

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Master of Social Sciences in the field of Psychology
Credit Unit Statement

The Master of Social Sciences in the field of Psychology curriculum consists of four types of courses: compulsory courses, elective courses, capstone experience courses and postgraduate seminar courses.

The compulsory, elective courses and the capstone project (under capstone experience courses) are semester courses each carrying 6 credits, representing 2-3 hours of instruction each week for 13 weeks. For each 6-credit course, the contact hours and study load are 26-39 hours and 120 - 180 hours respectively. The dissertation (under capstone experience courses) is a full-year 12-credit course. The contact hours and study load for dissertation are 27 hours and 240 hours respectively. The total study load for the programme is 1,200 – 1,800 hours.

For dissertation option, students are required to complete 8 compulsory courses, and a dissertation (total: 60 credits). For non-dissertation option, students are required to complete 8 compulsory courses, 1 elective course from the elective course list of this programme, and a capstone project course (total: 60 credits).

The postgraduate seminar courses are replacement courses for exempted courses only. Students can take one of the postgraduate seminar courses in lieu of an exempted course. They are semester courses each carrying 6 credits, representing 1.5-2 hours of instruction per week. The contact hours and study load are 19.5-26 hours and 120 hours respectively.

1. Compulsory courses (semester course, 6 credits each)

Students are required to complete two research methods courses, to gain mastery of the quantitative skills necessary for conducting and understanding research in the field of Psychology. Assessment stresses regular homework to ensure that statistical procedures have been well-learned, along with a written proposal/report of a research project (about 1,000 words) and/or test(s). (100% coursework) In addition, students are required to complete six courses, each covering a core area of Psychology (i.e. Biological, Cognitive, Developmental, Personality, Social, and Abnormal Psychology). Studies in each course cover a mixture of historically significant findings along with cutting-edge research reports. Assessment includes laboratory reports and essays (1,000-4,000 words), performance in class discussion, projects, and/or test(s). (100% coursework)

2. Elective courses (semester course, 6 credits each)

The elective courses generally cover more specialized areas: human neuropsychology, internship in psychology, concepts and approaches of therapeutic psychology, health psychology and well-being, professional ethics and issues in psychology, psychological testing and measurement and special topics in psychology. Studies in each course cover a mixture of historically significant findings along with cutting-edge research reports. Assessment includes laboratory reports and essays (1,000-4,000 words), performance in class discussion, projects, and/or test(s). (100% coursework)

3. Capstone experience courses

Dissertation (full-year course, 12 credits)

Students should conduct an independent empirical investigation of a psychological problem under the supervision of a faculty member. Students will work on the dissertation for 10 months (from September to end of June), for a total of 12 credits, receiving about 27 contact hours of individual supervision from a supervisor. A successful dissertation should represent the result of the candidate's research which displays some originality and demonstrates a sound understanding of the field of study and the appropriate research methods. The dissertation should be about 8,000 to 10,000 words in length (excluding tables, figures, bibliographies, and appendices). (100% coursework)

Capstone project course (semester course, 6 credits)

Students should conduct an independent research study in an area of psychology of the candidates' choice, subject to availability of supervision. Students will conduct a research project or read within an area of study, to be agreed with their instructor, and write an extended essay or research project report. The essay or project write-up should be about 4,000 to 5,000 words in length (excluding tables, figures, bibliographies, and appendices) and should follow the practice of communication in top psychology journals. (100% coursework)

4. Postgraduate seminar courses (semester course, 6 credits each)

The postgraduate seminar courses are replacement courses for exempted courses only. Students can take one of the following postgraduate seminar courses in lieu of one exempted course:

PSYC7021 Postgraduate seminar in cognitive psychology /

PSYC7022 Postgraduate seminar in social psychology /

PSYC7023 Postgraduate seminar in developmental psychology

- These seminar courses cover recent developments in the field of Cognitive Psychology, Social Psychology, or Developmental Psychology, concentrating particularly on theoretical debates and empirical results that are likely to have considerable impact on the field. Theoretical and empirical articles will be read each week, and discussed in class. Discussions will be led by both the instructor and students in the class. Assessment includes presentation, in-class discussion and writing assignments (1,000-2,000 words). (100% coursework)

PSYC6025 Postgraduate seminar in scientific writing for psychology

- This seminar course addresses writing skills in relation to Psychological research. Students will engage in a series of assignments designed to improve the fluency and quality of their writing. Particular efforts will be focused on improving the conceptual clarity of writing. Regular feedback will help students improve upon their writing skills. The assessment is mainly based on writing assignments (2,000-4,000 words). (100% coursework)