4. Registration / residence requirements / leaves

4.1 Orientation

Each year in August, the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) arranges an orientation programme for new postgraduate students. The programme includes both topics on academic matters and campus life. Some of them are listed below:

- Postgraduate Studies at CUHK
- Independent Learning at CUHK
- Honesty in Academic Work
- CUSIS and My Study
- Introduction to Student Services
- Mental Wellness and Postgraduate Studies
- Preventing Sexual Harassment
- Introduction to CUPSA and CSSA
- TIPS for Non-local Students

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

4.2 Student registration

An applicant who has been offered admission shall pay the fees and register by respective deadlines. Anyone who fails to pay fees and register after the deadline shall be considered to have declined the offer. An applicant who has been offered admission but wishes to defer registration should submit an application on a prescribed form before the start of the academic year to the Head of Graduate Division for approval.

A student is not allowed to register simultaneously for another course of study leading to the award of a degree, diploma or certificate either at CUHK or at any other tertiary institution unless an application has been submitted in advance to the Graduate Division concerned, endorsed by the Faculty concerned and approved by the Graduate Council. A student in breach of this regulation will be required to discontinue studies at the University.

4.3 Course selection / withdrawal / additions

The schedules for course selection and course add/drop are announced by the Graduate School to new students and returning students via the “Preparation for the new academic year” posted on the homepage of the Graduate School. Course selection and course add/drop are conducted via the Chinese University Student Information System (CUSIS) accessible on the homepage of the Graduate School. However, if students wish to register for course(s) outside their own study schemes, they should complete the prescribed form and obtain approval from their Programme Director and the
departments which offer the courses. All relevant reference materials, such as the study schemes and teaching timetables are available at CUSIS.

Students will be able to check their own course register during and after the course selection period at CUSIS. However, the course register will be tentative until the Graduate Division’s approval has been obtained after the add/drop period. Selection of courses with limited quota is subject to the Graduate Division’s confirmation. Hence, students should check their course register before attending classes.

Courses of each programme listed in the 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 “Postgraduate Teaching Time-table” at the Graduate School homepage 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 concerned. Only under special circumstances may a student apply for permission to withdraw from a course or enroll in a new course after the specified period of the teaching term. Such an application should be made according to prescribed procedures and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval. A student who withdraws from a course without approval will be given a failure grade for the course.

4.4 Residence requirements

Residence requirements, as defined below, are applicable to all TPg students, full-time or part-time:

(a) A student is classified as being in residence if s/he is attending courses as prescribed by his/her programme 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 an academic year and is attending courses, if required, is regarded as in residence.

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

4.5 Normative and maximum study periods

A 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 all requirements for graduation within the maximum study period which shall include any periods of leave of absence and suspension of studies. A student who cannot complete all requirements within the maximum study period is required to discontinue studies at the University.
The normative and maximum study periods of different taught programmes can be found from the General Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies on the homepage of the Graduate School. 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 period of his/her respective programme, may, according to the prescribed procedures, apply on a prescribed form to the Graduate Division for shortening of his/her study period for approval by the Graduate Council subject to the statutory minimum of 12 months for Master's programmes and 24 months for doctoral programmes.

4.7 Change programme

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Approval procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Change to another programme of a different Graduate Division</td>
<td>1. Heads of both Graduate Divisions to endorse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. GCExCo to approve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Change to another programme in the same Graduate Division, where period of study carried over is equal to or NOT more than 50% of the normative period for the new programme</td>
<td>1. Graduate Division Head to approve and report to GS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. GCExCo to note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Change to another programme in the same Graduate Division, where period of study carried over is more than 50% of the normative period of the new programme</td>
<td>1. Graduate Division Head to endorse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. GCExCo to approve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Change of the mode of study (full-time/part-time)</td>
<td>1. Graduate Division Head to endorse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Dean of the GS to approve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8 Leave of absence

In case of illness necessitating absence exceeding three weeks, a student shall submit an application together with a medical certificate signed by the Director of the University Health Service or a registered medical practitioner(s) to obtain endorsement from the Graduate Division Concerned and permission from the Dean of the Graduate School.

On the other hand, applications for leave of absence for non-medical reasons are handled as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leave of absence</th>
<th>Approval procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(a) Leave for 3 weeks to 1 year^ Graduate Division Head to approve
(b) Leave between 1 to 2 years^  
1. Graduate Division Head to endorse
2. Dean of the GS to approve
(c) Leave for more than 2 years^  
3. Graduate Division Head to endorse
4. GCExCo to approve

^Leave of absence 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.

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 December 2015, CUHK’s enrolment of postgraduate students is around 12,600 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 HKSAR Government 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. As their stay in Hong Kong is governed by law, all non-local students must comply with conditions and requirements attached to their student visa.

The following are some highlights of recent immigration arrangements which are applicable to non-local TPg students:

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

(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. (*Students are required to comply with CUHK policy on concurrent registration, which is applicable to both local and non-local students.)

(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 12 months’ stay on time limitation 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.
Relevant information on student visa can be found on the website of the Hong Kong Immigration Department at [http://www.immd.gov.hk/](http://www.immd.gov.hk/).

### 4.10 Employment

According to the Regulations, a full-time student is not allowed to take up any full-time employment, paid or unpaid, during term time within the normative period of study. For students who are approaching the end of the normative study period, they will be considered for taking up full-time jobs under the condition that the student concerned had completed all programme requirements.

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