Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Programs in Social Science

Curriculum for Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Program in Social Science

The Master of Philosophy (MPhil) program is available to students, on a limited basis, in areas of special research interests in the social sciences.   Students are accepted with major research interests in anthropology, China's economy, demography, geography, political science, Science, Technology and Society (STS), social psychology, and sociology.   Prior to admission, students must possess a sufficient reading background in the proposed thesis research area.   Students must also demonstrate the capacity to identify a worthy research topic supported by a critical review of relevant literature.

Program Requirements

Students are required to:

a) Take a minimum of 15 credits of postgraduate courses offered by the Division, of which 9 credits must be chosen from the following research methodology courses:

SOSC	5090	Statistics in Social Science
SOSC	5110	Social Science Research Design and Methods
SOSC	5170	Systematic Methods in Qualitative Research
SOSC	5340	Quantitative Analysis in Social Science
SOSC	5700	Categorical Data Analysis
SOSC	5760	Structural Equation Modeling

Subject to the approval of the supervisors and the PG Coordinator, students may also take MGCS courses offered by the Division for the MSc Program in Global China Studies to meet the coursework requirement.

b) Complete and pass SHSS 6770 Professional Development in Humanities and Social Science which should be taken in the first year of study for full-time students, or the first two years of study for part-time students.   The 1 credit earned from SHSS 6770 cannot be counted toward the credit requirements.

c) Full-time RPg students are required to take an English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) Speaking Test administered by the Center for Language Education before the start of their first term of study.   Students whose ELPA Speaking Test score is below Level 4, or who failed to take the test in their first term of study, are required to take LANG 5000 Foundation in Listening & Speaking for Postgraduate Students until they pass the course by attaining at least Level 4 in the ELPA Speaking Test before graduation;

Additional coursework may be required as a part of the research preparation. Students are also required to complete a thesis under the supervision of a faculty in the Division, and subsequently, present and defend the thesis before the Thesis Examination Committee.   They are expected to work closely with their supervisors on

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an informal rather than formal classroom basis.

Curriculum for Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program in Social Science

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program is composed of two fields. Each field includes a number of academic specializations:

i) Political Economy covers the specializations in politics, economics, regional geography, international relations, and Science, Technology and Society (STS).

ii) Social Relations covers the specializations in sociology, psychology, anthropology, and demography.

Students must choose one of the two fields as their major field of study before the end of their second regular term of study. They should also identify a supervisor in one of the specializations before the end of their third regular term of study, and prepare for the qualifying examination in this academic specialization under the guidance of the supervisor.

Program Requirements

Students are required to take 27 credits of coursework, of which 12 must be from the following research methodology courses:

SOSC	5090	Statistics in Social Science
SOSC	5110	Social Science Research Design and Methods
SOSC	5170	Systematic Methods in Qualitative Research
SOSC	5340	Quantitative Analysis in Social Science
SOSC	5700	Categorical Data Analysis
SOSC	5760	Structural Equation Modeling

Subject to the approval of the supervisors and the PG Coordinator, PhD students may also take other advanced statistics or econometrics courses not specified in the list to meet the methodology course requirements.

For the remaining 15 credits, at least 9 credits have to be taken as taught courses and 6 credits among courses designated by the PG Committee as relating to the students' major field of studies.

Students are required to complete and pass SHSS 6770 Professional Development in Humanities and Social Science which should be taken in the first year of study for full-time students, or the first two years of study for part-time students. The 1 credit earned from SHSS 6770 cannot be counted toward the credit requirements. HKUST MPhil graduates in Social Science who have taken and passed this course before may be exempted from this requirement, subject to prior approval from the Division Head and PG Coordinator.

Full-time RPg students are required to take an English Language Proficiency

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Assessment (ELPA) Speaking Test administered by the Center for Language Education before the start of their first term of study. Students whose ELPA Speaking Test score is below Level 4, or who failed to take the test in their first term of study, are required to take LANG 5000 Foundation in Listening & Speaking for Postgraduate Students until they pass the course by attaining at least Level 4 in the ELPA Speaking Test before graduation.

For students whose native language is not English, and do not have a TOEFL score of over 600 (paper-based total) or 250 (computer-based total) or 100 (internet-based total), or an IELTS score of 6.5 or above, or a score of 4 or above in "HKDSE English Language", they are required to take a course on English writing offered by the Center for Language Education.

PhD Qualifying Examination

Students have to pass a qualifying examination related to their specialization before the end of their fifth regular term of study in order to become doctoral candidates. Students who have been granted 9 or more transfer credits are required to pass the qualifying examination before the end of their third regular term of study.

The qualifying examination will be a four-hour written examination, comprising two questions in each of the three parts: a) social science methodologies; b) general theories; and c) research developments. The student will be required to answer one question in each of these three parts. The student's Thesis Supervision Committee composes the examination questions, and is also responsible for grading the examination. Students will be graded Excellent, Good, Pass or Fail. The qualifying examination can be retaken only once.

The PhD Thesis

a) PhD Thesis Supervision Committee

The PhD thesis is conducted under the supervision of a Thesis Supervision Committee composed of at least two faculty members, one of whom is designated as the thesis supervisor and committee chair. At least one member of the Committee must have supervised at least one doctoral student who has completed a PhD degree. One member can be from outside the Division.

b) PhD Thesis Prospectus Defense

The PhD candidate should present and defend a thesis prospectus within one regular term after he has passed the qualifying examination. The thesis prospectus should be a substantial document in the neighborhood of 30 pages, which demonstrates a mastery of the literature on the subject, identifies a significant intellectual problem, and lays out a plan for solving that problem. It must be given to the Thesis Supervision Committee at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the prospectus defense. It is defended during a two-hour discussion with members of the Thesis Supervision Committee. The Committee will either formally approve the prospectus, or specify required revisions to be made within a specified time period for final approval.

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c) PhD Thesis Examination

A student submitting a thesis will need to defend it before the Thesis Examination Committee. Details on thesis examinations can be found in the *Handbook for Research Postgraduate Studies*.