. All supervisory appointments have to be reported to the Dean of the Graduate School.

A Supervisor should not at any one time supervise more than a specified number of research students (including Continuing Students), to be determined by each Faculty. The Head of the Graduate Division may give approval to a teacher (other than himself/herself) to exceed the limit by two. Further exceptions and exceptions for the Head of the Graduate Division himself/herself may be considered by making application to the Dean of the Graduate School.

If a Supervisor for whatever reason becomes unable to supervise before the student's thesis/portfolio is completed, the Head of the Graduate Division should ensure that a suitable Co-supervisor (who may become Supervisor when necessary) is appointed as soon as possible.

### 5.2 Eligibility requirements of a Supervisor

For master's programmes, the Supervisor should be a full-time academic staff at the rank of Assistant Professor<sup>(1)</sup> or above at CUHK, and in addition should either

- (a) have held a Ph.D. degree or equivalent<sup>(2)</sup> for at least one year; or
- (b) have held a master's degree by research or a relevant professional master's degree for at least three years, and have (i) successfully co-supervised an M.Phil. thesis or equivalent<sup>(3)</sup>, or (ii) successfully supervised an M.Phil. thesis or equivalent<sup>(3)</sup> at another institution.

For doctoral programmes, the Supervisor should be a full-time academic staff at the rank of Assistant Professor or above at CUHK, and in addition should have held a Ph.D. degree or equivalent for at least three years, and have either

- (a) successfully supervised an M.Phil. thesis or equivalent<sup>(3)</sup>; or
- (b) successfully co-supervised a Ph.D. thesis or equivalent<sup>(4)</sup>; or
- (c) successfully supervised a Ph.D. thesis or equivalent<sup>(4)</sup> at another institution.

Student's portfolio conducted in accordance with the relevant provisions are considered as equivalent to M.Phil and Ph.D. thesis in respect of D.Mus., M.Mus., and M.F.A.

Notes:

- (1) For M.F.A. students, a teacher with an academic title of Assistant Professor or above and with teaching experience of at least five years at this University need not have a higher degree.
- (2) For the Faculty of Medicine, a relevant Membership/Fellowship from a professional college, or research-based M.D. is to be regarded as the equivalent of a Ph.D. degree. For Doctor of Nursing students, a teacher with a relevant Doctor of Nursing degree is regarded as equivalent to having a Ph.D. degree.
- (3) For the Graduate Division of Social Work, M.S.W. is accepted. For Doctor of Education, those who have successfully supervised two M.Ed. projects are accepted.
- (4) It refers to Ed.D. for Doctor of Education students, D.Nurs. for Doctor of Nursing students, Psy.D. for Doctor of Psychology students.

Prospective Supervisors who do not meet the requirements as specified above may (a) be recommended by the Graduate Division and endorsed by the Dean of the Faculty, considerations of which to be based mainly on experience in research; or (b) act only in a co-supervisory capacity together with another Supervisor who satisfies the above conditions by exception approval. Such exceptions may be granted by GCEXCo.

In the case of a doctoral candidate who is also a full-time academic staff at the rank of Assistant Professor of the University, all Supervisors of the candidate must be teachers of the rank of Associate Professor or above. Exceptions will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis by GCEXCo. If the candidate is of the rank of Associate Professor or above, the appointment of all Supervisors of the candidate will have to be submitted to GCEXCo for approval.

Please also refer to the *Guidelines and Procedures for Thesis Submission/Assessment for Research Postgraduate and Taught Doctoral Programmes* available on the Graduate School website.

### **5.3 Induction of new Supervisors**

To accelerate the pace for junior faculty members to become eligible as RPg supervisors, the Graduate School offers, in collaboration with the Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR), a module in the Professional Development Course entitled "*Workshop on Research Postgraduate Supervision*" for first-time supervisors who are *Assistant Professors*. Workshops are held each year with experienced supervisors to share strategies and techniques to help supervisors support and supervise their RPg students successfully.

## 6. Progress towards Graduation

### 6.1 Graduation requirements

All RPg students are required to fulfil a set of graduation requirements as prescribed by the Programme in order to graduate. Some of the requirements are compulsory for all while some are specific to individual programmes or individual students. Different types of graduation requirements will be introduced briefly in the following sections. Students should refer to the Course List, Course Descriptions and Study Scheme of their own programmes in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for details. Besides, RPg students should report and record the fulfilment of graduation requirements in the Study Plan and Progress Report for RPg studies in consultation with the Supervisor.

### 6.2 Course requirements

The course requirements set out the required courses and elective courses, if applicable, of the Programme. Taught courses (excluding courses with research elements, such as “Research”, “Thesis Research”, “Thesis Preparation”, etc.) aim to enhance the knowledge in research. In general, the requirement for different RPg programmes is as follows:

- (a) Not less than 12 units for research master’s;
- (b) Not less than 12 units for research doctoral students in the pre-candidacy stage, completion of which will be part of the candidacy requirements.

The two requirements can be identical, but a higher requirement can be set for Ph.D. candidacy if the Graduate Division so desires. Doctoral students without a research master’s degree may be required to take additional courses. The Graduate Division may specify the minimum grade at which these courses must be passed.

Students should take at least one course in each term, unless otherwise stated in the Study Scheme or approved by the Head of the Graduate Division. In addition, students’ research progress is monitored through taking “Thesis Research” courses. The minimum number of units to be taken by RPg students in each Term is given below. Each unit is regarded as equivalent to approximately three hours of study/research per week by the student.

Status	Full-time (no. of units)	Part-time (no. of units)
M.Phil.	6	3
Ph.D. (pre-candidacy)	6	3
Ph.D. (post-candidacy)	12	6
Continuing Students	3	3

### **6.3 Postgraduate students taking undergraduate courses**

Postgraduate students are allowed to enrol in undergraduate courses (4000 level or below) in the following situations:

- (a) Taking undergraduate courses as make-up requirements.  
An RPg student with a first degree of a different subject than the postgraduate programme may have to make up for some undergraduate courses as assigned by the Supervisor. Taking undergraduate courses which are not required.
- (b) RPg students may take other undergraduate courses, typically in a different subject, purely out of interest (e.g., calligraphy or music), or to develop other skills (e.g., language, including a third language).

RPg students who wish to take undergraduate courses should first consult their Supervisors.

Programmes can include up to 15% of undergraduate courses in the programme requirements. GCExCo's approval is required if Graduate Divisions request to include more than 15% undergraduate courses in the programme requirements.

### **6.4 Research thesis and oral examination**

All RPg students are required to submit a research thesis and pass an oral examination. The schedule, procedures, and assessment of the research thesis and oral examination will be described in detail in Section 8 below.

### **6.5 Candidature for doctoral degree**

There are two stages of Ph.D. studies: the pre-candidacy stage and the post-candidacy stage. No student will be admitted directly as a Ph.D. student (post-candidacy); such a status can only be gained by a Ph.D. student (pre-candidacy) upon satisfying all candidacy requirements for those under the "articulated" scheme and the Qualifying Examination for those under the "non-articulated" scheme. Only a Ph.D. (post-candidacy) candidate can submit a thesis and be examined.

The candidacy requirements are set by the Graduate Division, with administration taken care of by the Graduate School. A Ph.D. student shall not proceed to the post-candidacy stage until he/she has fulfilled all components of the candidacy requirements. The candidacy requirements include at least the following components:

- (a) Course requirements;
- (b) Candidacy Examination/Qualifying Examination; and
- (c) Thesis proposal and defence of the proposal.

The Candidacy Examination or Qualifying Examination contains a written component of one or more papers, which cover the basic disciplinary knowledge expected of a Ph.D. student. The subject coverage is not specific to each student, but is the same for a broad subject category within each Graduate Division. The Graduate Division may specify that certain papers can be replaced by passing

relevant courses at specified grades. There may be an additional oral component.

## 6.6 Candidacy Examination and Qualifying Examination

Candidacy Examination and Qualifying Examination are two different terms used in the assessment of Ph.D. students for proceeding to the candidature for doctoral degree. The former is used in “articulated” programmes whereas the latter in “non-articulated” programmes.

Students should refer to the study scheme of their own programme in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for details of the requirements.

For “articulated” programmes, the maximum period to pass the candidacy requirements, counted from first entry to the programme, is tabulated below. A Ph.D. student (pre-candidacy) who failed to pass the candidacy requirements within this maximum period will be discontinued from studies at the University:

Degree	Full-time	Part-time
Ph.D. (entering with a research master’s degree)	24 months	32 months
Ph.D. (entering without a research master’s degree)	36 months	48 months

However, for “non-articulated” programmes, the maximum period to pass the Qualifying Examination is defined by individual Graduate Divisions. Please refer to the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for details of individual programmes.

## 6.7 Improving Postgraduate Learning

While there is no universally accepted approach for teaching students to be more creative in research, there are some basic principles, methodologies and skills with which students can equip themselves in the arduous task of doing research. Most knowledge and skills are imparted by the students’ Supervisors as they work together. However, some skills are cross-disciplinary in nature and can be taught in a more formal or systematic manner, e.g., laboratory safety, searching for and analysis of information, principles and ethics in documentation, presentation skills, and so forth. These courses are collectively referred to as the Improving Postgraduate Learning (IPL) programme and are coordinated by CLEAR.

