2025-2026

REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
(MSocSc)

(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)

These regulations apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Social Sciences in the academic year 2025-26 and thereafter.

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to the University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

The degree of Master of Social Sciences (MSocSc) is a postgraduate degree awarded for the satisfactory completion of a prescribed course of study in one of the following fields: Behavioral Health; Clinical Psychology; Counselling; Criminology; Educational Psychology; Gerontology; Media, Culture and Creative Cities; Mental Health; Nonprofit Management; Population and Policy Analysis; Psychology; Social Data Analytics; Social Service Management; Sociology; and Sustainability Leadership and Governance. These fields of study will not necessarily be offered every year.

Admission requirements

MSS 1. To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences, candidates
(a) shall comply with the General Regulations and the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
(b) shall hold
  (i) a Bachelor's degree of this University; or
  (ii) another qualification of equivalent standard from this University or from another University or comparable institution accepted for this purpose;
(c) for a candidate who is seeking admission on the basis of a qualification from a university or comparable institution outside Hong Kong of which the language of teaching and/or examination is not English, shall satisfy the University English language requirement applicable to higher degrees as prescribed under General Regulation G2(b);
(d) shall satisfy any other admission requirements which may be specified for individual fields of study in the regulations below; and
(e) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

MSS 1.1 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the fields of Behavioral Health, Counselling, Gerontology, Mental Health, and Social Service Management, candidates shall preferably have had a minimum of two years of post-qualification experience in the relevant fields, in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.2 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Clinical Psychology, candidates
(a) shall hold a Bachelor's degree with a major in Psychology, or a recognized equivalent qualification;
(b) shall have demonstrated empirical research experience in the form of a dissertation completed in the Bachelor's degree programme or another equivalent programme in psychology, or first-authorship in published journal article;
(c) shall be eligible for the Graduate Membership of the Hong Kong Psychological Society; and
(d) shall preferably have relevant working experience,
in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.3 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences

in the field of Criminology, candidates
(a) shall hold a Bachelor's degree preferably with a major in the social sciences or humanities discipline; or
(b) shall preferably have working experience in the criminal justice system, social welfare agencies, or in other work with offenders,
in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.4 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Educational Psychology, candidates
(a) shall hold a Bachelor's degree with a major in Psychology, or a recognized equivalent qualification;
(b) shall be eligible for the Graduate Membership of the Hong Kong Psychological Society; and
(c) shall preferably have relevant working experience in educational or related settings,
in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.5 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Nonprofit Management, candidates shall preferably have three years of relevant working experience, in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.6 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Psychology, candidates
(a) shall preferably have more than one year of work experience; and
(b) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination and interview if shortlisted,
in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.7 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Social Data Analytics, candidates
(a) shall preferably have a Bachelor's degree in one of the fields of social sciences: Anthropology, Cognitive Science, Communication, Economics, Education Studies, Ethnic Studies, Linguistics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Urban Studies and Planning, or a closely related field; or a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics, Computer Science, or a related field with an additional major/minor or substantial advanced coursework in one or more social sciences domains; and
(b) shall preferably have pre-existing training in statistics and/or formal logic or prior experience with one or more technical domains, including programming, statistics, formal logic, calculus, linear algebra, etc.
in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.8 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Population and Policy Analysis, candidates
(a) shall preferably have a Bachelor's degree in one of the fields of social sciences: Anthropology, Cognitive Science, Communication, Economics, Education Studies, Ethnic Studies, Linguistics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Urban Studies and Planning, or a closely related field; and
(b) shall preferably have prior experience with applied statistics, mathematics, programming, and/or one or more technical domains (e.g. demographic methods); and
(c) with a background in statistics, mathematics, computer science, or a related field may be considered if they have a minor or have completed substantial advanced coursework in one or more social sciences domains before admission; or if they commit to pursuing additional domain-specific study upon admission
in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.9 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology, candidates shall hold a Bachelor's degree preferably with a major in the social sciences or humanities discipline, in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 2. An application for exemption from the above requirements shall be considered on a case by

case basis.

