

**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.

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### **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.
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### **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.
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### **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.

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### **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.

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### **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.

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### **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.

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### **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.
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### **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.

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### **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:

<i>Grade</i>		<i>Standard</i>	<i>Grade Point</i>
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.

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### **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.

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## **SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

### **MENTAL HEALTH**

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 Mental Health for social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and other health related workers who are interested in mental health issues and practices. The programme shall extend over not less than two and not more than three academic years of part-time study, inclusive of intervening vacations.

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### **EXEMPTION**

Candidates may be granted exemption of up to three 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 to replace the exempted compulsory course to meet the degree requirements.

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### **ASSESSMENTS**

To complete the programme, candidates shall satisfy the examiners in the assessment of courses as prescribed in the programme. Assessments of the courses may be conducted either by course assignments, or by presentations, or written tests, or a combination of both methods. The grading system follows the standard practice in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

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### **CURRICULUM**

Candidates are required to complete 60 credits, including 5 compulsory courses (6 credits each), and four to five courses (6 or 12 credits each) or three elective courses (6 credits each) with a dissertation (12 credits). In the first year of study, students will acquire most current knowledge about the contexts, policies and practices in mental health. They will also be introduced to advanced and practical knowledge and skills in psychiatric assessment and mental health counselling. In the second year, students can choose to specialize in **four areas** in mental health (i.e. Integrative Mental Health, Children and Youth Mental Health, Psychogeriatric Care and Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy). Candidates can take elective courses in other fields of study under the Master of Social Sciences (Behavioral Health, Gerontology, 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 or programme is needed.

**(A) *Compulsory courses***

Candidates shall complete the following courses.

- SOWK6309. Mental health: policies and practices (6 credits)
- SOWK6310. Psychosocial approaches in mental health care (6 credits)
- SOWK6328. Theory and practice in mental health counselling (6 credits)
- SOWK6329. Assessment in mental health: A bio-psychosocial approach (6 credits)

**(B) *Elective courses***

Dissertation option: Candidates shall complete three of the following courses.

Non-dissertation option: Candidates shall complete four to five courses (6 or 12 credits each). If interested, candidates can choose courses to make up one of the four areas of concentration: (1) Integrative Mental Health (2) Children and Youth Mental Health, (3) Psychogeriatric Care and (4) Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy.

- SOWK6022. Emotionally focused therapy (6 credits)
- SOWK6127. Cognitive-behavioral interventions (6 credits)
- SOWK6201. Mental health problems in old age (6 credits)
- SOWK6214. Children and youth mental health (6 credits)
- SOWK6311. Cognitive-behaviour therapy skills training (6 credits)
- SOWK6322. Special topics in mental health I (6 credits)
- SOWK6323. Special topics in mental health II (6 credits)
- SOWK6345. Mental health economics & policy (6 credits)
- SOWK6337. Evidence-based interventions and care for people with dementia (6 credits)
- SOWK6346. Cognitive-behaviour therapy supervised practice - Counsellor stream (12 credits)
- SOWK6347. Cognitive-behaviour therapy supervised practice - Practitioner stream (12 credits)
- SOWK6349. Mental health recovery: Narrative and strengths-based practices (6 credits)
- SOWK7011. Narrative therapy: A post-structuralist approach to life challenges (6 credits)
- SOWK7014. Early intervention in mental health (6 credits)
- SOWK7015. Early intervention in mental health for older adult (6 credits)
- SOWK7016. Early intervention in mental health for young person (6 credits)

and any other courses offered under the Master of Social Sciences (Behavioral Health, Counselling, Gerontology, Nonprofit Management, Social Service Management) and the Master of Social Work programmes

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

***Capstone Experience Courses***

**(C) *Compulsory course***

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

- SOWK6265. Research methods in human service (6 credits)

**(D) *Dissertation (Elective)***

Candidates opt for dissertation option shall complete the following course.

- SOWK9003. Dissertation (12 credits)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

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## *Compulsory Courses*

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### **SOWK6309. Mental health: policies and practices (6 credits)**

As part of practice competence, mental health workers should be able to take a critical stance in understanding and analyzing the policy contexts that affect their practice. The first half of the course will provide a general understanding of selected social policies in Hong Kong. It will also offer students an understanding of certain policy analysis frameworks. The second half of the course focuses on critically examining policy issues relating to mental health care. Topics such as policy trends in mental health care, legal contexts of mental health care, stigma and discrimination, rights of persons with mental illness and etc. will be explored. Overseas examples in mental health policies will be used for comparison.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK6310. Psychosocial approaches in mental health care (6 credits)**

This course critically examines current models of prevention, rehabilitation and treatments for people with mental illness. Topics such as prevention and rehabilitation, hospital and community care, models of social and vocational rehabilitation, models of psychological intervention, culture and mental health, multidisciplinary teamwork in mental health service, core competences of mental health workers/social workers and etc. By comparing these to overseas models of psychosocial approaches in mental health care, students can appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the models that are at work in Hong Kong.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK6328. Theory and practice in mental health counselling (6 credits)**

