

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Graduate School

Common Requirements for Research Postgraduate Programmes

Graduation Requirements

All research postgraduate (RPg) students are required to fulfill a set of graduation requirements as prescribed by the Programme in order to graduate. Some of the requirements are compulsory for all while some are specific to individual programmes or individual students. Different types of graduation requirements will be introduced briefly in the following sections. Students should refer to the Course List, Course Descriptions and Study Scheme of their own programmes in the Postgraduate Student Handbook for details. Besides, RPg students should report and record the fulfilment of candidacy and graduation requirements in the Study Plan and Progress Report for RPg studies in consultation with the Supervisor.

Coursework Requirements

The coursework requirements set out the required courses and elective courses, if applicable, of the Programme. Taught courses (excluding courses with research elements, such as “Research”, “Thesis Research”, “Thesis Preparation”, etc.) aim to enhance the knowledge in research. In general, the requirement for different RPg programmes is as follows:

- (a) Not less than 12 units for research master’s;
- (b) Not less than 12 units for research doctoral students in the pre-candidacy stage, completion of which will be part of the candidacy requirements.

The two requirements can be identical, but a higher requirement can be set for Ph.D. candidacy if the Graduate Division so desires. Doctoral students without a research master’s degree may be required to take additional courses. The Graduate Division may specify the minimum grade at which these courses must be passed.

Students 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. In addition, students’ research progress is monitored through taking “Thesis Research” courses. The minimum number of units to be taken by RPg students in each Term is given below. Each unit is regarded as equivalent to approximately three hours of study/research per week by the student.

Status	Full-time (no. of units)	Part-time (no. of units)
M.Phil.	6	3
Ph.D. (pre-candidacy)	6	3
Ph.D. (post-candidacy)	12	6
Continuing Students	3	3

Postgraduate Students taking Undergraduate Courses

Postgraduate students are allowed to enrol in undergraduate courses (4000 level or below) in the following situations:

- (a) Taking undergraduate courses as make-up requirements.
A RPg student with a first degree of a different subject than the postgraduate programme may have to make up for some undergraduate courses as assigned by the Supervisor.
- (b) RPg students may take other undergraduate courses, typically in a different subject, purely out of interest (e.g., calligraphy or music), or to develop other skills (e.g., language, including a third language).

RPg students who wish to take undergraduate courses should first consult their Supervisors.

Programmes can include up to 15% of undergraduate courses in the programme requirements. GCExCo's approval is required if Graduate Divisions request to include more than 15% undergraduate courses in the programme requirements.

Research Thesis and Oral Examination

All RPg students are required to submit a research thesis and pass an oral examination. Students should refer to the schedule, procedures, and assessment of the research thesis and oral examination in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for the detailed requirements.

Candidature for Doctoral Degree

There are two stages of Ph.D. studies: the pre-candidacy stage and the post-candidacy stage. No student will be admitted directly as a Ph.D. student (post-candidacy); such a status can only be gained by a Ph.D. student (pre-candidacy) upon satisfying all candidacy requirements. Only a Ph.D. (post-candidacy) candidate can submit a thesis and be examined.

The candidacy requirements are set by the Graduate Division, with administration taken care of by the Graduate School. The candidacy requirements include at least the following components:

- (a) Course requirements;
- (b) Candidacy Examination/ Qualifying Examination; and
- (c) Thesis proposal and defence of the proposal for Articulated M.Phil-Ph.D. Programmes only.

The Candidacy Examination or Qualifying Examination contains a written component of one or more papers, which cover the basic disciplinary knowledge expected of a Ph.D. student. The subject coverage is not specific to each student, but is the same for a broad subject category within each Graduate Division. The Graduate Division may specify that certain papers can be replaced by passing relevant courses at specified grades. There may be an additional oral component.

Advancement to research doctoral candidature (or Ph.D. (post-candidacy) stage for students admitted under the “M.Phil.-Ph.D. programmes”) is conditional upon fulfilment of the candidacy requirements. The prevailing procedure takes the Supervisor and the Head of Graduate Division to sign off on a document “Notification of Fulfilment of Candidacy Requirements” to confirm the completion of candidacy requirements of individual students.