Most IPL short courses are optional. However, RPg students are strongly advised to take every module that has potential relevancy to their research endeavours. Supervisors and Heads of the Graduate Divisions should also promote the IPL modules and encourage their students to take them.

The online module “*Observing Intellectual Property and Copyright Law during Research*” is compulsory for all RPg students. Relevant information is available on the CLEAR website at [www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/ipl.html](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/ipl.html).

Different programmes may require students to complete specific IPL modules, such as “*General Safety*”, “*Chemical Safety*” or other laboratory safety courses, depending on the nature of the research project. Students should consult their Graduate Divisions or Supervisors for details.

Research Data Management (RDM) is of increasing interest and importance to the academia. More and more research funders require researchers to submit data management plans as part of grant applications and share their research data to the scholarly community. In light of these policies and requirements, the Research Data Management (RDM) Training is incorporated into an appropriate IPL module offered by the Library. Attendance of RDM Training module is optional for the 2021-22 intake. Starting from the 2022-23 intake, all RPg students are required to complete the RDM training, specifically, the online course Basics of Research Data Management, in the first year of study as part of the graduation requirements. Relevant information is available at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/ipl.html>.

Postgraduate students engaged in laboratory works need to comprehend a broad range of safety-related concepts. It is important for them to be familiar with safe working and basic emergency procedures while conducting laboratory activities that carry safety risks. In principle, postgraduate students should not conduct any laboratory work before meeting the University recognised training requirements. With effect from the 2022-23 intake, students who are prescribed laboratory safety training shall take the courses and, where appropriate, examinations in their first year of study.

## **6.8 Research Ethics Training**

To strengthen researchers' awareness of ethical concepts, the Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services (ORKTS) offers Research Ethics Training (RET) which contains four online modules in the following domains: (a) *Human Subject Ethics*; (b) *Laboratory Animals Ethics*; (c) *Survey and Behavioural Ethics*; and (d) *Publication Ethics*.

All RPg students admitted in 2017-18 and thereafter are required to complete the online RET module on "*Publication Ethics*" and obtain a valid Publication Ethics Certificate for graduation. More information on RET is available at [www.research-ethics.cuhk.edu.hk/web/](http://www.research-ethics.cuhk.edu.hk/web/).

## **6.9 Other requirements**

Graduate Divisions may prescribe additional graduation requirements for students of their particular field of research. For example:

- Language requirement, e.g., knowledge of spoken Cantonese and written Chinese may be required for some courses taught in Cantonese and English.
- A higher minimum cumulative GPA (e.g., 2.5) for graduation.
- Additional requirements for individual students may be set by the Graduate Division or Supervisor, depending on the academic progress of the students.

## **6.10 Course and unit exemptions**

Students who have already completed equivalent courses may apply for exemption from taking some courses and/or units by taking the following actions:

- (a) Check their eligibility by reading the *Policy on Course and Unit Exemptions for Postgraduate Students* (available in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook*);



- (b) Consult the Graduate Division on the possibility of granting course and unit exemptions;
- (c) Complete the prescribed online application form and attach any required supporting documents for submission to the Graduate Division via CUSIS; and
- (d) Pay the required fee.

Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The decision rests with the Head of the Graduate Division and is subject to approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

### **6.11 Study Plan and Progress Report for RPg Studies**

In order to improve supervision, ensure timely progress and encourage broader training, the Graduate School requires each RPg student, together with his/her Supervisor or, if no Supervisor has been assigned yet, a divisional adviser, to complete an online Study Plan and Progress Report for RPg Studies on an annual basis.

The report is divided into two parts: the 1<sup>st</sup> part deals with the requirements of the whole programme. Students/Supervisors are required to complete this part. The 2<sup>nd</sup> part is an annual account on the courses/other requirements completed by the students in each study year.

At the end of each academic year, Supervisors will meet with their RPg students to record the progress of the students' academic activities and fulfilment of the programme requirements against the study plan. Students also have the opportunity to read the comments given by their Supervisors. Supervisors should monitor the students' progress to ensure that the students fulfil the coursework requirements, Candidacy Examination/Qualifying Examination and any other graduation requirements within the study period.

### **6.12 Departmental duties and teaching assistance**

As a condition of the PGS award, RPg students shall carry out assignments relating to teaching and research as part of their postgraduate studies, normally for not more than 12 hours per week on average, as prescribed by the respective Department Chairperson, School Director or Faculty Dean. PGS holders are requested to observe at all times the *Code of Conduct for Postgraduate Studentship Holders* which is enclosed with the Admission Offer and Letter of Award at the time of admission.

Undertaking undergraduate teaching in the capacity of a Teaching Assistant (TA) during the study period is one of the common departmental duties which is also regarded by both the RPg students and the Graduate Divisions as part of the students' education. The *Guidelines on the Allocation of Teaching Duties to RPg Students* should be observed in assigning duties to RPg students. RPg students who will take up TA duties are required to attend training courses offered by CLEAR. Students may refer to the CLEAR website ([www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear)) for more details.

### **6.13 Language policy**

CUHK is a bilingual (Chinese and English) university. The University has three goals related to language proficiency at the postgraduate level:

- (a) At the time of admission, ensure a proper alignment of the language proficiency of students with the language of instruction adopted by the programme;
- (b) After admission, ensure that students have the opportunity to continue strengthening their language proficiency; and
- (c) Provide students with opportunities to be exposed to Chinese language and culture, particularly those without such exposure prior to admission.

The majority of postgraduate students at the University are proficient in Chinese and English, though there is a small number of overseas students who do not have prior exposure to the Chinese language and culture. The University deems it desirable that these students, at least doctoral students who will spend three years or more at the University, have some such exposure while they are attending the University. They will be encouraged to take at least one course in Chinese language and culture, though it will not be regarded as a degree requirement. A large variety of such courses are offered at the University.

In addition, postgraduate students may wish to strengthen their proficiency in Chinese (Putonghua and/or Cantonese) and/or English for academic, professional or other purposes, the programme in which they are enrolled may have specific language proficiency needs (such as proficiency in Japanese in the Japanese Studies programme), or the programme may for general educational purposes have a third language requirement. The University will continue to ensure that appropriate language courses are offered through the relevant units, including the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Chinese Language Centre, English Language Teaching Unit, Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, and other relevant departments.

## 7. Assessment and Examination

### 7.1 Assessment of academic performance

Assessment of a student's academic performance may take various forms: class work, written work, laboratory performance, field work, research papers, assignments, tests, oral defence and any other method of academic assessment. A combination of assessment methods may be used in one course. The specific course and assessment method(s) and the relative weight of these methods (e.g., written assignment X%, mid-term test Y%, final course examination Z%) should be spelt out in the course assessment scheme as designed by the teacher responsible and approved by the Assessment Panel of each Graduate Division. The course assessment methods should be announced to students as part of the course outline at an early stage of the academic term.

### 7.2 Course grades

The University adopts the 4-point grade point system for grading students' performance. Course grades, their standards and converted points to be used in reporting are as follows:

Grade and Standard		Sub-division (if needed)	Converted Points
A	Excellent	A	4.0
A-	Very Good	A-	3.7
B	Good	B+	3.3
		B	3.0
		B-	2.7
C	Pass	C+	2.3
		C	2.0
		C-	1.7
D	Pass	D+	1.3
		D	1.0
F	Failure	F	0.0
DI	Distinction	Not counted in the calculation of Grade Point Average (GPA)	
PA	Pass		
FA	Failure		
P	Ungraded Pass	Not counted in the calculation of the grade point average (GPA)	
U	Failure		

"DI"/"PA"/"FA" or "P"/"U" grades are for specified courses adopting distinction/pass/failure and pass/failure gradings where other grades are not applicable.

GPA of a student's course work is computed by dividing the total weighted converted points for courses taken by the total number of units attempted inclusive of courses failed, where the weighted converted points are converted points multiplied by the number of units of the course concerned. Courses graded by "DI"/"PA"/"FA" or "P" and "U" are not counted in the calculation of GPA.

A student who has gained a grade of “D” or above or “DI”/“PA” or “P” in a course will earn the unit(s) of that course. The units of courses repeated/retaken shall count only once towards the fulfilment of course units for graduation. A student receiving a failure grade in a required course must repeat the course or take an approved substitute course.

### **7.3 Assessment Panel**

Each Graduate Division should establish an Assessment Panel which is chaired by the Head of the Graduate Division and comprises at least two members from the Graduate Division, apart from the Graduate Division Head himself/herself. The membership may overlap with that of the Graduate Panel of the Graduate Division. When handling grade appeals, the Assessment Panel may co-opt other teachers or form ad-hoc panels if necessary.

The terms of reference for the Assessment Panel include:

- (a) To propose policies on the matters contained in this policy paper (e.g., peer assessment) for approval by the Department/Programme Committee.
- (b) To monitor and ensure fairness and honesty in all assessment work.
- (c) To review comments provided by Visiting Committee and programme review panels.
- (d) To review and define grade descriptors as and when necessary.
- (e) To endorse course assessment schemes.
- (f) Be responsible for the quality of examination/test papers. For example, for each course, a colleague within the department/ programme could be appointed as an internal reviewer to independently check the paper and model answer/marking scheme.
- (g) To approve grade boundaries and the assignment of grades recommended by teachers.
- (h) To arrange make-up examination/assessment for students who have been given approval to be absent from examination/assessment.
- (i) To endorse requests submitted by teachers for change of marks or grades upon appeal by students, and to help resolve any informal complaints thereon.
- (j) To ensure that reasonable effort is undertaken to monitor and uphold academic honesty in all assessments.
- (k) Any other duties as determined by individual Departments/Divisions/Programmes.

