THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
LKS FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Important Notes for Research Postgraduate (RPg) Students

Important: This document should be read in conjunction with the regulations, procedures, and guidance notes concerning your RPg studies in the Handbook for MPhil and PhD Programmes issued by the Graduate School.

Introduction

To ensure your successful completion of the MPhil/PhD programme, the progress of your study is monitored by your supervisors, the Departmental Research Postgraduate Committee (DRPC)/Departmental Research Postgraduate Advisors (DRPA), the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee (FHDC) and the Graduate School (GS).

Students are required to observe the requirements below.

1. Bi-annual Progress Reports and Confirmation Reports

RPg students and their supervisors are required to submit Candidate's Progress Reports and Supervision Reports respectively at six-monthly intervals to the FHDC through the DRPC/DRPA. In addition, a confirmation report should be submitted two months before the completion of their probationary period. The reports should focus on the work accomplished by the candidate during the specified period and include a working plan for the following six months. This is so the FHDC can identify any problems as early as possible and recommend remedial measures in consultation with the supervisors and/or the DRPC/DRPA.

Please refer to the GS webpage on progress monitoring for details on key dates, etc.

Important: The postgraduate scholarship for full-time candidates may be suspended if their progress reports are not submitted by the stipulated deadlines, or if their progress is not satisfactory.

2. Safety Awareness Workshop

All new RPg students are required to attend the online Safety Awareness Workshop, organized by the Safety Office during the RPg Orientation. Students are required to pass an online safety quiz with the workshop. The online workshop is compulsory for all new RPg students and passing of the quiz is one of the requirements for confirmation of candidature by the end of the probationary period. Exemption is automatically granted to PhD students who are MPhil graduates of the Medical Faculty and have already attended the workshop and passed the safety quiz.

3. Research Integrity

All members of the University, including research students, are under an obligation to observe the highest standards of professional conduct. Failure to do so, not only defeats the object of scholarly enquiry, but brings both the researcher and the University into disrepute. The nature and scope of one's ethical duty as a researcher rests on two fundamental assumptions that ought to be self-evident. The first is that of honesty in the conduct of research, the reporting of findings, and the proper attribution of ideas and their source. The second is that positions of seniority or responsibility should never be abused so as to put pressure on research students to forego their right to proper acknowledgement of their contribution to the research or publication in question.

All students are reminded to read through the Research Integrity section of the GS website and HKU's Policy on Research Integrity and consult their supervisors should questions arise.

4. Data Management Plan (DMP)

Beginning with the September 2017 intake, all HKU RPg students have the responsibility for (i) using a data management plan (DMP), where applicable, to describe the use of data in preparation for, or in the generation of their theses, and (ii) depositing, where applicable, a dataset in the HKU Scholars

Hub. RPg students registered in September 2017 and thereafter are required to submit a DMP before the expiry of their probationary period, if data is to be collected or generated as part of the research. Details of submission of DMP are available on the [University Libraries website](#).

5.   Graduate School Core Courses on Research Integrity

All RPg students registered from September 2021 onwards are required to take the GS Core Courses GRSC6101 Responsible Conduct of Research and GRSC6102 Stream-based Responsible Conduct of Research if they have not completed equivalent training in previous research programmes.

GRSC6101 covers essential vocabulary, principles and practices conductive to the promotion of responsible conduct of research while GRSC6102 addresses responsible conduct of research in the following topics (students are required to complete one of these six modules):

  (i)   Working with Human Participants (Humanities)
  (ii)   Working with Human Participants (Medicine)
  (iii)   Working with Animals (Medicine)
  (iv)   Lab Safety
  (v)   Working on Big Data
  (vi)   Working on Texts

The courses comprise two 3-hour classes and normally includes lectures and in-class group discussions. RPg students must attend both courses, complete the web-based learning module and submit a 500-word reflective report before their probationary period can be confirmed.

Please refer to the section on [Coursework Requirements on the GS website](#) for further details.

6.   Presentation / Seminar

Qualifying Research Seminar (for confirmation of candidature) - RPg students are required to give a qualifying research seminar before their candidature can be confirmed. The seminar should be arranged by their supervisors with the assistance of the Department concerned. The FHDC will only recommend confirmation of students' candidatures subject to the support of the supervisors and the DRPC/DRPA concerned.

Annual Seminar - RPg students are required to give a presentation on their research work annually at local/international conferences. Performance of candidates should be assessed by their supervisors concerned and the assessment details should be included in the Supervision reports.