Qualifying examination

MSS 3.
(a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidates' formal academic ability or their ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent and may include a project report.
(b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.

Award of degree

MSS 4. To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Social Sciences, candidates
(a) shall comply with the General Regulations and the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and
(b) shall complete the programme as prescribed in the syllabuses and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below.

Period of study

MSS 5. The curriculum shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study; or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study, unless otherwise specified for individual fields of study in the regulations below.

MSS 5.1 In the field of Clinical Psychology, the programme shall normally extend over two academic years of full-time study, with a maximum period of registration of four academic years of full-time study.

MSS 5.2 In the field of Counselling, the programme shall normally extend over two or three academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of three academic years for the two-year part-time study or four academic years for the three-year part-time study.

MSS 5.3 In the field of Criminology, the programme shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or four academic years of part-time study.

MSS 5.4 In the field of Educational Psychology, the programme shall normally extend over two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of four academic years for both full-time and part-time study.

MSS 5.5 In the fields of Media, Culture and Creative Cities, the programme shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or four academic years of part-time study.

MSS 5.6 In the field of Nonprofit Management, the programme shall normally extend over one academic year (three semesters) of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study.

MSS 5.7 In the fields of Mental Health, Social Service Management, and Social Work, the programme shall normally extend over two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of three academic years of part-time study.

MSS 5.8 In the field of Population and Policy Analysis, the programme shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study.

MSS 5.9 In the field of Sociology, the programme shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study.

MSS 6. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration specified in the above regulations, unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty.

Advanced Standing

MSS 7. Advanced Standing may be granted to candidates in recognition of studies completed successfully before admission to the curriculum. Candidates who are awarded Advanced Standing will not be granted any further credit transfer for those studies for which Advanced Standing has been granted. The amount of credits to be granted for Advanced Standing shall be determined by the Board of the Faculty, in accordance with the following principles:

(a) a candidate may be granted a total of not more than 20% of the total credits normally required under a curriculum for Advanced Standing unless otherwise approved by the Senate; and
(b) credits granted for Advanced Standing shall not normally be included in the calculation of the GPA unless permitted by the Board of the Faculty but will be recorded on the transcript of the candidate.

Exemption

MSS 8. Candidates may be exempted, with or without special conditions attached, from the requirement prescribed in the regulations and syllabuses governing the curriculum with the approval of the Board of the Faculty, except in the case of a capstone experience. Approval for exemption of a capstone experience may be granted only by the Senate with good reasons. Candidates who are so exempted must replace the number of exempted credits with courses of the same credit value.

Progression in curriculum

MSS 9. Candidates may, with the approval of the Board of the Faculty, transfer credits for courses completed at other institutions during their candidature. The number of transferred credits may be recorded in the transcript of the candidate, but the results of courses completed at other institutions shall not be included in the calculation of the GPA. The combined total number of credits to be granted for Advanced Standing and credit transfer shall not exceed half of the total credits normally required under the curricula of the candidates during their candidature at the University.

Completion of curriculum

MSS 10. To complete the curriculum, candidates

(a) shall satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;

(b) shall follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed written work and field work;
(c) shall complete and present a satisfactory dissertation or capstone project as prescribed in the syllabuses; and
(d) shall satisfy the examiners in all prescribed courses and in any prescribed form of examination.

Dissertation and Capstone project

MSS 11. Subject to the provisions of Regulation MSS 10(c), the title of the dissertation or capstone project shall be submitted for approval by not later than March 31 of the final academic year in which the teaching programme ends and the dissertation or capstone project shall be presented by a date as prescribed in the syllabuses for each field of study; candidates shall submit a statement that the dissertation or capstone project represents their own work (or in the case of conjoint work, a statement countersigned by their co-worker(s), which show their share of the work) undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree.

Assessment

MSS 12. Candidates shall be assessed for each of the courses for which they have registered, and assessment may be conducted in any combination of continuous assessment of coursework, written examinations and/or any other assessable activities. Only passed courses will earn credits.