This course provides an overview on professional ethics and a theoretical foundation for the practices in mental health counselling. It has two major objectives: First, it intends to discuss key ethical issues in counselling, and to critically examine counsellors as persons guided by their value orientation, intentionality, and reflexivity. Second, it attempts to present a range of current evidence-based bio-psycho-social intervention approaches for working with people in face of mental distress and for nourishing people's positive mental health. As an overview, it covers some of the current and contemporary approaches stemming from various theoretical orientations such as body and mind, cognition and behavior, constructivism and post-modernism, and family systems. Their application and evidence of effectiveness in mental health counselling will be discussed. Some lectures may also involve reflection exercises, experiential learning and skills training.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK6329. Assessment in mental health: A bio-psychosocial approach (6 credits)**

This course provides students with knowledge and skills in conducting psychiatric and psychosocial assessments on people with mental illness. Assessments on individual illnesses such as depression and psychosis will be taught using a bio-psychosocial perspective. The first 5 lectures cover the genetic and neurological bases of certain types of mental illness and the other 5 lectures will focus on the psychosocial factors in the etiology and development of certain types of mental illness. Students will be introduced to selected neurological, psychological and psychosocial assessment tools that are commonly used in measuring the mental health characteristics and statuses of a person with mental health concerns. Practical skills in using these assessment tools will be taught during classes.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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## *Elective Courses*

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### **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

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### **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

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### **SOWK6201. Mental health problems in old age (6 credits)**

This course explores the types of mental illnesses among the elderly in Hong Kong. Attention will be put towards the understanding of the causes and treatments of mental illness in the elderly population. A critical review of medical, psychological and social services for the elderly with mental illness will be conducted.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK6214. Children and youth mental health (6 credits)**

This course focuses on an understanding of the mental health issues found among children and youth in Hong Kong. While it will introduce the developmental perspectives on child and adolescent development, it will also provide an overview of the prevalence and general features of different childhood and adolescent mental health problems. The course will also bear a practice focus and introduce to students the assessment, treatment and skills in engaging children and youth suffering from various mental health problems.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK6311. Cognitive-behaviour therapy skills training (6 credits)**

This course adopts a CBT case process model and provides step-by-step intensive and hands-on training of cognitive-behaviour therapy skills for students who are interested in practicing CBT.

Cognitive-oriented techniques such as thought stopping, cognitive restructuring, cognitive continuum and pie chart will be taught, while behavioural techniques such as activity ruler, activity chart, behavioural experiment and exposure will also be introduced to the students. It is expected that students would actively participate by practicing the various skills, engaging in role plays and other activities in class. Students who intend to enroll in this course must have taken SOWK6127 Cognitive-behavioral interventions or an equivalent. As it is an intensive skill-oriented training, the optimum class size is 12 students.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK6322. Special topics in mental health I (6 credits)**

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. There is no health without mental health. Various psychological, emotional, biological and socioeconomic factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point of time. Mental well-being is associated with our rapid changing society. This course will introduce students to mental health topics or issues in our contemporary society. For example, mental health policy and services, maternal and child mental health, neurological issues and problems in mental health, and suicide prevention.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK6323. Special topics in mental health II (6 credits)**

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. There is no health without mental health. Various psychological, emotional, biological and socioeconomic factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point of time. Mental well-being is associated with our rapid changing society. This course will introduce students to mental health topics or issues in our contemporary society. For example, mental health policy and services, maternal and child mental health, neurological issues and problems in mental health, and suicide prevention.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK6345. Mental health economics & policy (6 credits)**

Mental health is closely associated with our rapidly changing society. This course will introduce students to mental health topics and issues in our contemporary society – including public policy; causes and prevention; treatment and support; resource allocation challenges; discrimination and stigma; and inequalities. These issues will be covered at different points across the life-course, with examples covering topics such as maternal mental health; child and adolescent mental illness and its adulthood consequences; recovery; workplace issues; family impacts and roles; suicide; and dementia. Students will gain in-depth understanding about mental health challenges and policy responses, especially from an economic perspective; risk factors for mental illness; economic evaluation of mental health interventions and policies, including methods and applications of cost-effectiveness and cost-utility analyses; policy analysis. Illustrative real-world examples will be used throughout the course, such as mental health policy in England today, economic evaluation of medication and nonpharmacological interventions for common mental disorders and severe mental illnesses, projection and other modelling to inform national dementia care policy.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK6337. Evidence-based interventions and care for people with dementia (6 credits)**

Dementia care and interventions can improve cognition, behavioural and psychological symptoms, and other outcomes in people with dementia and wellbeing of carers. This course equips current and future practitioners with the fundamental understanding and skills in delivering evidence-based

non-pharmacological interventions in dementia, covering the entire course of illness from mild to severe, including Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST), Tailored Activity Program (TAP), multicomponent carer support programmes, and dementia care management; as well as case identification and evaluation of intervention outcomes.