### **7.4 Examination administration**

Course examinations are administered either by the Registration and Examinations Section of the Registry or Graduate Divisions. The former is responsible for administration of examinations for undergraduate courses in some of which postgraduate students could have enrolled. The latter is responsible for administration of examinations for postgraduate courses.

Students who are unable to sit any examination due to illness or other compelling reasons should apply in writing with documentary evidence to the Graduate School as early as possible but in any case not later than five working days from the examination. The Graduate School will determine in consultation with the Graduate Division the required follow-up action. An application for absence from examination on medical ground shall be accompanied by a medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner. A student who is absent from any examination without permission will be given a failure

grade in that examination. No supplementary examination is allowed for students failing an examination in this case. However, under special circumstances, the Graduate Council may on the recommendation of the Graduate Division approve an exceptional assessment arrangement.

For rules to be observed by candidates during examinations please refer to the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* available on the Graduate School website and additional/specific rules to be prescribed by the Graduate Divisions/course teachers. A student who violates any of the rules regarding examinations shall be disciplined in accordance with the nature and gravity of the offence.

### **7.5 Grade appeal process**

Grade appeals are handled by the Assessment Panel of each Graduate Division. However, it is advisable that students who wish to initiate a grade appeal should first approach the teacher responsible and discuss with him/her the expectations of both parties. This will provide a chance for both parties to review the examination script, or any other form of student work which has been assessed, together with the relevant course assessment scheme and other rules and regimes. If a resolution acceptable to both parties cannot be achieved through this informal process, the student may submit a formal grade appeal to the Assessment Panel through the Graduate Division or Head of the Graduate Division within two weeks from the grade release date of the course concerned. No appeal for grade review will be accepted after this period.

### **7.6 Unsatisfactory performance**

A student is required to discontinue studies if his/her performance is unsatisfactory. The definition of unsatisfactory performance is as follows:

- (a) The cumulative grade point average is 1.0 or below; or
- (b) The student fails to have probation lifted after being put on academic probation for two consecutive terms of attendance; or
- (c) Additional requirements laid down by the Graduate Division are not satisfied.

A student shall be put on academic probation if he/she has obtained a cumulative GPA below 2.0 in the preceding term or upon receiving a failure grade in a thesis monitoring course unless he/she is required to discontinue studies. A student on academic probation shall be reviewed by the Graduate Division at the end of the term in which he/she is put on probation, at which time if he/she has obtained a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above or attained satisfactory progress, probation shall be lifted, otherwise probation shall continue to apply in his/her next term.

If at any time the Supervisor is of the opinion that a student is not making satisfactory progress or is unlikely to attain the standard required for the degree, and the assessment result is endorsed by the Head of the Graduate Division and Graduate Council, the student shall be required to discontinue studies or may be advised to transfer to a course of study for a master's degree in the case of a doctoral student.

## 8. Thesis

### 8.1 Preparation for research and thesis writing

The main output of an RPg student is the thesis or a portfolio. In fact, the eligibility of a student for award of a degree is assessed by the Thesis Assessment Committee on the basis of:

- (a) The thesis or portfolio;
- (b) An oral examination; and
- (c) A written examination, if required.

In an attempt to collect and distribute to RPg students key learning and research materials, the Graduate School has published a document titled *Research and Thesis Writing*, which focuses on the structure of a thesis and provides advice on the areas of research and thesis writing techniques. The publication comprises six chapters:

- Chapter 1: Beginning research – advises how to select a research topic and work with a Supervisor
- Chapter 2: Effective use of information – guides students through searching for information online and helps them develop skills and techniques for using library resources
- Chapter 3: Structuring a thesis – outlines the main components of the structure of an academic thesis
- Chapter 4: Writing a thesis – focuses on the actual writing of a thesis
- Chapter 5: Proofreading – focuses on proofreading and suggests a number of ways of checking for inconsistency in thesis content and structure at micro and macro levels
- Chapter 6: Guide to thesis formatting – contains information about the requirements for formatting a thesis, based on the regulations of the Graduate School

The publication is the output of a concerted effort of various CUHK departments. RPg students are advised to read the document carefully before they formulate their research plan. It is accessible from the GS Platform (Students) on the Graduate School website.

### 8.2 Research ethics

The University has an established policy on research ethics which applies to all researchers including students. Please refer to the ORKTS website for the *Policy on Research* ([https://www.orkts.cuhk.edu.hk/images/Research\\_Funding/Policy\\_on\\_Research\\_2020.pdf](https://www.orkts.cuhk.edu.hk/images/Research_Funding/Policy_on_Research_2020.pdf)) and the *Policy on Intellectual Property* ([https://www.orkts.cuhk.edu.hk/images/Policy/Policy\\_on\\_IP\\_2020.pdf](https://www.orkts.cuhk.edu.hk/images/Policy/Policy_on_IP_2020.pdf)) (see also section 6.8 above on Research Ethics Training).

### 8.3 Procedures

The procedure relating to the submission of theses/portfolios is summarised in the following table, with more elaborations available in the ensuing sections.

Event/Time	Tasks of Students	Tasks of Graduate Divisions
<b>Declaration of intention to submit thesis/portfolio</b> – submit to Graduate School (GS) four months before actual submission	Complete and submit Form TAS-1 with 1-2 pages summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division to approve proposed date of submission and the thesis/portfolio title;</li> <li>- Graduate Division to forward signed Form TAS-1 to GS, with nominations of Thesis Assessment Committee members on Form TAD-1A (for master's) or Form TAD-1C (for doctoral).</li> </ul>
<b>Appointment of examiners</b> – after approval of nomination		Head of the Graduate Division to inform Internal Examiners (IE) of their appointment.
<b>Change of thesis/portfolio title</b> – after approval of thesis/ portfolio title	Complete and submit Form TAS-2 to Graduate Division for approval	Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division to approve and forward signed Form TAS-2 to GS.
<b>Change of Thesis Assessment Committee</b>		Complete Form TAD-2A/TAD/S-1 and forward to GS.
<b>Deferment of submission of thesis/portfolio</b> - delay in submission of thesis/ portfolio beyond the original proposed date	Complete and submit Form TAS-3 to Graduate Division for approval	Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division to approve the application and forward signed Form TAS-3 to GS.
<b>Submission of thesis/ portfolio</b> – according to the proposed date of thesis/ portfolio submission	<p>Check the applicable submission method at GS Platform (Student).</p> <p><i>Conventional Procedure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Upload the first draft of thesis to VeriGuide (<a href="http://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/plagiarism_detection/index.jsp">http://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/plagiarism_detection/index.jsp</a>);</li> <li>(ii) Complete the “Academic Honesty Declaration Statement”, which will be sent from VeriGuide to student via email after uploading;</li> <li>(iii) Submit the required documents to GSO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- *Copies of thesis for dispatch to External Examiner(s);</li> <li>- An abstract of thesis/portfolio in both Chinese and English;</li> <li>- Completed Forms TAS-4, TAS-5, TAS-6 and the “Academic Honesty Declaration Statement”;</li> <li>- Receipts of examination fee and publication fee (for doctoral students); and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Graduate Division to distribute thesis/portfolio and Form TAD-3 (Thesis Assessment Report) to IEs.

Event/Time	Tasks of Students	Tasks of Graduate Divisions
	<p>(iv) Submit *copies of thesis (for IEs) to Graduate Division.</p> <p><i>New Online Procedure:</i></p> <p>(i) Upload the following documents to CUSIS (the thesis will be transferred to VeriGuide via CUSIS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First draft of thesis/portfolio;</li> <li>- An abstract of thesis/portfolio in both Chinese and English;</li> <li>- Completed Form TAS-5 with endorsement from the Supervisor and Head of Graduate Division;</li> <li>- Receipts of examination fee and publication fee (for doctoral students); and</li> </ul> <p>(ii) Submit *copies of thesis (for IEs) to Graduate Division.</p> <p>(*Number of copies depends on the number of examiners)</p>	
<b>Oral examination</b> – after submission of thesis/portfolio to Graduate Division and GS	Attend an oral examination	Graduate Division to arrange oral examination <u>within two months</u> after thesis submission.
<b>Assessment reports</b> – immediately after oral examination		Head of the Graduate Division to collect IEs’ reports and complete Form TAD-5.
<b>Assessment results</b> – available upon completion of assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- may check progress on GS Platform (Students);</li> <li>- act according to instruction of Graduate Division/GS.</li> </ul> <p>(For follow-up actions on different final grades, please refer to the relevant sections below.)</p>	<p><u>Head of the Graduate Division</u> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- complete and return Forms TAD-5, TAD-6, TAD-7 to GS with a copy of IEs’ reports;</li> <li>- copy the above Forms to Supervisor, with a copy of all examiners’ reports;</li> <li>- copy Form TAD-6 (with Part A of examiners’ assessment report) to student for information and follow up action;</li> <li>- provide justification to GS for case of Grade IV.</li> </ul> <p><u>Supervisor</u> to give advice to student, if applicable.</p>

#### 8.4 Declaration of intention to submit thesis/portfolio

Students have to declare their intention to submit the thesis/portfolio by completing and returning the “Declaration Form on Intention to Submit Thesis/Portfolio” (Form TAS-1) to the Graduate Division and



the Graduate School four months before actual submission. Form TAS-1 includes the proposed date of submission and the thesis/portfolio title (with 1-2 pages of summary/abstract of thesis/portfolio) for approval by the Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division.

