

## 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.

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 concerned, endorsed by the Faculty concerned, 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 on 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 on 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 provided he/she is also attending courses, if required, shall be regarded as in residence.
- (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) and (c) 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

Students are expected to graduate at the end of the normative study period, except for those who have applied and obtained approval for alteration of their periods of study. Students are normally expected to submit their theses (note: in this document “thesis” shall include – for D.Mus., M.Mus., and M.F.A. students – the student’s portfolio) by the end of the normative study period, i.e., the normal time period allowed for completion of all programme requirements, unless an extension has been granted.

A student who has not submitted his/her thesis and complete the programme requirements within the normative period of study, or the submission is not passed, will be put on “continuing status” until successful completion of the thesis or upon reaching the maximum study period. The student concerned shall apply to the Graduate School for continuation of studies beyond the normative study period. Continuing students shall pay a “continuation fee” per term unless they continue to take courses, in which case full tuition fees apply.

A student must complete the graduation requirements within the maximum study period, which shall include any periods of leave of absence and suspension of studies. A student who has not completed all requirements for graduation within the maximum study period shall be discontinued from studies at the University.

The normative and maximum study periods of different research programmes shall be as follows:

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. (under 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 end of the normative study period of his/her respective programme may seek endorsement from the Graduate Division concerned for shortening of his/her period of study for approval by the Graduate Council, subject to the statutory minimum of 12 months for master's programmes and 24 months for doctoral programmes. The programme requirements must be satisfied by the new end date and in particular the thesis submitted would be graded 'Pass' and if revisions would be required, the Supervisor shall confirm that the revised thesis meets the requirements as decided by the Thesis Assessment Committee before the student would be recommended for award of the degree, and by a specified period - no later than three months from the date of official notification of the examination result.

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. The award of PGS will be automatically withdrawn upon the end of the new normative study period.

#### **4.7 Transfer of candidature, change of study programme or study mode**

Students may apply for transfer of candidature and/or and change of field of study (or programme) or study mode.

A student who has registered in a research doctoral programme may, on the recommendation of the Graduate Division concerned and with the approval of the Graduate Council, be transferred to a research master's programme provided that such a transfer takes place before the thesis or portfolio is submitted.

A student who has registered in a research master's programme and has completed the first year of studies may, on the recommendation of the Graduate Division concerned and with the approval of the Graduate Council, be transferred to a research doctoral programme provided that the student meets the admission requirements of the doctoral programme concerned.

A student admitted under the "M.Phil.-Ph.D. programmes" may be permitted to transfer between M.Phil. and Ph.D. (pre-candidacy) on the recommendation of the Graduate Division concerned. Transfer from the Ph.D. (post-candidacy) to M.Phil. stream may be permitted exceptionally, on the recommendation of the Graduate Division concerned and with the approval of the Graduate Council as shown in the diagram below.

The period of study of a student changing from research master's to research doctoral in the same field of study shall count from the commencement date of his/her research master's studies.

Non-articulated M.Phil./Ph.D.	
1. Transfer of candidature (from M.Phil. to Ph.D.): for cases meeting entry requirements and completing the first year of studies	1. Supervisor to endorse 2. Graduate Division Head to approve and report to GCExCo to note
2. 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

