

Research Postgraduate Programmes – Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

1. What are the differences between research postgraduate programmes (PhD or MPhil) and taught postgraduate programmes?

In terms of research programmes, a PhD or MPhil degree is awarded to a student who, upon completing an approved programme of study and research, submits a thesis presenting the results of his/her research and satisfies the examiners in an oral examination (and other examinations if required) in matters relevant to the subject of the thesis. Students must also complete all of the required coursework before submitting their theses.

The coursework credit requirements for different categories of students are as follows:

Full-time MPhil students with a 2-year normal study period Part-time MPhil students with a 4-year normal study period	9 credits
Full-time PhD students with a 3-year normal study period Part-time PhD students with a 6-year normal study period	15 credits
Full-time PhD students with a 4-year normal study period Part-time PhD students with an 8-year normal study period	22 credits

Individual programmes may impose higher credit requirements, if deemed necessary.

One credit is approximately equal to 40 hours of study, including classes, private study and an examination.

Taught postgraduate programmes focus more on coursework, and some may require students to complete a dissertation.

2. What are the eligibility criteria for PhD or MPhil admission? What are the English language requirements?

Please click [here](#) for the University's admission requirements and English language requirements.

3. When do I need to apply? How can I obtain the application materials?

To apply for the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS) via PolyU, please quote the reference number allocated by the Research Grants Council (RGC) of Hong Kong. Before submitting an online application to PolyU, you should file an initial application to the RGC via the [HKPFS Electronic System](#) to obtain a reference number before noon on 1 December (HKT 12:00 noon GMT +8 hours). Please note that late applications will not be accepted for consideration for the HKPFS.

The main application deadline for PolyU research postgraduate programmes is 31 December each year. However, some departments may set different deadlines for their research programmes. You are therefore advised to note the various application deadlines shown for the individual research areas on the [Study@PolyU](#) website.

4. When does the new academic year start?

There are two teaching semesters, each lasting for 13 weeks, and a 7-week summer term. The academic year starts in late August or early September. The second semester commences in mid-January and the summer term runs from May to July. Please click [here](#) for details of PolyU's academic calendar.

5. Can I enrol in more than one programme at the same time?

While registered as a candidate for a research degree at PolyU, if you wish to apply for concurrent registration in another programme of study leading to an award from PolyU or elsewhere, you must obtain prior written permission from the University. Failure to obtain such approval may lead to disciplinary action, including the discontinuation of your study at PolyU. Please click [here](#) to download the application form for concurrent enrolment.

6. How much is the tuition fee?

Please click [here](#) for information on tuition fees.

7. Am I eligible for a research studentship?

Please click [here](#) to learn more about research studentships.

8. Am I eligible to apply for Halls of Residence accommodation?

Full-time UGC-funded research students are eligible to apply for accommodation in PolyU's Student Halls of Residence, subject to availability. Please click [here](#) for details of Halls of Residence accommodation.

9. How are non-local students defined?

Please click [here](#) for more information.

10. Are non-local students allowed to enrol in study programmes in Hong Kong?

All non-local students who are admitted to study programmes in Hong Kong must obtain a student visa before departing for Hong Kong. You should not travel to Hong Kong without a valid student visa.

11. When should I apply for a student visa? Where can I find information about student visa?

If you are admitted, you will find more information on how to apply for a student visa in your Notice of Offer via [eAdmission](#). PolyU will sponsor your application for a student visa and provide relevant assistance. As it may take at least 6 weeks for the Immigration Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to process your student visa application, you are strongly advised to submit your application as soon as you have received either an offer or a conditional offer of admission from us. Please note that the Immigration Department may not accept student visa applications from certain nationals. Please click [here](#) to visit the Immigration Department's website.

12. Is financial assistance available for non-local students?

No. Non-local students are not eligible for financial assistance from PolyU or the HKSAR Government. Non-local students are therefore advised to secure sufficient funds before enrolling in a study programme at PolyU.

13. Can non-local students take up internships and part-time jobs?

According to the Hong Kong Immigration Policy, non-local students enrolled in full-time locally accredited programmes at undergraduate level or above are allowed to take up internships, part-time on-campus employment and summer jobs. Please click [here](#) to view the Immigration Policy on Study. However, research students receiving studentships or financial assistance from the University are not allowed to take up any employment without prior approval.

Before You Apply

14. What is the procedure for submitting an application?

- Explore our research programmes and research areas to help you identify your research interest(s).
- Review the [admission requirements](#) and read all of the information posted on the [Study@PolyU](#) website.
- Discuss your research interest(s) with the research personnel of the academic department(s) concerned.
- Prepare scanned copies of supporting documents (e.g., academic certificates and transcripts for undergraduate and/or postgraduate studies, research proposal) for your online application.
- Submit your online application and settle the application fee before the application deadline via [eAdmission](#).