If the intended date of submission is more than three months ahead of the end of the original normative study period, permission of the Graduate Council is required. Since the normative study period will end three months after the intended date of submission, permission to shorten the normative study period will be handled at the same time. A separate application for shortening the normative study period is not needed.

A Ph.D. student (pre-candidacy) cannot submit a thesis/portfolio. He/She must first proceed to Ph.D. (post-candidacy) before he/she can do so. Students are not allowed to submit theses/portfolios during leave of absence or if the External Examiner(s) has/have not yet accepted the invitation to serve on the Thesis Assessment Committee.

### **8.5 Thesis Assessment Committee**

Upon approval of the thesis/portfolio title and the proposed date for submission, the Graduate Division will nominate members of the Thesis Assessment Committee to evaluate the student's thesis/portfolio for award of the degree sought and provide the student with an opportunity to defend the thesis/portfolio. The composition of the Thesis Assessment Committee is as follows:

- (a) Chairperson – the Head of the Graduate Division or his/her representative with an academic title of Associate Professor or above at CUHK. The Supervisor/Co-supervisor should NOT serve as the Chairperson of the Committee.
- (b) At least three Internal Examiners –
  - (i) the Head of the Graduate Division or his/her nominee as the Chairperson;
  - (ii) the student's Supervisor; and
  - (iii) a third Internal Examiner from within or outside the Graduate Division.

The Internal Examiners must be academic staff of the University. An academic staff who left the University may continue to serve as Supervisor/Co-supervisor/Internal Examiner of the student in the said capacity up to three months after his/her retirement/resignation.

- (c) External Examiner – One for doctoral students and optional for master's students.

An External Examiner must not be an academic staff of the University. Anyone who has been a teaching staff of the University or who has taken part in the teaching of the candidate, even in a visiting capacity, within the last three years of the assessment or anyone who is expected to join the University before the assessment is completed is not eligible for appointment as External Examiner. In addition, an External Examiner must be at least Senior Lecturer in the Commonwealth system or Associate Professor in the American system. In special circumstances, External Examiners without university affiliation but have the rank of Associate Professor (or equivalent) or above are appointed on the basis of relevant professional experience. Two External Examiners will be appointed to assess the thesis/portfolio of a part-time doctoral

student who is a current full-time staff member of the University at the rank of Assistant Professor or above. All nominations of External Examiners must be approved by the Senate and University Council.

With effect from the 2020-21 academic year, the requirement of appointing External Examiners for assessing theses leading to M.Phil.<sup>(4)</sup> becomes optional. Graduate Divisions have the discretion to decide if appointing External Examiners as members of the Thesis Assessment Committees for M.Phil.<sup>(4)</sup> theses is needed. If any External Examiner will be appointed, the Graduate Division concerned should ensure that the appropriate policy and procedures are properly implemented.

Note:

(4) The arrangement of optional external examiner also applies to M.F.A. and M. Mus programmes.

## **8.6 Thesis proposal and defence of proposal**

The thesis proposal and its oral defence can take different forms according to the traditions of different disciplines. In the areas of humanities and social sciences, it may consist of the submission of a written thesis proposal (which will include a description of the research methodology, possibly with pilot data), a presentation followed by an opportunity to be orally examined by a panel. In the area of science, it may take the form of an oral presentation of the research planned and undertaken. Graduate Divisions may also decide on whether the submission of the thesis for acceptance of a journal paper, conference paper or even preprint will satisfy this requirement.

## **8.7 Submission of thesis/portfolio**

Students are not allowed to submit theses for examination unless the External Examiners have accepted the invitation. Students should not contact the External Examiners on matters related to the thesis.

Students should submit their theses/portfolios to the Graduate School according to the proposed schedule, unless permission for deferment has been obtained.

For details please refer to the *General Information for Thesis Preparation and Submission – A Guide for Research Postgraduate and Taught Doctoral Students*.

Upon reviewing the student's thesis and the originality report generated by VeriGuide, the Chairperson of the Thesis Assessment Committee notifies the Graduate School and Graduate Division if the thesis can be sent to the External Examiner for assessment. If the Supervisor finds that the thesis is not suitable for submission, he/she will forward the thesis to the Internal Examiners for a decision. If there is any disagreement among the Internal Examiners, the case will be referred to the Head of the Graduate Division.

It is advisable to note the following before a student submits his/her thesis/portfolio:

(a) Timing

With effect from the 2021-22 academic year, the University will have three degree conferment

dates in each year, i.e. 31 March, 31 July, and 15 October.

Students are required to submit the final thesis before the deadline as stipulated below in order to have their graduation included in the degree conferment date concerned. Students who submit the final version of their thesis before 31 August will normally have the degree conferred in the same year.

Degree Conferment Date	31 March	31 July	15 October
Deadline for final thesis submission to GSO	28 February	30 June	31 August

(b) Formatting

There are specific requirements for thesis formatting such as order of contents, margins, paper size, citation styles, etc. For details, please refer to *Guide to Thesis Formatting* of the *Research and Thesis Writing* available on the GS Platform (Students) for illustrations and samples.

(c) Number of copies

The number of copies to be submitted depends on the number of members serving on the Thesis Assessment Committee. Students should check with their Graduate Division the number of copies required. Except for the copy for External Examiner(s) which should be submitted electronically to the Graduate School, student must submit all other copies directly to the Graduate Division. The Graduate School will send the thesis to the External Examiner(s) for assessment.

(d) Required documents and fees

The thesis must be submitted together with the completed forms and required fees. Please study the *General Information for Thesis Preparation and Submission – A Guide for Research Postgraduate and Taught Doctoral Students* carefully well in advance to familiarize with the requirements.

## 8.8 Oral examination

After dispatch of the thesis/portfolio to the Examiners, an oral examination will be held by the Thesis Assessment Committee. Normally, such an examination will be held within two months after the submission of the thesis/portfolio. Requests for delay should be submitted by the Graduate Division to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval.

The presence of an External Examiner at the oral examination is compulsory for doctoral programmes. Where the External Examiner is unable to be present at the oral examination, a second External Examiner will be appointed to attend the oral examination and undertake the same responsibilities as the first External Examiner.

The Graduate Division will inform the student of the details of the oral examination at least one week in advance. The oral examination covers not only the subject matter of the student's thesis/portfolio but also knowledge in related fields deemed essential to the field of specialisation. The Chairperson of the Thesis Assessment Committee chairs the oral examination and ensures that questions are fair and that the student is given adequate opportunity to answer them.

Even if the Examiners consider that a student's thesis/portfolio is not of the standard for the award of the degree sought, a student may, at the discretion of the Thesis Assessment Committee, be given an oral examination to defend his/her thesis/portfolio.

### 8.9 Written examination

Any written examination, if required, will be arranged by the Graduate Division. The Graduate Division should keep a record of the written examination and provide the record if circumstances require.

### 8.10 Thesis/Portfolio grades and follow-up actions

Examiners are normally given a period of five weeks for assessment of the thesis/portfolio. Students may check the progress of this assessment process on the GS Platform (Students). Upon receipt of all Examiners' reports, the Chairperson of the Thesis Assessment Committee will decide on a final grade within four weeks and through the "Notification to Student on Results of Thesis/Portfolio Assessment" (Form TAD-6) inform the student of the final assessment result and the required follow-up actions, if any. If revisions are required, the Supervisor must ensure that corrections are made satisfactorily within a specified period of time not later than three months.

The grading system of the final grades for the thesis/portfolio and follow-up actions on different thesis/portfolio grades are shown in the following table:

Grade	Status	Follow-up Action
I	Pass	<p>(a) If revision is not required, the student will be recommended for award of degree.</p> <p>(b) If revision is required, the revised thesis should be inspected by Supervisor(s) before the student is recommended for award of degree.</p> <p>Documents to be submitted to GS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- final version of thesis;</li> <li>- completed Form TAS-7; and</li> <li>- completed 'ProQuest Publishing Agreement'" (for doctoral students).</li> </ul>
II	This submission NOT passed. Re-submission allowed and re-examination required.	<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- revise and re-submit the thesis/portfolio to the Thesis Assessment Committee (repeat submission process mentioned in earlier sections); and</li> <li>- pay the re-submission fee and continuation fee (if applicable).</li> </ul>
III	Failure – no re-submission allowed	Graduate Division to submit recommendation to discontinue the student from studies for consideration by GCEXCo.

Grade	Status	Follow-up Action
IV	Recommended for award of research master's degree (for research doctoral programme)	Graduate Division to provide justification for the recommendation (award of master's degree) for consideration of GCExCo.

### 8.11 Re-submission

A student whose thesis/portfolio is not passed but re-submission is allowed and re-examination is required must re-write and re-submit the thesis/portfolio to the satisfaction of the Thesis Assessment Committee before being recommended for the award of degree. The re-submission must be made from the date of the official notification of the result of the first examination and within the student's prescribed maximum period of study.

A student who fails to re-submit the final version of thesis within one year from the date as specified by the Thesis Assessment Committee will be required to discontinue studies.

Apart from ruling in regard to thesis re-submission, the Thesis Assessment Committee may decide whether or not the student should be re-assessed by oral examination.

