

Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Humanities
[For Student Cohort Admitted before 2019/20]

This is a master's degree program satisfied by coursework and completion of a thesis. The primary aim of this MPhil program is to provide training for students who intend to pursue professional careers as teachers and researchers. It can be an end in itself or serve as preparation for the research degree of PhD.

I. Admission Requirements

All applicants must meet the general requirements for admission set by the University as stated in the [Handbook for Research Postgraduate Studies](#) of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology:

Applicants seeking admission to an MPhil degree program should have obtained a bachelor's degree from a recognized institution, or an approved equivalent qualification; and satisfied specific requirements prescribed by the School and department concerned as to their fitness to pursue postgraduate study.

Applicants whose first language is not English and whose bachelor's degree or equivalent qualification was awarded by institutions where the medium of instruction was not English are expected to have a level of English proficiency adequate for the study of humanities subjects at HKUST. Example of proficiency evidence is an overall score of 6.5 with no sub-score lower than 5.5 for International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or equivalent (score is valid for two years from the test date).

For those specializing in China-related topics, applicants must provide evidence of appropriate degree of proficiency in Chinese language.

II. Areas of Concentration

Students enrolled in the program may opt for one of the following four areas of concentration: Linguistics, Literature, History and Anthropology, or Philosophy and Religion, though they are expected to go beyond conventional disciplinary boundaries and cultivate knowledge and expertise in interdisciplinary dialogue and interaction.

III. Academic Advising

Upon entering the program, students will receive initial guidance from a temporary advisor assigned by the Division's Postgraduate Committee (PGC).

The PGC, after consulting with the student and the faculty member, will assign a regular academic advisor—who will also serve as the MPhil thesis advisor—to each student no later than the end of the first term. Students will then work under the guidance of their thesis advisors to formulate a study plan, combining coursework in their chosen area of concentration and in other disciplines, and to write an MPhil thesis.

At the end of each term, the student's progress will be reported to the PGC by his or her advisor.

IV. Program Requirements

The requirements for the MPhil degree are as follows:

1. Completion of a minimum of 12 credits of coursework;
2. Completion of and passing SHSS6770 Professional Development in Humanities and Social Science (now renamed as PDEV6770 Professional Development for Research Postgraduate Students), and LANG5071 Postgraduate English for Humanities;
3. HUMA6990 MPhil Thesis Research; and
4. Presentation and oral defense of the MPhil thesis.

1. Credits

Students are required to take a minimum of 12 credits of postgraduate coursework in the Division of Humanities, preferably in their first year of study. The second year is normally devoted to the writing of the MPhil thesis.

In addition, students are required to complete and pass SHSS6770 Professional Development in Humanities and Social Science (now renamed as PDEV6770 Professional Development for Research Postgraduate Students), and LANG5071 Postgraduate English for Humanities. SHSS6770 (PDEV6770) should be taken in the first year of study for full-time students, or the first two years of study for part-time students. Students can be exempted from taking LANG5071 with the agreement of the Division Head and PGC. The 1 credit earned from SHSS6770 (PDEV6770) and from LANG5071 respectively cannot be counted toward the credit requirements.

For students who opt for an area of concentration, at least 6 credits of postgraduate coursework must be taken from the chosen concentration. Before the commencement of each academic year, the Division Office will provide students with a list of courses offered in each area of concentration.

For all entering students, they must propose a course-taking plan for the first academic year in consultation with their advisors. The proposal, consisting of a list of courses to be taken in the first year and a study plan specifying the learning objectives and how these objectives can be achieved by the proposed list of courses, should be submitted to the PGC for endorsement with prior approval of the advisor, no later than the end of the add/drop period of the first term.

2. The MPhil Thesis

The PGC, after consulting with the student and upon the recommendation of the student's thesis advisor, will appoint a three-member MPhil Thesis Committee no later than the end of the student's second term of study (third term for part-time students). Of these three members, one must be the thesis advisor. The PGC will appoint one of the other two members as chair of the committee, whose responsibilities include chairing both the MPhil thesis examination and the handling of the thesis prospectus.

At least two members of the MPhil Thesis Committee are preferably in the same discipline as that of the student.

An MPhil thesis prospectus (about 10 pages) should be submitted to the MPhil Thesis Committee no later than the first month of the student's third term of study (fourth term for part-time students). The committee must approve the prospectus before the student can begin work on the thesis. The prospectus must demonstrate a clear understanding of the literature on the proposed subject, identify an important intellectual question, outline a plan of research for completing the thesis, and include a bibliography. The committee will review the prospectus and the committee chair will announce the committee's decision in writing to the student no later than seven days after the review, with a copy to the PGC.

The thesis advisor will advise the student on his or her thesis. Other members of the MPhil Thesis Committee will

also advise the student upon request.

The thesis is normally written in English. If a student wishes to use Chinese as the thesis language, prior approval must be obtained from the following levels: thesis advisor, Division's PGC, Division Head, and Dean of Humanities and Social Science. Petition to write the thesis in Chinese must be made by the student before the end of his or her first year of study.

The thesis must demonstrate a level of originality appropriate to the Master's degree; it should also demonstrate an awareness of the conceptual and methodological problems relating to the chosen topic and a solid command of bibliographical materials in the field of study. The format of the thesis should conform to the general university guidelines outlined in the [Handbook for Research Postgraduate Studies](#) of the University. The usual length of an MPhil thesis is about 70 to 100 pages.

3. *MPhil Thesis Examination*

Each student who submits a thesis will need to defend it before the Thesis Committee. The thesis defense normally takes place in the second term of the student's second year of study.

A total of four copies of the thesis and an abstract of not more than 300 words must be submitted to the PGC four weeks prior to the oral examination. One of these copies will be placed in the General Office of the Division of Humanities for perusal by faculty, students, and other members of the University community.

Thesis defense will take place in front of the entire Thesis Committee and a public audience. The student will discuss the issues raised in his or her completed work.

The chair of the Thesis Committee will announce the result of the oral examination in writing to the student, with a copy to the PGC, no later than two days after the examination.

If revisions, either minor or major, are required, they will be relayed to the student by the chair of the committee in writing no later than one week after the examination. Revisions must be made to the satisfaction of the committee before the degree can be officially recommended by the Head of the Division to the Senate Committee on Postgraduate Studies.

The normative period for completing an MPhil degree in Humanities in full-time mode is two years.

V. Reconstitution of the MPhil Thesis Committee

When a change in the MPhil Thesis Committee is deemed necessary by the student, he or she must submit a written request to the PGC. The PGC will consider the request and make a decision on whether or not the committee should be reconstituted.