15. How many research areas can I select in an application?

You can select up to two areas of research for each programme offered by one academic department.

16. Can I apply to more than one department?

Yes. You may apply to more than one department as long as you submit separate applications. For each department to which you apply, you must pay the required application fee, upload supporting documents and invite referees by the required deadline.

17. Can I change my programme choice after submission?

You are not allowed to change your programme choice after your application has been submitted. You may submit another application as long as you pay the required application fee, upload supporting documents and invite referees by the required deadline.

18. Can I edit my proposed research plan/vision statement after submission?

After submission, you may edit your proposed research plan/vision statement at any time until the application deadline has elapsed.

19. Will you accept an application and supporting documents prepared and submitted by an agent or consultant?

PolyU has no financial arrangements or special relationships with agents who assist in the preparation and submission of applications for a fee. You must complete and submit your own application and provide your own personal details. All of the information necessary to complete an application to any programme is available on the [Study@PolyU](#) website.

20. Do I have to list all of the schools and institutions I have attended?

Yes. You must list all of your undergraduate and postgraduate studies in your online application.

21. How much is the application fee and how should I pay it?

The application fee for admission to research postgraduate programmes is HK\$300. This fee is non-refundable and non-transferrable. You must settle the application fee upon submission of your online application. Otherwise, your application will not be further processed. You are advised to use Visa or MasterCard to do so. Please click [here](#) to view the details of available payment methods.

22. What should I do if I have not yet received my results/transcript(s)/certificate(s) when I submit an application to PolyU?

If you have not yet received your results/transcript(s)/certificate(s) when you apply to PolyU, please indicate in your application the date on which they will be available. You should update your results and upload your final official transcript(s) and/or certificate(s) to your application once available.

23. Is it necessary to provide information on my academic referees with my application?

If you choose to apply for the HKPFS, you must invite two academics who are familiar with your academic performance and achievements to complete online academic referee's reports before the application deadline. After you have submitted your online application, a system-generated email invitation will be sent to your referees inviting them to complete an online academic referee's report. Please provide complete and accurate information on your referees, including their email addresses, in your online application.

If you choose to apply for admission to a research postgraduate programme at PolyU, please refer to [Supporting Documents for Application](#) on the [Study@PolyU](#) website and check whether the programme in which you are interested requires you to provide details of the academic referees you have nominated to complete online academic referee's reports before the application deadline.

24. When should my referees submit their online academic referee's reports?

You should advise your referees to submit their online academic referee's reports before the application deadline. For applications to the HKPFS, online academic referee's reports should be submitted no later than 2 December.

25. Why has one of my referees not received an email invitation from PolyU?

- Check that your referee's email address has been input correctly.
- Ask your referee to check his/her junk/spam mail folder for the email.
- Use the "Resend" button to send another email invitation to your referee.

26. How will I know if my referees have successfully submitted their online academic referee's reports to PolyU?

An email notification will be sent to you and the relevant referee as soon as each online academic referee's report has been submitted.

27. What supporting documents do I need to submit with my online application?

Please refer to [Supporting Documents for Application](#) for details. All supporting documents should be uploaded to [eAdmission](#).

28. Do I need to send the originals of my supporting documents to PolyU by post?

No. You do not need to send the originals of your supporting documents to PolyU by post at the application stage.

29. Can I make changes to my application or submit supporting documents after submission?

Please proofread your input and uploaded documents thoroughly before submission. Any errors or incorrect information provided in your online application may cause delays in processing your application or lead to the rejection of your application.

30. How should I upload my supporting documents? What format should they have?

Please ensure that your documents conform to the following specifications:

- PDF format is preferred.
- PDF files must not have a digital signature.
- Do not include password protection, as it will prevent us from opening the file.
- Scanning in 300 dpi resolution is recommended.
- Scan in black and white.
- Ensure that your full name appears on all uploaded documents.
- All uploaded documents must be legible. Ensure that all critical and identifying marks and information are legible; for transcripts, these include the institution's name and grading scheme, your name, the names of your programmes and the grades you have received.
- Files may not exceed 5 MB (5,000 KB) each.
- Page orientation: please make sure that the orientation of the scanned document matches that of the original. For example, transcripts that are printed vertically (portrait) should be scanned so that they appear in portrait format. Transcripts printed horizontally (landscape) should appear in landscape format.
- Do not upload all of your supporting documents as one file! Each qualification/result selected for upload must match the document uploaded.
- Create one single electronic file per checklist item per submission. If your document contains more than one page, please ensure that the pages are contained and uploaded within a single electronic file, and that the pages are in the correct order.
- Preview your documents, because you will be unable to edit or delete them once they have been submitted. It may take a few seconds to upload your documents. Note that during busy periods the upload time may be considerably longer.

