5. Progress towards graduation

5.1 Graduation requirements

All TPg students are required to fulfill certain requirements for graduation. Some of the requirements are compulsory for all while some others are specific to individual programmes or individual students. While each type of graduation requirements will be discussed in the following sections in general, students should refer to the course list, course descriptions and study scheme of their own programmes in the Postgraduate Student Handbook for the specific requirements.

5.2 Course requirements

The course requirements list the required courses and elective courses, if applicable, of the programme. Students should take at least one course in each term, unless otherwise stated in the study scheme or approved by the Graduate Division Head concerned.

5.3 Postgraduate taking undergraduate courses

Postgraduate enrolment in undergraduate courses (4000 level or below) is allowed in situations including the following:

(a) Taking undergraduate courses as make-up requirements

A student with a first degree in subject A admitted to a postgraduate degree programme in subject B may have to make up some undergraduate courses in subject B.

(b) Taking undergraduate courses which are not required

Postgraduate students may take other undergraduate courses, typically in a different subject, purely for broadening and interest (e.g., calligraphy or music), or to develop other skills (e.g., language, including a third language).

As taking undergraduate courses may impose additional pressure on the overall workload, postgraduate students who wish to take undergraduate courses should first consult their Programme Directors.

On the other hand, programmes normally can only include up to 15% of undergraduate courses in the programme requirements. If Graduate Divisions request to include more than 15% undergraduate courses in the programme requirements, approval from GCExCo is required.
5.4 Other requirements

Graduate Divisions may prescribe additional graduation requirements for students of their programmes. Some of these requirements are listed below as examples:

- Language requirement, e.g., knowledge of spoken Cantonese and written Chinese may be required for some courses taught in Cantonese and English
- Graduate Divisions may specify a minimum cumulative GPA (e.g., 2.0) for graduation
- Additional requirements for individual students may be set up by the Graduate Division, depending on the academic progress of the students
- Students of taught doctoral programmes are required to submit a thesis and pass an oral examination for graduation. The schedule, procedures, and assessment of the thesis and oral examination will be described in details in a later Chapter “Submission of Thesis for Taught Doctoral Programmes”.

5.5 Course and unit exemptions

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

(a) check their eligibility by reading the Policy on Course and Unit Exemption for Postgraduate Students (available in the Postgraduate Student Handbook)
(b) consult the Graduate Division concerned on the possibility of granting course and unit exemption
(c) complete the prescribed online application form and attach any required supporting document to the Graduate Division via CUSIS
(d) pay the required fee

The decision in each case will rest with the recommendation of the Graduate Division Head concerned and be subject to approval by the Dean of the Graduate School on a case-by-case basis, taking into account individual circumstances.

5.6 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 in a postgraduate programme with the language of instruction within the programme.

(b) After admission, ensure that postgraduate students have the opportunity to continue strengthening their language proficiency as is relevant to the postgraduate programmes in which they are enrolled.

(c) Provide postgraduate students, especially those admitted with no prior exposure to the Chinese language and Chinese culture, opportunities to acquire such exposure before their graduation.
Currently, there is a university-wide English language proficiency requirement for admission into postgraduate programmes. In addition, the existing policy requires each Graduate Division to adopt one of the following three arrangements:

(a) offer all relevant postgraduate courses in English;
(b) offer all relevant postgraduate courses in English and/or Putonghua;
(c) use Cantonese in some relevant postgraduate courses.

Recent statistics shows that the majority of postgraduate students at the university are proficient in Chinese as well as in English, though there is a small number of overseas students who do not have prior exposure to the Chinese language and the Chinese culture.

In addition, postgraduate students will have other language needs while in attendance at the University. They might 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 might have specific needs for proficiency in a certain language (such as proficiency in Japanese in the Japanese Studies programme), or the programme might for general educational purposes have a third language requirement.