2. Basic Information on Programmes and Courses

2.1 Research postgraduate programmes

The Graduate School offers through 59 Graduate Divisions a total of 97 research programmes, namely those examined by scrutiny of an extended research dissertation and an oral examination and are leading to the degrees of PhD, DMus, MPhil, MMus and MFA. As of September 2017, the number of research postgraduates programmes offered by CUHK was as tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Type</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral programmes</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DMus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's programmes</td>
<td>MPhil</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MMus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Articulated” MPhil-PhD programmes</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New programmes may be proposed by Graduate Divisions/Faculties or initiated by the University in accordance with its strategic development. Such initiative may be mobilised 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 at the Graduate School website.

2.2 MPhil-PhD Programmes

Any Graduate Division that has an MPhil and a PhD Programme may choose to convert to the articulated MPhil-PhD Programmes. New programmes can be created directly in this mode.

The framework of articulated MPhil-PhD Programmes introduces more flexibility in the entry requirement for PhD 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 MPhil-PhD Programmes should state their intention to pursue either an MPhil or a PhD. The minimum requirement for admission to an articulated MPhil-PhD Programme is the same as that for an MPhil Programme. Graduate Divisions will steer applicants into the appropriate stream, according to their research ability, potential and interest.

More information about the articulated MPhil-PhD Programme can be found in Section 5 of this document.
2.3 Strategic goal statement for research postgraduate programmes

As a first-class 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 in mind:

(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 the Department concerned.

(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 the outside 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 programmes

The University has clear expectations of the attributes of its graduates. The research programmes aim to educate researchers to embark on careers that would 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 either 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 to 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 at both doctoral and master’s level, 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 students’ normative period of study and it must be recommended by the Graduate Division concerned and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

The remaining normative and maximum periods of study for both students changing from full-time to part-time or students changing from part-time to full-time are computed based on the following principle – ratios of time spent by part-time students as compared with full-time equivalents:

(a) 2/3 for MPhil students during the normative study period;

(b) 3/4 for PhD 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 programmes

Committed to providing world class education and training to researchers, CUHK Departments and Faculties are keen at 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 organizations of distinguished standing and of strategic alliance value to CUHK.

(b) Such programmes are for PhD 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

A 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 MPhil-PhD 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 3 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. Besides, 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 4 letters and 4 numerals. The first 4 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5000</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma/Master’s courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6000</td>
<td>Advanced Master’s courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7000</td>
<td>Doctoral courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8000</td>
<td>Thesis monitoring courses, e.g., Thesis Research courses of “articulated” MPhil-PhD Programmes or thesis monitoring courses for other MPhil and PhD programmes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 pre-requisite and co-requisite requirements, unless otherwise stipulated by the Programme.

As resolved by the Senate, no double-coding of a single course is allowed.

2.9 Cross-institutional courses and Joint Centre for Advanced Study

In order to enhance students’ access to educational resources available elsewhere in Hong Kong, local universities have entered into collaboration to share RPg courses. Students from local 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 Enrollment Scheme

Participating universities are CityU, CUHK, EdU, 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 to be available for enrollment 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 the University Grants Committee’s (UGC) 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 Chemistry, Mathematics, Molecular Medicine and Physics are offered.

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