Candidacy Examination and Qualifying Examination

Candidacy Examination and Qualifying Examination are two different terms used in the assessment of Ph.D. students who are admitted under the “articulated” and “non-articulated” programmes, respectively.

Students (pre-candidacy) should refer to the study schemes of their own programmes in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for the detailed requirements.

For “articulated” programmes, the maximum period to pass the Candidacy Examinations, counted from first entry to the programme, is tabulated below, failing which the student concerned will be discontinued from studies at the University:

Degree	Full-time	Part-time
Ph.D. (entering with a research master’s degree)	24 months	32 months
Ph.D. (entering without a research master’s degree)	36 months	48 months

However, for ‘non-articulated’ programmes, the maximum period to pass the Qualifying Examination is defined by individual Graduate Divisions. Students should consult the programmes of studies of each Graduate Division in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for details.

Improving Postgraduate Learning (IPL)

While there is no universally accepted approach for teaching students to be more creative in research, there are some basic principles, methodologies, and skills with which students can equip themselves in the arduous task of doing research. Most knowledge and skills are imparted by the students’ Supervisors as they work together. However, some skills are cross-disciplinary in nature and can be taught in a more formal or systematic manner, e.g., laboratory safety, searching for and analysis of information, principles and ethics in documentation, and presentation skills.

For over the past two decades, the Graduate School has organised related short courses to help postgraduate students do their research. These modules are collectively referred to as the Improving Postgraduate Learning (IPL) programme and are coordinated by CLEAR.

Most IPL short courses are optional for postgraduate students. However, all research postgraduate students should consider seriously taking every module that has potential relevance to their research endeavours. Supervisors and Graduate Division Heads should also promote these modules to their students.

All research postgraduate students are required to complete the following IPL modules in their first year of studies for completion of the candidacy/graduation requirements with effect from the 2022-23 intake. For avoidance of doubt, note that M.Phil. and Doctor of Nursing students are also expected to complete the stipulated IPL requirements during the first year of study.

- 1) Research Data Management (RDM) is of increasing interest and importance to the academia. More and more research funders require researchers to submit data management plans as part of grant applications and share their research data to the scholarly community. In light of these policies and requirements, the Research Data Management (RDM) Training is incorporated into an appropriate IPL module offered by the Library. Students are required to complete the online course *Basics of Research Data Management* in the first year of study. Information is available at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/ipl.html>.
- 2). The University Safety Office (USO) has stipulated in its course/examination protocol that passing the relevant safety examinations is a requirement for those students who undertake laboratory activities that carry safety risks. In principle, postgraduate students should not conduct any laboratory work before meeting the University-recognised training requirements. Postgraduate students for whom laboratory safety training and examination is relevant, are required to complete the safety courses and/or sit for the examinations in their first year of study prescribed by their programmes/Divisions.

Observing Intellectual Property and Copyright Law during Research and Research Ethics Training Module on Publication Ethics

In addition to completing the IPL modules stipulated for partial fulfilment of candidacy requirements, students are also required to complete the following IPL modules for graduation.

The online module *Observing Intellectual Property and Copyright Law during Research* is compulsory for all RPg students. Relevant information is available on the CLEAR website at www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/ipl.html.

To strengthen researchers' awareness of ethical concepts, the Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services (ORKTS) offers Research Ethics Training (RET) which contains four online modules in the following domains: (a) *Human Subject Ethics*; (b) *Laboratory Animals Ethics*; (c) *Survey and Behavioural Ethics*; and (d) *Publication Ethics*. All RPg students admitted in 2017-18 and thereafter are required to complete the online RET module on *Publication Ethics* and obtain a valid Publication Ethics Certificate for graduation. More information on RET is available at www.research-ethics.cuhk.edu.hk/web/.

Other Requirements

Graduate School and Graduate Divisions may prescribe additional term-end assessment and graduation requirements for students. Examples include:

- Language requirement, e.g., knowledge of spoken Cantonese and written Chinese may be required for some courses taught in Cantonese and English.
- A higher minimum cumulative GPA (e.g., 2.5) for graduation.
- Additional requirements for individual students may be set by the Graduate Division or Supervisor, depending on the academic progress of the students.