MSS 13.
(a) Where so prescribed in the syllabuses, coursework or a dissertation or a capstone project shall constitute part or whole of the examination for one or more courses.
(b) An assessment of the candidates' coursework during their studies, including completion of written assignments and participation in field work or laboratory work, as the case may be, may be taken into account in determining the candidates' result in each written examination paper; or, where so prescribed in the syllabuses, may constitute the examination of one or more courses.

MSS 14. Candidates shall not be permitted to repeat a course for which they have received a passing grade for the purpose of upgrading.

MSS 15. Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners at their first attempt in not more than half of the number of courses to be examined, whether by means of written examination papers or coursework assessment, during any of the academic years of study, may be permitted to make up for the failed course(s) in the following manner:
(a) undergoing re-assessment/re-examination in the failed course; or
(b) re-submitting failed coursework, without having to repeat the same course of instruction; or
(c) repeating the failed course by undergoing instruction and satisfying the assessments; or
(d) for elective courses, taking another course in lieu and satisfying the assessment requirements.

MSS 16. Subject to the provision of Regulation MSS 10(c), candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory dissertation or capstone project may be permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation or capstone project within a specified period.

MSS 17. Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners in any prescribed field work/practical work/internship may be permitted to present themselves for re-examination in field work/practical work/internship within a specified period.

MSS 18. Candidates who are unable because of their illness to be present at the written examination of any course may apply for permission to present themselves at a supplementary examination of the same course to be held before the beginning of the following academic year. Any such application shall

be made on the form prescribed within seven calendar days of the first day of the candidate's absence from any examination. Any supplementary examination shall be part of that academic year's examinations, and the provision made in the regulations for failure at the first attempt shall apply accordingly.

MSS 19. There shall be no appeal against the results of examinations and all other forms of assessment.

MSS 20. Candidates who

(a) are not permitted to present themselves for re-assessment/re-examination in any failed course(s) or to repeat the failed course(s) or take another course in lieu under Regulation MSS 15; or
(b) have failed to satisfy the examiners in any course(s) at a second attempt; or
(c) are not permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation or capstone project under Regulation MSS 16; or
(d) have failed to submit a satisfactory new or revised dissertation or capstone project under Regulation MSS 16; or
(e) have exceeded the maximum period of registration.

may be required to discontinue their studies.

MSS 20.1 In the field of Clinical Psychology, candidates who have failed two external placements or the second attempt of either the external placement or internal practicum may be required to discontinue their studies.

MSS 20.2 In the field of Educational Psychology, candidates who have failed any two practicum courses may be required to discontinue their studies.

Grading systems

MSS 21. Individual courses shall be graded according to the one of the following grading systems:

(a) Letter grades, their standards and the grade points for assessment as follows:

Grade	*Standard*	*Grade Point*
A+	Excellent	4.3
A		4.0
A-		3.7
B+	Good	3.3
B		3.0
B-		2.7
C+	Satisfactory	2.3
C		2.0
C-		1.7
D+	Pass	1.3
D		1.0
F	Fail	0

or

(b) 'Pass' or 'Fail'.

Courses graded according to (b) above shall not be included in the calculation of the GPA.

Classification of awards

MSS 22. On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diploma.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

COUNSELLING

The Department of Social Work and Social Administration offers a postgraduate programme leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Counselling for professionals in the human services, such as social workers, teachers, managers, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and hearing therapists and other related professionals who are interested in counselling. The programme shall extend over two academic years for the two-year part-time study or three academic years for the three-year part-time study. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration of three academic years for the two-year part-time study, or four academic years for the three-year part-time study, inclusive of intervening vacations.

EXEMPTION

Candidates may be granted exemption of up to two compulsory courses in recognition of studies completed in related areas. Exemption will only be considered in special circumstances and each application for exemption will be considered on its own merit. Candidates with exemption granted are required to take an additional elective course(s) to replace the exempted course(s) to meet the degree requirements.

EXAMINATIONS

To complete the programme, candidates shall satisfy the examiners in the assessment of courses and a practice-based project report as prescribed in the programme. Assessments of the courses may be conducted by ongoing coursework assignments, or by written tests, or by a combination of both.

