

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@CUHK
- Campus 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 Programme Director 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. 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 Programme Director 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

Except for periods of approved leave, all TPg students are required to be in residence during their period of study.

A TPg student is classified as being in residence if

- (a) He/She is attending courses as prescribed by his/her programme on a regular basis; and
- (b) He/She is present in Hong Kong except for absences not exceeding one month aggregate in an academic year; or
- (c) He/She is away from Hong Kong and his/her programme of studies approved by the Graduate Council and the Senate so provides.

4.5 Normative and maximum study periods

A TPg student is required to complete all 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 taught programmes are available 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. In any case, the minimum normative study period is 12 months for master's programmes and 24 months for doctoral programmes.

4.7 Programme change

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

Scenarios	Approval Procedures
(a) Change to another programme of a different Graduate Division	1. Heads of both Graduate Divisions to endorse 2. GCEExCo to approve
(b) Change to another programme in 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. Programme Director to endorse 2. Graduate Division Head to approve and report to GS 3. GCEExCo to note
(c) Change to another programme in 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. Programme Director and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. GCEExCo to approve
(d) Change of the mode of study (full-time/part-time)	1. Programme Director and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. Dean of GS to approve

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.

Leave of absence for non-medical reasons is limited to a maximum of one year in the first instance, and any extension is limited to one more year, beyond which no further extension will be granted, unless approval from the Graduate Council is obtained in special cases. Leave period for TPg students is calculated on the basis of term(s), for example, a student taken a month off will be recorded as taken leave for the given term, if approved.

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

Leave of Absence	Approval Procedures
(a) Leave for a period up to 1 year	Graduate Division Head to approve
(b) Leave for more than 1 year and up to 2 years	1. Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. Dean of GS to approve
(c) Leave for more than 2 years	1. Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. GCExCo to approve

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 November 2023, CUHK's enrolment of postgraduate students is around 14,000, including a substantial portion of non-local 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 TPg students:

- (a) Full-time students may take up employment or study-related internships as arranged or endorsed by institutions. All students, local and non-local, are required to comply with the CUHK policy on taking up of employment 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 recent 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 24 months' stay on time limitation only without other conditions of stay provided that normal immigration requirements are met.

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.

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. Students who are approaching the end of their normative study period may be allowed to take up full-time employment under the condition that they have already completed all graduation requirements of the programme, subject to the endorsement of the Programme Director and Head of the Graduate Division, and approval of the Dean of the Graduate School.

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