Only one re-submission of thesis/portfolio is allowed unless exceptional approval is granted by GCExCo on extension of the re-submission deadline and/or further re-submission of the thesis/portfolio.

### 8.12 Deferment of submission of thesis/portfolio

To apply for deferment of submission of a thesis/portfolio beyond the originally proposed date, the form for "Application for Deferment of Submission of Thesis/Portfolio" (Form TAS-3) should be completed and forwarded to the Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division for approval and then to the Graduate School for record. Deferment must NOT exceed the maximum study period. The deferment of the thesis/portfolio submission may result in a delay of the graduation.

### 8.13 Submission of final version of thesis/portfolio

Students are required to submit an electronic copy of the final version of their theses/portfolios. The arrangement is applicable to both research master's and doctoral students, including M.D. and D.Sc., who are required to submit theses in order to fulfil the graduation requirements. For details please refer to the *General Information for Thesis Preparation and Submission – A Guide for Research Postgraduate and Taught Doctoral Students*.

### 8.14 Copyright of theses/portfolio

The University decided that with effect from 2007-08 students should hold the copyright ownership of their theses/portfolios. However, to make theses accessible for wider scholarly and academic purposes, students are requested to sign an agreement to grant the University a worldwide irrevocable, non-exclusive right in respect of the copyright to the theses/portfolios for the purpose of making copies, abstracts, reproducing or otherwise dealing with the theses/portfolios by whatever means, including but

not limited to, digitising, storing, reproducing, and distributing the theses/portfolios in any media and in any format, provided that any and all such acts are only for scholarly and academic purposes and with proper acknowledgment of authorship.

For theses/portfolios submitted before the effective year, the University retains the copyright of each of the theses/portfolios submitted. A request may be made to the Dean of the Graduate School to grant permission to release this copyright to anyone intending to use a part or whole of the materials in any thesis/portfolio in a proposed publication. Students/graduates are expected to give due acknowledgement of their Supervisors' guidance (in case of a translation, students should seek the approval of the original author). Photocopying of theses/portfolios may be made for "fair use" for the purposes of research or private study, without the express permission of the Dean of the Graduate School, in accordance with the prevailing guidelines for copyrighted works.

### **8.15 Confidentiality of thesis/portfolio**

Normally, requests for keeping theses confidential will not be approved. Students and Supervisors who wish to protect potential patent rights (which will belong to the University if the work is done as part of normal duties) should exercise care to exclude sensitive material from the theses/portfolio.

With effect from December 2014, a one-year "restricted access" is granted automatically to the final version of thesis submitted by a postgraduate student. The said period is extended to two years and made applicable to students who submit the final version of their theses after the change comes into effect on 22 April 2022. Access to the table of contents and full text of the thesis will be blocked during this period after which the thesis will be open for public access unless approval from GCEXCo is granted. Students may opt out of the "restricted access" if they wish to release their theses immediately for open access.

Approval for confidentiality for theses for reasons other than patent application may be granted only in exceptional circumstances, normally up to three years (including the "restricted access" period). Each case will have to be submitted to GCEXCo for consideration.

Students (including graduates) are advised to make requests for extending and modifying the restricted access period in writing at least one month prior to the date the restriction shall lapse. Retroactive requests for extending the restricted access period received after the said deadline will not be approved.

## 9. Financial Assistance and Fees

### 9.1 Postgraduate Studentship

Postgraduate studentship (PGS) is available to full-time RPg students and is awarded to them at the time of admission. Students awarded PGS will receive stipends in return for assisting in the teaching and research work of the Graduate Division. The monthly stipend for 2022-23 is HK\$18,025 for M.Phil. and Ph.D. (pre-candidacy), and HK\$18,525 for Ph.D. (post-candidacy). This monthly stipend is payable only within the normative study period and is subject to revision by the University from time to time as it considers fit.

The PGS is a form of financial assistance. Holders of PGS are not employees of the University. PGS is payable monthly in arrears, except in the following situations:

(a) Termination

- (i) For students who are discontinued or withdraw from studies for whatever reason, the award of PGS will automatically be withdrawn with immediate effect.
- (ii) The Graduate Division may terminate the PGS if the student's study performance is found to be unsatisfactory in relation to academic results and/or teaching assistant related duties by giving one month notice in writing to the student. The student may relinquish the PGS award at any time by giving one month notice in writing to the Graduate School or payment equivalent to one month award in lieu of notice.

(b) Suspension

- (i) The PGS award is tenable in Hong Kong. Award of the PGS will be suspended for any period of absence away from Hong Kong unless otherwise approved by the University.
- (ii) The Graduate Division may suspend the PGS for a certain period of time if the student's study performance is found to be unsatisfactory in relation to academic results and/or teaching assistant related duties.
- (iii) For Ph.D. students (without research master's) who cannot pass the candidacy requirement by the end of the 24<sup>th</sup> month of their studies, PGS will be suspended from the 25<sup>th</sup> month and will resume upon passing the candidacy requirement.

(c) Curtailment

The Graduate Division may also curtail the PGS award if the student's study performance is found to be unsatisfactory in relation to academic results and/or teaching assistant related duties. To curtail the PGS award, the student's PGS will be reduced by 20%.

(d) Academic probation

If a student is put on academic probation due to unsatisfactory progress of his/her studies, he/she may be barred from performing teaching or other duties carrying studentships/bursaries, until he/she is advised that probation has been lifted.

Any decision for termination/suspension/curtailment of PGS must be endorsed by the Department/Faculty Board and be approved by the Head of the Graduate Division. The Head of the Graduate Division shall inform the Graduate School about the decision, and the Graduate School shall take follow-up action on financial matters and notify the student concerned.

Termination/suspension/curtailment of PGS can only be made on the basis of unsatisfactory study performance in relation to academic results and/or teaching assistant related duties. Any violation of University rules which falls within the scope of authority of the Graduate School Disciplinary Committee or the Faculty Disciplinary Committee is not covered by this Section and cannot result in a Graduate Division's recommendation to terminate/suspend/curtail student's PGS. In case of doubt, it is for the Dean of the Graduate School to decide whether the Graduate Division can terminate/suspend/curtail the PGS.

A student may submit his/her appeal within two weeks from the date of notification of the termination/suspension/curtailment to the Dean of the Graduate School for review. The Dean of the Graduate School has the discretion to take any steps deemed appropriate during the review process. The Graduate School will notify the student of the result of his/her appeal.

## **9.2 Grants for academic travel and Global Scholarship**

- a) **Research Postgraduate Student Grant for Overseas Academic Activities** (the Grant) are available for full-time RPg students to conduct academic activities abroad, such as presenting papers at academic conferences or conducting research or academic visits overseas. Applications for conference grants will be vetted and approved by Graduate Divisions. Applications for conducting other academic activities will be considered and approved by the Graduate School Bursary Sub-Committee.
- b) With effect from 2020-21, research doctoral students and research master's students may reimburse the expenses of approved overseas academic activities including conference travels up to HK\$30,000 and HK\$10,000 respectively for activities conducted during the whole normative study period. For attending academic conferences, preference will be given to applicants who i) should have at least one accepted paper in a pre-approved conference determined by his/her Graduate Division; ii) should be the presenting author of an accepted paper in that conference; and iii) may be required to comply with additional requirements(s) determined by his/her Graduate Division. For other academic activities, higher priority will be given to those which are directly related to the applicants' research, e.g., field trip for collecting data for thesis, attending workshop/laboratory for acquiring skills which are essential for the applicants' research work.
- c) With effect from March 2022, the Grant has been extended to support the registration fee of virtual attendance of academic conferences and the training fee of virtual academic activities (e.g. summer schools, training courses/ workshops, etc.).
- d) **Global Scholarship Programme for Research Excellence** - to provide funding to support academic exchange of RPg students with a selected group of leading research universities. Full-time Ph.D. students are eligible to apply for the award. The scheme is currently



suspended due to the pandemic, and it will be revamped soon. For details, please contact the Office of Academic Links at [mobilityscheme@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:mobilityscheme@cuhk.edu.hk).

### 9.3 Other financial assistance and scholarships

Besides PGS and the grant/scholarship programme mentioned above, there are Government grants and loans, University bursaries and loans, scholarships and prizes, and financial assistance for disabled students. For more details and application, please consult the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid website at <http://admission.cuhk.edu.hk/finance.html>.

### 9.4 Student fees

Some student fees applicable to RPg students are listed below for reference. For information on other fees, please refer to the Fees table published in the CUHK Calendar at [www.iso.cuhk.edu.hk/english/publications/calendar/](http://www.iso.cuhk.edu.hk/english/publications/calendar/). Fees are subject to revision from time to time.