CURRICULUM

Candidates are required to complete 66 credits, including 5 compulsory courses (6 credits each), and 3 elective courses (6 credits each) or 1 elective course (6 credits) with a dissertation (12 credits), a skills training laboratory (6 credits each) and a practicum (12 credits) that includes a practice-based project report. Elective courses are so designed that they can provide a focused study in one of three service settings: welfare, education, and health care. By selecting a particular combination of courses, candidates may (1) specialize in one stream from these three service settings; or (2) choose a more broad-based curriculum; or (3) choose to complete 1 elective course with a dissertation (equivalent to two courses) if candidates are interested in advancing their research skills.

Candidates can take elective courses in other fields of study under the Master of Social Sciences (Behavioral Health, Gerontology, Mental Health, Nonprofit Management, Social Service Management) and the Master of Social Work programmes. Special approval from the respective Programme Directors for the courses in the above-mentioned fields of study is needed.

Candidates can also take a maximum of one elective course from the Master of Buddhist Counselling programme. Teachers from the Master of Buddhist Counselling programme may also serve as the co-supervisor in the Capstone Experience Courses if the area of study is relevant. The selection of cross-listed courses and co-supervision of Capstone Experience Courses shall be subject to the approval of the Programme Director/Chairman of the two respective programmes.

(A) ***Compulsory courses***

Candidates shall complete the following courses.

SOWK6040. Practice research in human services (6 credits)
SOWK6158. Critical issues in human development (6 credits)
SOWK6159. Abnormal psychology (6 credits)
SOWK6160. Assessment and testing (6 credits)
SOWK6161. Theories and practices in counselling and professional ethics (6 credits)

(B) ***Elective courses***

Dissertation option: Candidates shall complete one of the following courses.
Non-dissertation option: Candidates shall complete three of the following courses.

SOWK6022. Emotionally focused therapy (6 credits)
SOWK6062. The Satir model and family reconstruction (6 credits)
SOWK6127. Cognitive-behavioral interventions (6 credits)
SOWK6162. Counselling in the welfare setting (6 credits)
SOWK6163. Counselling in the health care setting (6 credits)
SOWK6164. Counselling in the educational setting (6 credits)
SOWK6166. Substance abuse counselling (6 credits)
SOWK6168. Group counselling (6 credits)
SOWK6188. The fundamentals of art therapy (6 credits)
SOWK6204. Hypnotherapy (6 credits)
SOWK6206. Play therapy (6 credits)
SOWK6274. Theories and practices in positive psychology and strength-based interventions (6 credits)
SOWK6299. Applied motivational interviewing in addiction recovery (6 credits)
SOWK6314. Theories and practices in coaching in the workplace (6 credits)
SOWK6317. Theories and practices in mindfulness, compassion and valued-based psychotherapies (6 credits)
SOWK6330. Special topics in counselling I (6 credits)
SOWK6331. Special topics in counselling II (6 credits)
SOWK6349. Mental health recovery: Narrative and strengths-based practices (6 credits)
SOWK7009. Online counselling and psychosocial interventions for digital generations (6 credits)
SOWK7010. Bowen family systems theory and clinical applications (6 credits)
SOWK7012. Theories and practices in animal assisted interactions (6 credits)

(Note: not all elective courses will necessarily be offered in a given year.)

(C) ***Skills training (Compulsory)***

Candidates shall complete the following course.

SOWK6170. Skills training laboratory (6 credits)

Capstone Experience Courses

(D) ***Practicum (Compulsory)***

Candidates opt for either dissertation or non-dissertation option shall complete the following course.

SOWK6171. Practicum and practice-based project report (12 credits)

(E) ***Dissertation (Elective)***

Candidates opt for dissertation option shall complete the following course.