Pre-requisite: SOWK6201. Mental health problems in old age

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**SOWK6346. Cognitive-behaviour therapy supervised practice – Counsellor stream (12 credits)**

The course adopts a case-study format in which students are required to provide counselling clients using cognitive-behavior interventions, over a period of two semesters. Students are required to complete 120 hours of direct client contact, 52 hours of individual and group supervision, 4 hours of briefing sessions and 32 hours of skill-based workshops. Students will have to report in class the progress of their treatment sessions. Through case discussion and group supervision, students will learn the process and techniques of cognitive-behavior interventions. Students who intend to enrol in this course must have taken SOWK6127 “Cognitive-behavioral interventions”, and SOWK6311 “Cognitive-behaviour therapy skills training”. As it is an intensive skills-oriented training, the optimum class size is 18 students. Upon completion of this course, students may be eligible for the membership of Hong Kong Professional Counselling Association.

Assessment of student practicum performance will mainly make reference to the student’s rating in (1) practicum assessment form and (2) Beck’s Cognitive Therapy Rating Scale, so as to assess the student’s ability in using CBI to guide the case assessment and intervention. The assessment will be conducted at mid-term and end of practicum, so that more concrete feedbacks and suggestions can be given to students to facilitate their learning and improvement.

Pre-requisite: SOWK6127 Cognitive-behavioral interventions or an equivalent, and SOWK6311 Cognitive-behaviour therapy skills training.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**SOWK6347. Cognitive-behaviour therapy supervised practice – Practitioner stream (12 credits)**

The course adopts a “case-study” format in which students are required to provide counselling for up to five clients using cognitive-behavior interventions, over a period of two semesters. Students will have to report in class the progress of their treatment sessions. Through case discussions and group supervision, students will learn the process and techniques of cognitive-behavior interventions. Upon completion of this course, students will be awarded a certificate equivalent to Level I Certificate Training in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy from Institute of Cognitive Therapy of Hong Kong.

Pre-requisite: SOWK6127 Cognitive-behavioral interventions or an equivalent, and SOWK6311 Cognitive-behaviour therapy skills training.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**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

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### **SOWK7011. Narrative therapy: A post-structuralist approach to life challenges (6 credits)**

The course introduces students to the philosophical foundations and practice of narrative therapy for working with individuals, families, groups and communities. Students will have a chance to be engaged with narrative ideas and its application in counselling and human services contexts.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK7014. Early intervention in mental health (6 credits)**

Early intervention in mental health refers to the early identification and treatment/care of people with mental illness, and prevention/delay of illness onset in subclinical populations. For common mental disorders and severe mental illness, early interventions are at the forefront of clinical and scientific advances, including therapy and service designs that improve access to evidence-based interventions. This course provides a systematic introduction to local and international developments in early intervention in mental health from a life course perspective, with a focus on youth and older people to illustrate early intervention modalities, such as the ‘third wave’ of cognitive behavioural therapy, peer support, digital, and low-intensity psychotherapies.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK7015. Early intervention in mental health for older adult (6 credits)**

Mental health problems in old age are common and can have deleterious consequences, including disability and death. Age-appropriate early interventions can be effective in preventing or minimizing mental health problems and their complications in older people. Building on a foundation of knowledge and skills in early intervention in mental health, this course provides further insight into the tailoring, adaptation, and co-creation of interventions with older adults, applying in-depth knowledge about psychological ageing and lifespan development for key psychosocial interventions and care.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **SOWK7016. Early intervention in mental health for young person (6 credits)**

Most adult mental illnesses onset before age 25 years. Adolescence is a window of opportunity for early interventions, which need to consider age-specific biopsychosocial development, system/context (family, school, social media), and risk/protective factors (peer relationship, bullying). Building on a foundation of knowledge and skills in early intervention in mental health, this course provides further insight into the tailoring, adaptation, and co-creation of interventions with young people, applying in-depth knowledge about developmental stage and life course determinants for key psychosocial

interventions and care.  
Assessment: 100% coursework

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### *Capstone Experience Courses*

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#### **SOWK6265. Research methods in human service (6 credits)**

This course covers the whole research process from the development of research questions and hypotheses to the analysis of data as well as presentation of findings. Different data collection methods including qualitative data collection such as case study, interviews and focus groups; and quantitative data collection such as survey and experiment will be discussed. Data analysis on various types of data including secondary data will be examined. Students will be expected to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills they acquired through the programme by attending the integrated seminars organized by the end of the first semester of the final academic year of study.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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#### **SOWK9003. Dissertation (12 credits)**

The title of the dissertation shall be submitted for approval not later than five months before the formal submission of the dissertation or 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. The dissertation shall be a critical study that demonstrates the application of research methodology to the investigation of problems relevant to the field of study, and shall not exceed 20,000 words in length.

Assessment: 100% coursework