

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 certain requirements for graduation. Some of the requirements are compulsory for all while some others are specific to individual programmes or individual students. Students should therefore refer to the Course List, Course Descriptions, and Study Scheme of their own programme in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for the specific requirements. Besides, each RPg student should complete the Research Progress Report together with the Supervisor so as to ensure that student's progress is on the track.

Coursework Requirements

The coursework requirements list the required courses and elective courses, if applicable, of the programme. Taught courses (i.e. excluding courses labeled as “research”, “thesis research”, “thesis preparation”, etc.) are added to prepare students for research and enhance relevant knowledge in their research field. The general requirement is as follows:

- not less than 12 units for research master's students;
- 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 could be identical, but a higher requirement can be set for the Ph.D. candidacy if the Graduate Division so desires. Doctoral students without a research master's degree may be required to take additional courses. Each 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 Graduate Division Head concerned.

In addition, each student's progress in research is monitored through courses called “Thesis Research”. The number of units should not be less than the following requirement per term. 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

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 for those under the “articulated” scheme and the Qualifying Examination for those under the “non-articulated” scheme. 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. A Ph.D. student shall not proceed to the post-candidacy stage until s/he has fulfilled all components of the candidacy requirements. 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.

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.

Candidacy Examination and Qualifying Examination

Candidacy examination and qualifying examination refer to the assessment of Ph.D. students for advancement to candidacy. The former is used in “articulated” programmes whereas the latter is used in “non-articulated” programmes. For articulated programmes, the maximum period to pass the candidacy requirements, counted from first entry to the articulated programme, is tabulated below. A Ph.D. student (pre-candidacy) who failed to pass the candidacy requirements within the prescribed maximum period 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. Please refer to the study scheme of individual programmes in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for details of the requirements.

Research Thesis and Oral Examination

All RPg students are required to submit a research thesis and pass an oral examination for graduation.

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. Many of these information 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, presentation skills and so forth.

These courses are collectively referred to as the Improving Postgraduate Learning (IPL) programme and are organized and administratively supported by the Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR).

Most IPL courses are optional. However, RPg students are strongly advised to take every module that has potential relevance to their research endeavors. Supervisors and Graduate Division Heads should also promote these modules to their respective students.

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

Different programmes may require students to complete specific IPL modules, such as "*General Safety*" and "*Chemical Safety*" or other laboratory safety courses, depending on the nature of the research project. Students should consult their Graduate Divisions or Supervisors for details.

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. Attendance of RDM Training module is optional for the 2021-22 intake. Starting from the 2022-23 intake, all RPg students are required to complete the RDM training, specifically, the online course *Basics of Research Data Management*, in the first year of study as part of the graduation requirements. Relevant information is available on the CLEAR website at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/ipl.html>.

Postgraduate students engaged in laboratory works need to comprehend a broad range of safety-related concepts. It is important for them to be familiar with safe working and basic emergency procedures while conducting laboratory activities that carry safety risks. In principle, postgraduate students should not conduct any laboratory work before meeting the University recognised training requirements. With effect from the 2022-23 intake, students who are prescribed laboratory safety training shall take the courses and, where appropriate, examinations in their first year of study.

Research Ethics Training

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 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 a third language.
- Additional requirements for individual students may be set up by the Graduate, depending on the academic progress of the students.

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