SOWK6264. Dissertation (12 credits)

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Compulsory Courses

SOWK6040. Practice research in human services (6 credits)

Social workers, teachers, nurses and counselors are guided by theories, research and practice wisdom in their work. It is important for students to be able to appraise, utilize, participate and contribute to research. In order to build evidenced and indigenous practice knowledge appropriate to local settings, this course aims to introduce students to principles and procedures of evidence-based practice. Specifically, it aims to help students in tracing research foundations in clinical practice, examining critical issues associated with evidence-based practice, accessing and evaluating new information related to practice and ultimately evaluating critically their practices. Through carrying out a mini-practice research as ongoing assignments, the students are expected to equip with hand-on experiences in planning, designing, implementing research and presenting its findings.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6158. Critical issues in human development (6 credits)

This course examines factors affecting human development through an exploration of the normal patterns of growth from infancy to old age. Individual, social, and familial conditions affecting growth at different stages in the life cycle will be studied, together with related problems of adaptation and adjustment, with particular foci on current thinking in the field of developmental psychology.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6159. Abnormal psychology (6 credits)

This course provides a broad exposure to both theory and practice in the understanding of mental disorders. A wide array of types of mental disorders will be examined. Important themes will be emphasized such as the continuum in behavior from normal behavior to mental illness, issues in diagnosis and classification, and the diathesis-stress and nature-nurture models of abnormal behaviour.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6160. Assessment and testing (6 credits)

This course surveys the major concepts and techniques in the field of psychometrics and provides students with some hands-on experience with commonly used tests. Topics covered include: the context of testing and measurement, the testing process, test standardization, reliability and validity, the nature of intelligence and its appraisal, personality assessment, special domain testing, occupational applications, and ethics in testing.

Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6161. Theories and practices in counselling and professional ethics (6 credits)

This course provides a theoretical foundation for the practice of counselling. Topics covered include the major approaches in counselling, counsellor dimensions, working with various clinical and non-clinical populations, professional ethics and limitations of counselling.
Assessment: 100% coursework

Elective Courses

SOWK6022. Emotionally focused therapy (6 credits)

Emotionally focused therapy (EFT) is an attachment based approach that utilizes the power of empathic attunement and experiential interventions to facilitate a felt sense of security with oneself and others. In the context of individual therapy in EFT, the therapist tunes into the emotion processes of the client and works to facilitate corrective emotional experiences. These new, healing emotional experiences build capacities in regulating emotions and shape a sense of trust in one's worthiness and competence.

This course provides a theoretical overview of the EFT approach in the context of individual therapy (EFIT) with an emphasis on the experiential practice of empathic attunement and EFT interventions. Students will learn the roadmap of EFT, apply practical interventions on how to attune to the here-and-now emotions, and facilitate processes that promote more secure and flexible models of self and others. Neuroscience is introduced to help students to understand its role played in emotional changes.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6062. The Satir model and family reconstruction (6 credits)

Human behaviour is heavily influenced by family upbringing and socialization. This course, based on a marathon experiential training mode, aims to help students to achieve an understanding of their family. Virginia Satir's concepts of family rules, communication patterns, family mapping and self-esteem will be used to guide students through a process of self-discovery. Active participation will be essential.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6127. Cognitive-behavioral interventions (6 credits)

The course introduces students to the Beck's cognitive-behaviour therapy model in working with people with depression and anxieties. A case process approach will be adopted to provide a stage-by-stage and step-by-step understanding of the theory and practice of Beck's CBT. Other CBT models for working with people with psychosis, OCD, pathological gambling, substance abuse and etc. will also be discussed in class.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6162. Counselling in the welfare setting (6 credits)

This course introduces the various macro and micro intervention approaches in working with disadvantaged individuals who are users of social services in Hong Kong. Through a systems perspective, students will have the opportunity to examine various intervention approaches in helping

disadvantaged groups, such as new arrivals, elderly people, at-risk youth, and mentally and physically handicapped persons to deal with their intra-personal, interpersonal and environmentally-induced difficulties. The course emphasizes the integration of micro and macro intervention approaches.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6163. Counselling in the health care setting (6 credits)

Counselling approaches used in health care, such as crisis intervention, grief work, cognitive behavioural intervention, support groups, art therapy, psycho-education skills, bereavement counselling, pastoral care and peer counselling, will be examined. Students will be provided with experiential training on skills/ techniques in working with patients in hospitals and in the community.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6164. Counselling in the educational setting (6 credits)