Types of Fees	HK\$
Tuition fee for UGC-funded RPg Programmes (per annum)	
Full-time students	42,100
Part-time students (2009-10 intake and beyond):	42,100
- Ph.D. Programme	
- M.Phil. Programme	
- Doctor of Music Programme	
- Master of Music Programme	
Continuation fee (per term)	
No course taken	Approx. 1/8 of current annual tuition fee
Any course taken	1/2 of current annual tuition fee
Thesis/Portfolio Examination	
Research doctoral programmes	2,400
Research master's programmes	2,000
Re-submission of thesis in revised form	
Research doctoral programmes	2,400
Research master's programmes	2,000
Fee for application for course and unit exemptions	160
Fee for transcript or certifying letter (per copy)	50
Fee for report on curriculum details	
First copy per application	150
Subsequent copy	50
Fee for replacement of graduate certificate (per copy)	800
Fee for replacement of CU Link Card (each card)	130
Administrative fee for award of taught postgraduate degree to Ph.D. student	8,000

Types of Fees	HK\$
Caution money	450
Graduation fee	450
Fee for reinstatement of studentship	430
Fine for fee payment in arrears	200

### 9.5 Payment schedule of tuition fee

Tuition fee notes are issued by the Donations and Projects Management Unit (DPU) of the Finance Office in electronic format by emails to students' @Link mailbox two weeks prior to the payment due date. Students are advised to check their mailbox according to the following schedules to receive the fee notes and make payments accordingly:

Students of	During Normative Period of Study	After Normative Period of Study
Doctoral programmes	Fee notes will be issued every 6 months of studies - Full fee	Fee notes will be issued every 6 months of studies - Continuation fee if no taught course is taken; or - Full fee if taught course(s) is/are taken.
Master's programmes	Fee notes will be issued in early September (Term 1) and early January (Term 2) - Full fee	Fee notes will be issued every term after the course add/drop period - Continuation fee if no taught course is taken; or - Full fee if taught course(s) is/are taken.

A student who is in arrears shall be subject to fines. Unless written approval is given by the University to defer payment, a student who is in arrears, whether in part or in full, or who has outstanding fees/fines unpaid for more than two weeks shall be considered to have withdrawn from studies.

Apart from caution money, all fees once paid shall not be refunded, unless exceptionally approved by the Bursar and Director of Finance.

## 10. Academic Honesty and Disciplinary Action

### 10.1 Academic honesty

The University places utmost importance on honesty in academic work and intellectual property, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating in examinations, plagiarism and infringement of intellectual property. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary actions including termination of studies or employment. As such, the University has prepared *Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide for Students and Teachers* which is available at [www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/).

The content of the *Guide* is listed below for easy reference:

- Section 1: What is plagiarism
- Section 2: Proper use of source material
- Section 3: Citation styles
- Section 4: Plagiarism and copyright infringement
- Section 5: CUHK regulations on honesty in academic work
- Section 6: CUHK disciplinary guidelines and procedures
- Section 7: Guide for teachers and departments in handling cases of academic dishonesty
- Section 8: Recommended statement to be included in course outlines
- Section 9: Electronic submission of assignments via VeriGuide
- Section 10: Declaration to be attached to assignments

CLEAR has prepared a video (English/Cantonese/Putonghua versions) regarding honesty in academic work ([www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/tnl/acad\\_honesty.html](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/tnl/acad_honesty.html)). Students are strongly encouraged to watch the video so as to have a full understanding of the issue.

### 10.2 Infringement of copyright

The law protects creators of original works such as books, newspapers, computer programmes, photographs, films, sound recordings and broadcasts. The creators hold the exclusive right to use or authorise others to use their work – including reproduction, public performance and broadcasting. The Copyright Ordinance provides certain limited exemptions for learning purposes. “Fair dealing” of a work for research or private study, criticism, review, news reporting, or for giving or receiving instruction in a specified course of study provided by an educational establishment is permitted. Copyright infringement is a serious offence and may lead to civil remedies or even criminal sanctions. For more information, please visit the University’s website at [www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/copyright](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/copyright).

Copyright infringement by the CUHK members, such as excessive downloading of electronic content, violates local laws and University license agreements and will lead to University disciplinary action. For details of the University’s policy on copyright and confidentiality of theses/portfolios, please refer to the *Postgraduate Student Handbook*.

### 10.3 Graduate School Disciplinary Committee

The University may take disciplinary action against a student, who violates any rule or regulation prescribed by the University authorities, and/or commits any misconduct such as plagiarism, wilful damage to any property of the University, fraud, theft, refusal to comply with regulations, offence of immoral nature, etc. Disciplinary actions may take the form of reprimand, suspension of rights, termination of studies, etc. The Graduate School Disciplinary Committee is a sub-committee of the Graduate Council to handle all non-academic disciplinary matters pertaining to postgraduate students and where appropriate, recommend penalties to be imposed.

Upon receipt of a case involving student discipline, the relevant Disciplinary Committee shall constitute a Disciplinary Panel to examine the case and recommend a course of action. The Senate Committee on Student Discipline has resolved that with effect from 2015-16, all disciplinary cases of an academic nature involving postgraduate students shall be handled by the Faculties that offer the courses concerned. The Graduate School Disciplinary Committee will handle non-academic disciplinary matters. The Panel of the Graduate School Disciplinary Committee normally consists of three members of the Committee who, wherever possible, shall not be from the same Faculty as that of the student who is the subject of the complaint.

The student concerned has the following rights:

- a) He/She is allowed to object to any member of the Disciplinary Panel formed for his/her case by giving reasons. The Chairperson of the Committee is the authority for ruling on such objections.
- b) He/She has the right to request a meeting with the Disciplinary Panel before a decision on his/her case is taken. He/She is also allowed to meet the Panel, as the case may be, with an accompanying person whose identity should be limited to: University staff member, fellow University students, parent, sibling, spouse or registered guardian.
- c) He/She has the right to appeal against the verdict and/or penalty passed by the Panel in writing by giving reasons. The matter will then be referred to the Senate Committee on Student Discipline. Late requests for appeals are not accepted.

Details on the workflow on handling discipline cases by the Graduate School Disciplinary Committee can be found at [www.cuhk.edu.hk/gss/Student\\_Staff/GSDCworkflow.pdf](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/gss/Student_Staff/GSDCworkflow.pdf).

## **11. Course Evaluation and Feedback**

### **11.1 Course and Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire**

Course and Teaching Evaluation (CTE) is a key quality assurance mechanism for teaching and learning and is conducted as a compulsory exercise at the University. Students' opinions about the courses they have taken and about the teacher(s) of the course are collected through the CTE Questionnaire. The results will be used for the enhancement of quality of teaching and learning, and of curriculum design. The results will also be made known to the students through controlled access.

### **11.2 Feedback via Progress Report for RPg Studies**

RPg students meet regularly with their Supervisors and they should make use of these chances to give their feedback to the Supervisors about any facets of their studies and research at the University. In particular, during their meetings for completing the Progress Report for RPg Studies, their opinions and feedback can be recorded formally for follow-up actions.

Completed Progress Reports of all RPg students will be endorsed by the Head of the Graduate Division and then submitted to the Graduate School. If there are comments which need special attention, the case will be brought up to the Dean of the Graduate School for perusal and decision on proper actions to be taken.

### **11.3 Exit survey (Survey on Research Postgraduate Programmes)**

Upon graduation, all RPg students will be invited by the Graduate School to complete a Survey on Research Postgraduate Programmes. The survey, which can be regarded as an exit survey, is for the quality assurance of the RPg programmes at the University. It is not for the assessment of individual performance of teachers or students. The purpose is to collect feedback from students on the quality of supervision and learning difficulties for the improvement of the RPg programmes. Individual responses will be kept strictly confidential.

The survey contains questions on admissions, academic supervision, programme of study and campus life, and also personal information without personal identifiers. Graduating students can make use of this chance to help improve the quality of the RPg programmes and the teaching and learning environments of the University.

As stated at the end of the Survey on Research Postgraduate Programmes, students are most welcome to discuss their problems and/or suggestions with their Supervisor, Department Chairperson, Head of the Graduate Division, Faculty Dean or the Dean of the Graduate School.

## 12. Credentials

### 12.1 Academic results

Students can check their academic results (grades and GPA of the courses taken in each term) on CUSIS. Relevant information about academic results, such as the schedule for releasing grades for each term and the guide to the grading system, is available online via the GS Platform (Students). Students may also generate an unofficial transcript via CUSIS. However, it is not an official document and is intended for students' reference or records of their academic results. If a student or a graduate needs a formal document as proof of his/her academic achievements, he/she should apply for a transcript to be issued by the Graduate School.

### 12.2 Transcripts

A transcript is an official proof of a student/graduate's academic achievements. It is a formal document listing the student/graduate's personal data, all the courses taken (including those before and after programme transfer, if applicable), grades achieved, GPAs and remarks such as period of leave taken, programme transfer, academic exchange, penalty, etc. In short, it is a full record of the academic activities and achievements of the student/graduate during his/her period of study at the University.

There are two versions of transcript for different purposes: official copy and student copy. A student who wishes to apply for admission to another educational institution or for employment may apply for an official transcript. The official copy shall not be issued to a student or any private individual. It shall be sent directly to the institution or prospective employer. The student copy is issued to students directly. Students may request an official copy or a student copy, or both, to serve different purposes.

Applications for transcripts can be made online via the Graduate School website at a fee.

### 12.3 Letter of Certification

The Letter of Certification is a letter to certify a student's current status in the University with details of date of admission, programme of study, expected date of graduation, etc. For graduates, the Letter of Certification also states the conferred degree and the graduate certificate print date.

Applications for Letters of Certification can be made online via the Graduate School website at a fee. Applicants are advised to state the purpose of their applications so that the required information can be included in the Letter.

### 12.4 Report on Curriculum Details

The Report on Curriculum Details sets out the study scheme and course descriptions of a student/graduate's Programme. It is usually requested by bodies of accreditation or institutions which need to verify the level of academic attainments of the student/graduate. Applications for Reports on Curriculum Details can be made online via the Graduate School website at a fee.