Research Postgraduate Symposium (RPS) - The RPS is an annual event organized by the Faculty to facilitate academic interaction and intellectual advancement among research postgraduate students and teaching staff. MPhil and PhD students are required to present at least once and twice respectively at the RPS during their period of study. Students who have presented at the RPS, if attended and assessed by their supervisors, can be considered as having satisfied the aforementioned requirement for the Qualifying Research Seminar or Annual Seminar.

7.   Transfer of Candidature

Under the University's Regulations for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil), a candidate whose candidature has been confirmed and who has satisfactorily completed all coursework requirements may be permitted to transfer the candidature to the degree of PhD, provided that such transfer is approved and effected at least three months prior to the expiry of the MPhil candidature.

Please refer to the [Notes for Guidance of Applicants for Transfer of Candidature to the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (M.136/705)](#) for details.

8.   Extension of Candidature

Candidates unable to submit their theses by the end of their study period must submit an [Application for Extension of Candidature (338/519)](#) at least 3 months before the expiry of their study period. Requests for extension are regarded as exceptional cases, for which consideration will only be given to those with sound and full justifications. The criteria for extension of candidature as laid down by the GS are as follows:

(a) Extension will only be approved by the GS based on good justifications with recommendation by the supervisors and endorsement by DRPC/DRPA and FHDC;
(b) The student must undertake to complete the study within a specified period;
(c) The student must, in consultation with his/her supervisor, submit a study plan for the period of extension;
(d) The progress of the student as shown from the bi-annual progress reports must be satisfactory;
(e) The award of Postgraduate Scholarship will not be extended despite the extension of candidature; and
(f) The FHDC may interview candidates with problems in completing their work on time.

Students granted extension of candidature are required to pay a continuation fee as stipulated under General Regulations of Special Concern to Research Students G17 of the GS Handbook.

8. Thesis submission

Candidates are required to:

(a) submit a Notice of Intent to Submit a Thesis (MPhil and PhD students) (208/1116 re-amended) available from the GS website to the Faculty Office via their primary supervisor and the DRPC/DPRA concerned at least 3 months before the expected date of submission of their theses for examination; and

(b) submit their theses for examination by the end of their period of study, together with the following documents:

(i) The Thesis Submission Form of the Graduate School (207/1116 amended) to be signed individually by each supervisor to declare that they have read the thesis and its Turnitin originality report and consider the thesis ready for examination.

(ii) The Thesis Submission Form of the Medical Faculty (M.166/1014), to be signed by both the primary supervisor and the student to confirm that the student has:

- submitted all the original research data related to his/her MPhil/PhD thesis to his/her primary supervisor; and

- has satisfied the poster/oral presentation requirement (please refer to Part Two of the Thesis Submission Form of the Medical Faculty (M.166/1014)).

9. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Please pay particular attention to Regulation 6 of the University's Regulations Governing Students' Academic Conduct Concerning Assessment, which reads:

"A candidate shall not engage in plagiarism nor employ nor seek to employ any other unfair means at an examination or in any other form of assessment. Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person's work (including but not limited to any materials, creations, ideas and data) as if one's own without due acknowledgement, whether or not such work has been published and regardless of the intent to deceive."

Plagiarism will lead to failure in examination and other serious penalties imposed by the Disciplinary Committee of the University. Please refer to the webpages on What is plagiarism? and Plagiarism and how to avoid it and consult your supervisor if you have any questions.

10. Compulsory Plagiarism Check for All RPg Thesis

The University views any act of plagiarism with utmost seriousness and as a form of academic misdemeanor which will not be tolerated. Therefore, for quality assurance purposes and to deter students from committing plagiarism, all MPhil and PhD theses submitted for examination must go through plagiarism check by the students and their supervisors via Turnitin. Please refer to the

Turnitin@HKU Student Guide. More information about Turnitin is available at the University Libraries website. Students are also encouraged to attend training workshops on Turnitin organized regularly by HKU Libraries.

11. Proper Acknowledgement of Work Done by Others in a Thesis

RPg study should involve a process of research leading to the writing up of a thesis. If a research project involves experiments or any other work conducted in collaboration with or with the assistance of anyone else (e.g. Postdoctoral Fellows, Research Officers, Research Associates, Technicians or Research Assistants etc. in the same or another department), proper acknowledgement of such contribution must be made in the thesis. The acknowledgement should specify the experiments or work involved and the extent of contribution by others in order to enable examiners to form an opinion on whether the student has done substantial work for the degree sought. A mere note to thank somebody for technical assistance is not sufficient. It is also the responsibility of the student to make known the acknowledgement to all parties concerned.

Please refer to HKU's Policy on Research Integrity for details.

Students should also consult their supervisors on how to make proper acknowledgement in their theses before submission.

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