This course offers an understanding of the developmental characteristics, needs and struggles of students in schools (children and adolescents). To understand the counselling process and acquire necessary skills in offering counselling to students are the main foci, such that students may be helped to cope better with their school life.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6166. Substance abuse counselling (6 credits)

This course examines the drug scene in Hong Kong and gives an overview of the problem of substance abuse in society. The different theoretical conceptualizations of substance abuse and theories of addiction are then reviewed as a prelude to devising intervention approaches to help drug-addicted persons.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6168. Group counselling (6 credits)

This course provides an overview of the theories and practice of group counselling approaches. Applications include working with families, children, the elderly people, and medical/psychiatric patients. Cultural issues, current research and developments in group counselling will also be discussed.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6188. The fundamentals of art therapy (6 credits)

This course introduces students to the philosophy and practice of Art Therapy, and how Art Therapy activities can be modified and used with potential clients under careful working guidelines. Students will also experience different art activities/philosophies, which are designed according to the various needs of potential clients. Lectures, participation in group workshops, and video and case presentations will form a part of this course.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6204. Hypnotherapy (6 credits)

This course gives an overview of the historical development and domain of hypnosis, as well as contemporary approaches in hypnosis. A particular emphasis is placed on the fundamentals of

hypnotherapy where particular skills will be of use in the counselling process. Lecture topics include the art of hypnotizing, styles of hypnotic suggestion, clinical applications, professional ethics and limitations of hypnotherapy.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6206. Play therapy (6 credits)

The objective of the module is to introduce the student to the principles and practice of play therapy and its application to the counseling and psychotherapy for children, adolescents and families. At the end of the course, the students will have an introduction of the history and development of play therapy, an understanding of various theoretical models of play therapy, rationale for the use of play in therapy, and phrase of the client's progress in play therapy. Practice material will be provided including how to development therapeutic rapport, conduct a play based assessment, setting up of a playroom and the selection of therapeutic play materials. Best practice tips on engaging the client, recording keeping and other ethical issues will be discussed.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6274. Theories and practices in positive psychology and strength-based interventions (6 credits)

Positive Psychology emphasizes the discovery and cultivation of human strengths and potential for a flourished life, and strength-based interventions include counseling and therapy models that foster psychological well-being and reduce distress and symptoms in clients. This course critically reviews the theory and practice of positive psychology and positive interventions, including the study of happiness, character strengths, optimism, resilience, compassion, meaning, goals, flow, creativity and hope and their relevance to psychological health and psychotherapy, as well as strength-oriented interventions which include mindfulness-based, compassion-based and valued-based models. The cultural relevance of Positive Psychology and strength-based interventions will also be examined.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6299. Applied motivational interviewing in addiction recovery (6 credits)

This course provides an overview of Motivational Interviewing (MI), an evidence-based counselling strategy for promoting behavioural change. MI originates from treating alcohol dependence, and was further extended to other settings, including health care, the criminal justice system, correctional and education, to mention just a few. Over 30 decades of evolution, MI has spread widely across many settings and cultures.

MI was developed from clinical observation, rather than theory. However, there are numbers of social psychology and counselling theories that can be used to explain the underlying mechanism of motivating strategies in the process of motivational interviewing, such as cognitive dissonance theory, self-determination theory, etc. Students are required to learn different social psychology theories and counselling theories to deconstruct MI. In addition, multifaceted unfolding of the concepts of addiction and recovery-oriented approach toward addiction treatment will be covered.