## **12.5 Graduate Certificate**

The Graduate Certificate is an official proof of the conferment of degree. There is no need for students/graduates to apply for it upon degree conferment. The certificate will be made available for collection at University specified times as announced by GSO.

## **12.6 Replacement of Graduate Certificate**

In case of loss or damage of the original Graduate Certificate, a graduate may apply for a replacement Certificate from the Graduate School at a fee. However, an application for replacement due to change of name after graduation will normally not be accepted.

A graduate should only possess one valid copy, including the replacement copy, of the Certificate, for each degree at any given time. In other words, if a Certificate previously reported lost is subsequently found, the graduate concerned is required to return the replacement Certificate to the Graduate School.

A replacement Certificate follows in general the current format of the Graduate Certificate, with an additional statement "This certificate is re-issued on [DD/MM/YYYY]", and the replacement will also bear the signatures of the current University Officers.

For details of the application procedures, please visit the Graduate School website at <https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/page/ReplacementofGraduateCertificates>.

## **12.7 Certified true copy of the Graduate Certificate**

As no duplicate copy of the Graduate Certificate will be issued, graduates may find it helpful to apply for a certified true copy of the Graduate Certificate for various purposes. Graduates or their representative will need to present the true copy of the Graduate Certificate at the Graduate School and a certified true copy can be prepared immediately at a fee.

## 13. Appeals and Complaints

### 13.1 Complaint process

The University is committed to the provision of the highest standard of education to all its students, and to maintaining an environment that facilitates learning to the fullest extent possible. In so doing, the University has established formal complaint procedures so that any current student who has reasonable ground to believe that he/she might have been treated in an improper manner by a staff member of the University, in an academic or non-academic matter, resulting in his/her being directly affected, may lodge a complaint with the University for an independent investigation.

These procedures are based on the principle that complaints will only be considered on matters of procedure that might have resulted in the complainant being unfairly treated, e.g., a complaint about the grade given by a teacher is admissible on possible procedural errors in determining the grade, but not on a teacher's academic judgment or evaluation with which the student concerned might disagree.

Although no student should be discriminated against or penalised for raising a *bona fide* complaint on reasonable grounds, the University also recognises the rights of individuals who may be wrongfully accused in the circumstances of a complaint. Where it is found that a student has raised a frivolous or vexatious complaint, or used false information in lodging a complaint, the complaint will be dismissed and any ongoing investigation will be terminated. The University reserves the right to invoke its student disciplinary procedure in respect of the student's conduct.

When a complaint is first lodged, the parties concerned should attempt to resolve the matter by informal means as far as possible. If an informal resolution cannot be reached, one or more of the following stages in the procedures should be followed:

- Stage 1: Formal Complaint
- Stage 2: Appeal to the Vice-Chancellor
- Stage 3: Appeal to the Council

Students who wish to lodge a complaint should first look at the *Procedures for Dealing with Student Complaints* at [www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/download/ComplaintProcedures.pdf](http://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/download/ComplaintProcedures.pdf), complete the prescribed complaints form and submit it to the Responsible Authority as set out therein.

Matters related to student discipline and allegations of sexual harassment will be dealt with by the Senate Committee on Student Discipline and in accordance with the University's prevailing Policy Against Sexual Harassment respectively.

### 13.2 Policy against sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is prohibited by law in Hong Kong. The University is committed to eliminating and preventing sexual harassment and will not condone any act of sexual harassment committed by its students and staff members.



There is a well-defined mechanism for dealing with allegations or complaints of sexual harassment and for providing proper redress if and when harassment occurs. By clearly stating the University's stance on sexual harassment and putting an appropriate procedure in place, the University aims to cultivate a sense of justice, fairness and openness in the University community in relation to gender equality and the furtherance of mutual respect. For more information on the legal definition and examples of sexual harassment and details of CUHK's policy, please refer to the website of the Committee Against Discrimination and Sexual Harassment at <http://cadsh.cuhk.edu.hk/en-gb/>. The current officers designated by the Panel Against Discrimination and Sexual Harassment to deal with enquiries and complaints are:

Convenor	Professor Margaret Ip	<a href="mailto:margaretip@cuhk.edu.hk">margaretip@cuhk.edu.hk</a>
Member	Professor Lam Hon Ming	<a href="mailto:honming@cuhk.edu.hk">honming@cuhk.edu.hk</a>
Secretary	Ms. Yvonne Luk	<a href="mailto:yvonneluk@cuhk.edu.hk">yvonneluk@cuhk.edu.hk</a>

Any staff member or student of the University who (a) has been sexually harassed by another staff member or student; (b) has witnessed an act of sexual harassment committed by another staff member or student of the University; or (c) has been expressly authorised by a victim to act on his/her behalf may approach the Panel Against Discrimination and Sexual Harassment. A flowchart summarizing the procedures to handle sexual harassment complaints is available at [http://policy-harass.cuhk.edu.hk/images/download-center/Flow\\_chart.pdf](http://policy-harass.cuhk.edu.hk/images/download-center/Flow_chart.pdf).

### **13.3 Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance**

As a data user and a responsible public institution, CUHK undertakes to comply with the requirements of the data protection principles set out in the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, and to ensure that personal data kept are accurate, securely kept and used only for the purpose for which they have been collected. All students are required to comply with all relevant provisions of the Ordinance and observe the following six Data Protection Principles under the Ordinance in the collection, use, disclosure and retention of personal data:

Principle 1 – Purpose and Manner of Collection: this provides for the lawful and fair collection of personal data and sets out the information a data user must give to a data subject when collecting personal data from that subject.

Principle 2 – Accuracy and Duration of Retention: this provides that personal data should be accurate, up-to-date and kept no longer than necessary.

Principle 3 – Use of Personal Data: this provides that unless the data subject gives consent otherwise personal data should be used for the purposes for which they were collected or a directly related purpose.

Principle 4 – Security of Personal Data: this requires appropriate security measures to be applied to personal data (including data in a form in which access to or processing of the data is not practicable).

- Principle 5 – Information to be Generally Available: this provides for openness by data users about the kinds of personal data they hold and the main purposes for which personal data are used.
- Principle 6 – Access to Personal Data: this provides for data subjects to have rights of access to and correction of their personal data.

For details of the Ordinance and its provisions please refer to the website of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong at [www.pcpd.org.hk](http://www.pcpd.org.hk). Students are also requested to observe the “*Information Security Best Practices*”, especially the “*Guidelines for Securely Managing Mobile/Removable Devices*” listed on the ITSC website at [www.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk/user-trainings/information-security-best-practices](http://www.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk/user-trainings/information-security-best-practices). It is important that any incident or suspected incident of violation of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance such as the loss of devices which carry identifiable personal or sensitive data, is reported to the University as soon as possible so that remedial actions can be taken to prevent or minimise the damages caused to the data subjects, the University and all other parties concerned. Please refer to the *Information Security Incident Report Policy and Procedures* under *Information Security Policies* posted on the ITSC website.

For further information, please visit the University’s website at [www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/pdo/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/pdo/).

#### **13.4 Whistleblowing Policy**

The Whistleblowing Policy is established to enable staff, students and other relevant parties to report their concern, in good faith and on a strictly confidential basis, about perceived irregularities in the operation of the University and the activities undertaken by its staff members that fall outside the scope of existing University policies and procedures. Members of the University can be assured that they can report such perceived irregularities without fear of reprisal or retribution.

For further details, please refer to the policy document at [www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/download/WhistleblowingPolicy.pdf](http://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/download/WhistleblowingPolicy.pdf)

## 14. Services and Support for Students

### 14.1 Chinese University Student Information System (CUSIS)

CUSIS provides a “centralised” interface for students to obtain the following information and services through a personal account:

- Personal record
- Handbooks, Study Schemes
- Course selection and course add/drop
- Academic results
- Online application for programme change, course and unit exemptions, leave of absence, official documents, etc.

Teachers and staff of Graduate Divisions can also login CUSIS for information and functions for their reference and use.

### 14.2 Graduate School Platform

The GS Platform (Students) allows students to obtain the following information and services on the Graduate School website:

- Rules and regulations, guidelines
- Announcements
- Thesis supervision and submission
- Improving Postgraduate Learning (IPL), academic honesty
- Useful forms

Teachers and staff of Graduate Divisions may also login to the GS Platform (Divisions) for information and reference.

### 14.3 Student Advisory System

The University has put in place a Programme/Division-level advisory system, which focuses on academic advising, to support students’ academic development and to overcome academic problems. Advisors, apart from giving advice on academic matters, can become resource persons and provide information on other whole-person development opportunities to students.

Under the implementation plan approved by the Senate, every student is assigned one academic advisor (Level I Advisor) by the Graduate Division. Graduate Divisions are also requested to nominate designated academic advisors (Level II Advisor) for students who need further support. Graduate Divisions/Programmes will have the flexibility to decide on the details of the appointment of Levels I and II advisors, such as whether Levels I and II advisors are to be the same person for a particular student, and the number of academic advisors for the Graduate Division, etc. so as to suit the different needs of Graduate Divisions/Programmes.

#### **14.4 University Library**

The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library is one of the major academic research libraries in East Asia. It comprises the University Library and six other Libraries – Ch'ien Mu Library at New Asia College, Elisabeth Luce Moore Library at Chung Chi College, Wu Chung Library at United College, Li Ping Medical Library at the teaching hospital in Shatin, Architecture Library and Lee Quo Wei Law Library.