After You Have Applied

31. Where will I find my application number?

An application number will be assigned to you and shown on your online application once you have successfully submitted your application.

32. When will I be notified of an admission offer? How will I know if I have been accepted for admission?

Admission offers for September entry will normally be made between February and May. You may log in to [eAdmission](#) to check your application status (e.g., notification of interview/test and admission offer) at any time. If you are given an offer or a conditional offer of admission, you will receive an email notification and a Notice of Offer via [eAdmission](#).

If you wish to check the progress of your application, you may directly approach the academic department concerned. Please click [here](#) for the contact details of the relevant academic departments.

33. When will the results of applications to the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme be announced?

The results of applications to the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme will be announced in around April on the [Research Grants Committee \(RGC\)](#) website. Successful candidates will be notified by the RGC via email.

When You Receive an Admission Offer

34. What should I do to accept an admission offer?

You should indicate your acceptance and pay a registration fee of HK\$5,000 before the payment deadline specified in the online Notice of Offer via [eAdmission](#). This registration fee is non-refundable and non-transferrable. It will be credited to your tuition fee, which will be payable upon your admission to the University. For scholarship recipients who are not required to pay a tuition fee, the registration fee will be refunded after admission.

Requests to waive or defer payment of the registration fee will not be considered. The failure to pay the registration fee by the stipulated deadline will result in the lapse of your admission offer.

35. When should I submit my student visa application?

You should submit your completed student visa application form with all of the required supporting documents to the Academic Registry of PolyU within 10 working days of the issuance date of the offer or conditional offer of admission. The guidelines for applying for a student visa can be downloaded from the online Notice of Offer.

36. Do I need to provide proof of financial means with my student visa application?

The Hong Kong Immigration Department requires all non-local students to provide proof of their ability to pay tuition fees and living expenses upon submission of their student visa applications. This proof can take the form of personal or family bank letters/bank statements.

If you are awarded an assistantship or a studentship, you will need to indicate the monthly amount under Section 7, “Financial Situation of Applicant”, of the student visa application form and provide a copy of the Letter of Award of your assistantship/studentship issued by the Graduate School of PolyU as financial proof when applying for a student visa.

37. How can I check the status of my student visa application?

You can check the latest status of your student visa application via [eAdmission](#).

As stipulated by the Hong Kong Immigration Department, a visa label is normally valid for 3 months upon collection. Non-local students are required to enter Hong Kong with their visa label within this 3-month period. PolyU will collect your visa label from the Immigration Department and dispatch it to you by express post from June (for September entry) or November (for January entry), although the Immigration Department may have approved the visa application earlier. If you have received a conditional offer of admission, you will only receive your visa label if and when you have fulfilled the admission condition(s).

38. Can I change the delivery address to which my visa label will be sent?

Yes. You can log in to [eAdmission](#) and change the delivery address before the status of your visa application has changed to “Approved”.

39. Do I need to submit originals of my academic certificates and full official transcripts? How should my academic certificates and full official transcripts be submitted?

If you accept our admission offer, you will need to ask each university you have attended (except PolyU), as stated in your online application, to send your academic transcripts and certified copies of your academic certificates* in a sealed and signed envelope directly to the Academic Registry of PolyU. The envelope should be signed and stamped by the Registrar or by an authorised official of your university. Please note that no certified copies of certificates or full official transcripts submitted will be returned.

If the institution will only release your academic transcripts and certified copies of your academic certificates* to you, please request that they are sent in a sealed and signed envelope so that you can forward the envelope directly to the Academic Registry of PolyU. Please do not open the envelope, as doing so will void the verification. The documents must be received in the original sealed and signed envelope to be considered official.

** Certified copies of degree certificates/diplomas should have original stamps and be duly certified by the Registrar or by an authorised official of your university.*

40. What should I do if I have received a conditional offer of admission?

To fulfil the condition(s) of your offer, you must upload the official documentary proof of your final degree results and/or English language test score report and update the final degree results and/or English test scores via [eAdmission](#) before the deadline specified in the online Notice of Offer.

41. What if I cannot provide official documentary proof(s) to fulfil the admission condition(s) by the deadline?

If you cannot provide official documentary proof(s) to fulfil the admission condition(s) stipulated in the online Notice of Offer, your offer of admission will become null and void.

42. How should I submit my original test score report (i.e., GMAT, GRE, IELTS or TOEFL)?

If you accept our admission offer, you will need to ask the relevant test provider to send the official score report directly to the Academic Registry of PolyU. PolyU's institutional code is 0732 for TOEFL and 3404 for GRE.

43. How will I know if I qualify to receive a research studentship?

If you are awarded a research studentship, you will be notified upon admission.