Students can be equipped with not only the knowledge and conceptual framework of motivational interviewing, but also practical experiences through group exercises and role-play. Active participation is expected in order to cultivate mutual learning communities and achieve better learning outcomes.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6314. Theories and practices in coaching in the workplace (6 credits)

This course aims to introduce the basic theories and practices in coaching. Students will be able to distinguish coaching from other learning and development approaches such as mentoring, counselling, consulting, training, facilitating etc. Various theoretical approaches to coaching will be covered. This course also encourages students to evaluate the various coaching models and develop their own coaching model to be applied in their own coaching practice. The emphasis is also on using coaching as a management tool and conversational tool to enhance performance at work for higher motivation and retention. The topic on cross cultural coaching is also a relatively imminent area for further research.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6317. Theories and practices in mindfulness, compassion and valued-based psychotherapies (6 credits)

This course will cover the most representative psychotherapies of such kind, including mindfulness-based psychotherapies, acceptance and commitment therapy, and compassion-focused therapy. All these therapies are transdiagnostic capable of treating different mental disorders and are evidence-based with proven treatment efficacy. They have a very different understanding of the nature of psychopathologies and human suffering from the traditional psychotherapies. Their theoretical frameworks, treatment principles and strategies, case conceptualization, and intervention skills will be demonstrated in this course, and the commonalities and differences among these therapy models will be reviewed. The benefits of practicing these therapies on the therapist and the therapeutic relationship will also be discussed. The students learning these contemporary psychotherapy models are expected to have advanced personal growth and gains in psychological well-being as well.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6330. Special topics in counselling I (6 credits)

This course aims to walk with students through the latest knowledge on counselling practices individuals with mental health issues and the promotion of wellbeing. It will provide you with the evidence- and experienced-based knowledge of non-pharmacological approaches and practical skills relevant to counselling practices You will be guided to see how these practices are not only applicable to counselling in mental health context but also to working with people coping with other issues and challenges in life.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6331. Special topics in counselling II (6 credits)

This course aims to walk with students through the latest knowledge on counselling practices individuals with mental health issues and the promotion of wellbeing. It will provide you with the evidence- and experienced-based knowledge of non-pharmacological approaches and practical skills relevant to counselling practices You will be guided to see how these practices are not only applicable to counselling in mental health context but also to working with people coping with other issues and challenges in life.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6349. Mental health recovery: Narrative and strengths-based practices (6 credits)

Recovery is “A deeply personal, unique process of changing one’s attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life even with the limitation caused by illness.” (Anthony, 1993). Recovery-oriented practices are empowering approaches that embrace person-centered alternatives for promoting hope, self-determination, self-management,

wellbeing and social inclusion of people in face of mental distress. Such humanistic approaches have been gaining international credence among mental health service users, service providers, professionals and policy makers in recent years.

Grounding on the recovery paradigm, this course aims to walk you through the re-authoring elements of recovery, and the latest knowledge on recovery-oriented practices for mental health counselling and the promotion of wellbeing. It will provide you with the evidence- and experienced-based knowledge of non-pharmacological approaches and postmodern practices including story-telling, narrative therapy, the strengths model assessment and intervention, Wellness Recovery Action Plan etc. You will be guided to see how these practices are not only applicable to counseling in mental health context but also to working with people coping with other issues and challenges in life. You will also have the opportunities to learn and practise the various conversation maps of narrative therapy through experiential exercises during the course.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK7009. Online counselling and psychosocial interventions for digital generations (6 credits)

This course brings together cutting-edge knowledge and discussions related to the online world, its impact on digital generations' health and mental health, and the use of technology in psychosocial services both in the unique local and international contexts. Students will learn essential theories and research of cyberpsychology and online counselling. The content includes basic principles, assessment and evidence-based practices of professional counselling and psychosocial interventions for individuals and groups over the Internet, focusing on understanding and practising online counselling and crisis intervention with high-risk groups. Ethical practices are highly emphasized throughout the entire course. Our goal is to help students with background training in "human services (e.g., counselling, social work, academic advising, support for caregivers) to be capable of helping people with various psychosocial needs or mental health conditions and distress through both synchronous and asynchronous e-platforms.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK7010. Bowen family systems theory and clinical applications (6 credits)