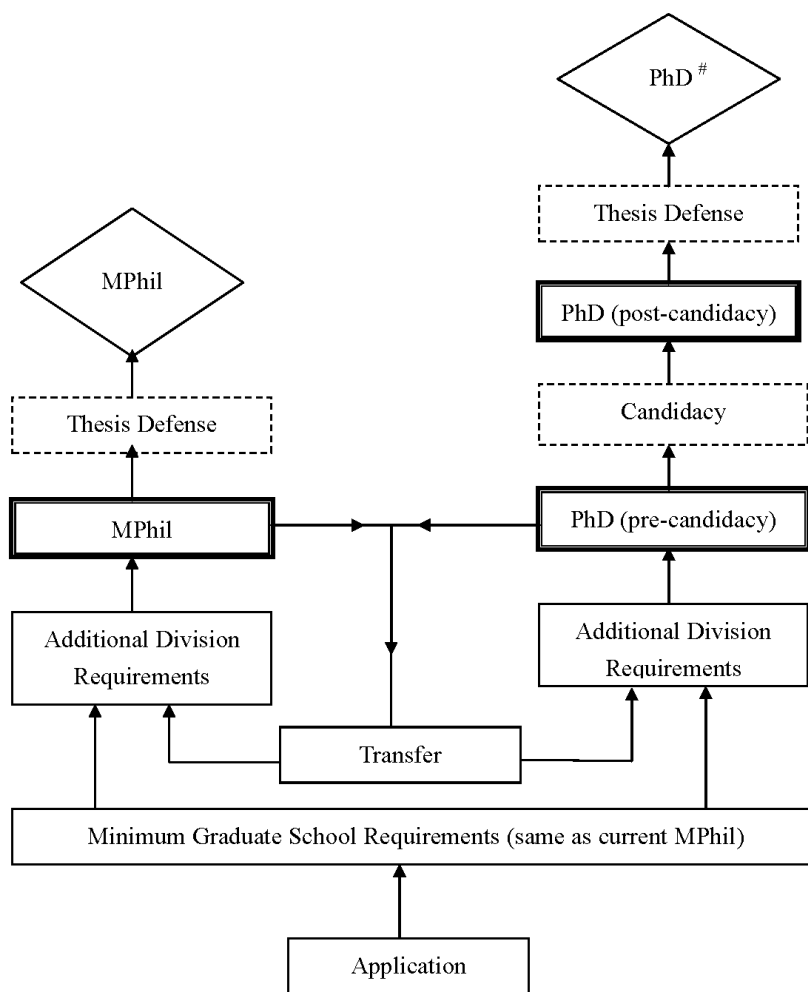
3. Transfer of candidature (from M.Phil. to Ph.D.); other special cases	1. Supervisor and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. GCExCo to approve
4. Transfer of candidature (from Ph.D. to M.Phil.)	1. Supervisor and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. GCExCo to approve
Articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D.	
5. Transfer of candidature (from M.Phil. to Ph.D. (pre-candidacy) or vice versa	1. Supervisor to endorse 2. Graduate Division Head to approve 3. GCExCo to note
6. Transfer of candidature (from Ph.D. (post-candidacy) to M.Phil.	1. Supervisor and Graduate Division Head to endorse 2. GCExCo to approve
Change of study programme	
7. Change to another programme of a different Graduate Division	1. Heads of both Graduate Divisions to endorse 2. GCExCo to approve
8. 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 GCExCo to note
9. 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 GCExCo to approve
Change of study mode	
10. 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

Considerations for change of study programme shall be as follows:

1. A student may change from one programme of study to another with the permission of the programme into which the student wishes to transfer.
2. The transfer-in programme will decide on the requirements for admission, as well as, where applicable, the candidacy requirements/the courses, the number of credits and grades the student is required to complete for advancement to post-candidacy/fulfilment of graduation requirement of the new programme; and the exemption of any programme-specific requirements based on the student's record.

3. The study period under the new programme should count from the admission date of the original programme the student has been enrolled in and counted toward the maximum duration of study.
4. A student who passed the candidacy requirements of the original programme should not assume to have fulfilled the candidacy requirements of the new transfer-in programme.
5. If the student is required to sit for the candidacy examination of the new programme which cannot be scheduled before the transfer, or has not already fulfilled any other candidacy requirements of the new programme within the time limit for fulfilment of candidacy requirement, Division/student may submit a request for extending the period allowed for completion of the candidacy requirements and, where appropriate, the PGS suspension deadline. In any case, PGS will not be tenable beyond the normative study period.

#### 4.8 Leave of absence



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.

In case of illness necessitating absence from classes/required activities 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
Academic Leave	
(i) In-residence leave (for conference and other academic purposes) <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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division to endorse</li> <li>2. Department Chairperson to approve</li> </ol> <ol 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> </ol>
Non-Academic Leave	
(i) No-pay leave (i.e., leave with PGS suspended) <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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor and Head of the Graduate Division to endorse</li> <li>2. Department Chairperson to approve</li> </ol> <ol 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> </ol> <ol 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> </ol>

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 RPg 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/](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 the Dean of Graduate School 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 the Dean of Graduate School before taking up the engagement. Subject to the approval of the Dean of Graduate School, 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 the Dean of Graduate School.

In case of irregularities (e.g., applications that are retroactive in nature, remunerative engagements that are neither research nor study related), the Dean of Graduate School will transmit the application and justifications to the GCExCo for approval.

Graduate Divisions shall note that applications for approval should be submitted to the Graduate School at least 4 weeks before the starting date of the intended engagements while applications involving HKPFS awardees should be submitted at least 5 weeks in advance for immediate transmission to the UGC Secretariat.

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