With over 2.7 million print volumes, 4.8 million ebooks, more than 150,000 electronic journal subscriptions and 900 databases, the Library welcomes around 2.3 million visits per year. Collections reflect CUHK's bilingual and multicultural environment. The electronic collections can be accessed and library resources (*LibrarySearch*) can be searched online at [www.lib.cuhk.edu.hk](http://www.lib.cuhk.edu.hk). Books can be borrowed from any of the libraries. As part of the *Hong Kong Academic Library Link (HKALL)* students can also use books from the other seven UGC-funded university libraries in Hong Kong.

In addition to a roving help team, librarians offer specialist support in person, via email or phone. Library orientation sessions are organised for new students at the beginning of each academic year. Workshops are held throughout the year, so that students can find, use and apply the information they need effectively. Information guides and news about all of the Libraries are available on the Library website.

#### **14.5 Language training**

Language courses for non-major students are mainly organised by the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) and Yale-China Chinese Language Centre (CLC). There are practical language courses, such as Postgraduate Presentation Skills and Putonghua/Cantonese for non-native speakers, or courses in special topics like Chinese Reading and Chinese Culture.

A Supervisor may include additional language courses in a student's study scheme as considered necessary or appropriate to improve the student's ability to understand the literatures in the student's field of research as well as in the presentation of his/her own ideas and research outputs. Students may also take the initiative to request the Supervisor to add language courses in their study scheme. In both scenarios, the additional workload to be imposed on the students must be considered.

Interested students please visit the websites of ELTU at [www.cuhk.edu.hk/eltu/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/eltu/) and CLC at [www.cuhk.edu.hk/clc/new/en/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clc/new/en/).

#### **14.6 Independent Learning Centre**

The Independent Learning Centre (ILC) provides a resource-rich environment for students to reflect on and engage in their role as Independent Learners. Through specialised workshops, individual consultations, online resources, and guided study plans, ILC helps learners to improve their communication and study skills, as well as plan their own learning strategies.

Please visit the ILC website ([www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk](http://www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk)) for information about its services and resources available to students.

## **14.7 Information Technology Services Centre**

The Information Technology Services Centre (ITSC) provides a comprehensive range of IT infrastructure and services, and integrates information technology into almost every facet of university life.

MyCUHK, the one-stop University portal, offers personalised access to CUSIS, University administrative systems, cloud email service, library services, a wide range of online services and campus information. The User Areas (1/F, Pi Ch'iu Building) and the Learning Commons (6/F, Wu Ho Man Yuen Building) are both equipped with computers, audio visual facilities and multi-functional printers to provide printing, scanning and photocopying services. They also have functional spaces to facilitate students' individual studies and group works.

For further information, please visit the ITSC website at [www.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk](http://www.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk).

## **14.8 Student services and student activities**

CUHK is committed to providing its students with a holistic and balanced education, consisting of both formal and non-formal elements. The formal element is primarily academic pursuit, while the non-formal element includes non-academic and extracurricular activities and personal education. OSA aims to facilitate the all-round personal development and growth of students of the University. It works with other functional units within the University and external resources to provide quality non-formal educational experience and support to students.

OSA provides a wide range of services for eligible postgraduate students as follows:

- (a) Wellness and counselling
- (b) Learning and cultural enhancement
- (c) Career planning and development
- (d) Student development and resources

For details of the services, please visit the OSA website at [www.osa.cuhk.edu.hk/](http://www.osa.cuhk.edu.hk/).

## **14.9 Student hostels**

- (a) On-campus housing - Full-time RPg students are eligible to apply for hostel residence. Please visit the website at [www.pgh.cuhk.edu.hk/](http://www.pgh.cuhk.edu.hk/) for details. However, continuing students are not eligible and may consider off-campus housing.
- (b) Off-campus housing - The information is available on the off-campus housing information website (<http://lces.osa.cuhk.edu.hk/non-local-services/housing/off-campus/introduction/>), which is managed by OSA. Students will find useful information such as accommodation for rental in relevant districts, points to note in signing tenancy agreements, FAQ and useful links on the website. There is also an online forum for students to share housing information and look for flat-mates.

#### **14.10 Student association**

RPg students are eligible to join the Postgraduate Student Association of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUPSA), taking part in the following:

- (a) Assisting postgraduates with issues related to campus life, academic and administrative aspects in the University.
- (b) Attending various university committees and taking part in University management.
- (c) Organising, co-organising and promoting events and recreational activities for postgraduates.
- (d) Providing new postgraduate with information and help for settling down in campus, as well as holding the orientation week.
- (e) Representing CUHK postgraduates to attend outer conferences and social events.

Please visit the CUPSA Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/cuhk.cupsa/> for more information and the latest activities.

#### **14.11 University Health Service**

The University Health Service (UHS) provides on-campus medical, dental and health promotion services to full-time students and staff members and their dependants. Its medical team includes physicians, dental surgeons and other allied health professionals. The health clinic is equipped with a minor operating theatre, a dispensary, a medical laboratory and a physiotherapy unit to provide primary medical and dental care services. For specific or more serious medical conditions, the clinic can arrange referrals to specialists. The Dental Unit provides both preventive and curative services, as well as dental prostheses. The Health Education Unit organises regular talks, student activities, awareness campaigns, and vaccination programmes.

Appointments can be made via telephone, Internet or in person. Medical services are generally free of charge, whereas the Dental Unit charges a nominal fee. Please visit the UHS website at [www.uhs.cuhk.edu.hk/](http://www.uhs.cuhk.edu.hk/) for more information.

In case of emergency, members of the University should seek prompt treatment at the Accident and Emergency Department of the Prince of Wales Hospital in Shatin or any Hospital Authority hospital. To call an ambulance, please dial 999.

#### **14.12 Other cultural/recreational/sports facilities and services**

There are other sports facilities, cultural and recreational facilities and services for students:

- (a) Physical education and sports facilities

In order to promote students' health and fitness, the University provides a variety of sports facilities and courses for students and staff members, details of which are available at [www.peu.cuhk.edu.hk/en-gb/](http://www.peu.cuhk.edu.hk/en-gb/).

(b) Sir Run Run Shaw Hall

The Sir Run Run Shaw Hall is the biggest and professionally-equipped theatre in the University suitable for holding ceremonies, assemblies, meetings, lectures and examinations, and for staging concerts, drama and dance performances, film shows and exhibitions. Temporary studio setting is possible on request. Booking for cultural activities is welcomed. For further information, please visit the Hall's website at [www.srrsh.cuhk.edu.hk/en](http://www.srrsh.cuhk.edu.hk/en).

(c) The Office of the Arts Administrator

The Office of the Arts Administrator is responsible for presenting and organising arts programmes, promoting and coordinating campus-wide arts activities, and providing educational opportunities in the arts for students' holistic development. For more information of the Office, please visit their website at [www.srrsh.cuhk.edu.hk/en](http://www.srrsh.cuhk.edu.hk/en).

(d) Parking

Students may obtain parking labels from the Security Office. Please refer to the University Traffic and Parking Regulations in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* or visit the Security Office website at [www.scu.cuhk.edu.hk/index.php/en/](http://www.scu.cuhk.edu.hk/index.php/en/) for more information.

(e) MTR Student Travel Scheme

Full-time students may apply for the scheme and enjoy the MTR ticket discount. For details, please refer to the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid website at <http://admission.cuhk.edu.hk/aid/application.html>.

#### 14.13 Safety and environmental issues

CUHK is devoted to cultivating a positive safety culture through the concerted efforts of all departments/units. The University Safety Office co-ordinates activities to support this mission, including provision of safety manuals and guidelines for the University community, organising health and safety talks and training courses such as *Getting to know the Safety Instructions of Chemicals*, *Safety Talk on Manual Handling Operation and Prevention of Back Injuries*, *Safety Talk on Health Hints on the use of Display Screen Equipment*. The Office also coordinates a list of departmental safety officers. Students and staff may contact the Office directly or the departmental safety officers if they need advice on safety issues. The Office's website is [www.cuhk.edu.hk/useo/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/useo/).

CUHK is a socially responsible institution of higher education committed to sustainable development. We value university social responsibility (USR) and articulate our USR priorities and connect them to sustainable development in the Strategic Plan. We are determined to translate USR into action to make a difference. The Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Office (SRSDO) is charged to advise senior management on key areas of USR and to execute, evaluate and enhance the USR action initiatives outlined in the Strategic Plan. For more details, please visit the office website at <https://www.srsdo.cuhk.edu.hk/en-gb/>.

## **Sources of information contained in this Code of Practice**

### CUHK units:

Academic and Quality Section, the Registry  
Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research  
Communications and Public Relations Office  
CUHK Library  
English Language Teaching Unit  
Independent Learning Centre  
Information Technology Services Centre  
Office of Admissions and Financial Aid  
Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services  
Office of Student Affairs  
Postgraduate Halls  
Postgraduate Student Association of The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Physical Education Unit  
Registration and Examinations Section, the Registry  
Security Office  
Sir Run Run Shaw Hall  
Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Office  
The Office of the Arts Administrator  
University Health Service  
University Safety Office  
Yale-China Chinese Language Centre

### Websites of other bodies:

Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data  
Immigration Department of the Government of the HKSAR

---

July 2023