This course will teach the fundamentals of Bowen family systems theory (or Bowen theory) and its application to clinical work. Bowen theory is one of the most well-established family therapy approaches. It views the family as an emotional unit and an emotional system, regulated by emotional processes found also in other living organisms. It adopts systems thinking (versus linear thinking) to viewing human behaviour, thus seeing symptoms not as the pathology of the individual, but as reflection of the dysfunctions of a family system.
Treatment is aimed at ameliorating the dysfunctional family relationship patterns and interaction processes.
Students will learn to make multigenerational and systemic assessment of families, to take a broad view, to practice objectivity and neutrality, to identify multigenerational relationship patterns and to work towards differentiation of self, a crucial factor for resilience, in their counselling work. Instructions on the theoretical concepts will be supported with ample illustrations of case examples with individual, couples and families facing problems such as eating disorder, marital difficulty, depression, and child behaviour/emotional problems. There will be videos, case presentations and discussions, and practice of questioning.
Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK7012. Theories and practices in animal assisted interactions (6 credits)

Human-Animal Interactions is a rapidly emerging field. Human services providers realized the power of the unconditional love offered by our non-judgmental animal partners to hance the well-being of

people interact with those animals. As the number of people in needs such as special educational needs (SEN), dementia, and mixed mood disorders, is increasing, the number of those who are non-responsive to the more traditional service formats is also increasing. Hence, animal assisted interaction (AAI) has become one of the most welcomed non-traditional interventions especially for those under-served or non-responsive individuals in the society. As one of the pioneering courses about AAI being taught at the post-graduate level, this course provides a comprehensive overview of the major theoretical orientations in AAI with a major focus on its application in counselling of people with common mental health needs. It aims to give students an appreciation of the general issues, problems encountered, and related ethical issues of applying AAI in the counselling process. It covers topics such as the basics of the human-animal relationship, ethics and professionalism, limitations of AAI etc. Students will also be introduced to the basic psychology and behaviour of animals, and the training philosophy since these will be incorporated into the design and practice of AAIs. Student learning will be facilitated by lectures, seminars, case studies, experiential exercises, group projects, and the completion of written assignments.
Assessment: 100% coursework

Skills training

SOWK6170. Skills training laboratory (6 credits)

This laboratory provides training on basic relationship building strategies and methods. Counselling relies on an establishment of therapeutic relationship. Characteristics and dimensions related to such counsellor-client relationship will be introduced, and strategies and methods for building rapport will be practiced in the laboratory setting. Further, the course will also cover basic skills related to case and group counselling. Teaching is done via an experiential learning approach. Students are required to participate actively in class and complete practice assignments.
Assessment: 100% coursework

Practicum (Capstone Experience Course)

SOWK6171. Practicum and practice-based project report (12 credits)

All students will have to be engaged in a total of 250 hours of clinical work, and to complete a practice-based project report of no more than 10,000 words. A practicum teacher will be assigned to supervise the student's clinical work and to facilitate his/her completion of the practice-based project report. The report should essentially be an evaluation of the clinical work performed by the student. Individual and group supervision will be provided. *Students must hand in their reports not later than June 30 of the same year when the practicum is undertaken.*

Prerequisite: Students who have completed and passed the following courses

SOWK6158. Critical issues in human development (6 credits)
SOWK6159. Abnormal psychology (6 credits)
SOWK6160. Assessment and testing (6 credits)
SOWK6161. Theories and practices in counselling and professional ethics (6 credits)
SOWK6170. Skills training laboratory (6 credits)

are permitted to take the practicum and practice-based project report course.
Assessment: 100% coursework

Dissertation (Capstone Experience Course)

SOWK6264. Dissertation (12 credits)

The dissertation is offered to students who have proven record to show their ability to conduct research. The dissertation shall be a critical study that demonstrates the application of sound research methodology to the investigation of problem(s) relevant to the field of counselling. The proposed topic of investigation has to be substantially different from the issues or problems covered in the practice-based project report (SOWK6171). The dissertation option is subject to approval of the Head of Department and relevant dissertation supervisor. The dissertation must represent a student's individual work and should not exceed 20,000 words in length. The title of the dissertation shall be submitted for approval not later than March 31 of the same academic year of study. The dissertation shall be presented by not later than **August 1** of the same academic year of study.
Assessment: 100% coursework