



Press release

For immediate release

## **HKU launches new double degree 6858 Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Laws, nurturing patent practitioners and legal professionals in the technology transfer industry**

October 26, 2021

STEM-knowledge driven businesses dominate today's economies. As Hong Kong's role as a premier innovation hub in Asia becomes increasingly important, the demand for patent practitioners and legal professionals in the technology transfer industry soars. In its recent policy address, the HKSAR government has actively promoted technological transfer and entrepreneurship via the Innovation and Technology Bureau. Coupled with the rapid development of the Greater Bay Area, the need for talents with both science and legal training becomes even greater. According to United States Patent and Trademark Office, there are 186,967 patents granted in the first half of 2021, and China ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the world. In view of this, the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Law, The University of Hong Kong (HKU), are joining hands to introduce a new double degree programme 6858 Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Laws (BSc&LLB) in academic year 2022-23, offering first of its kind in Hong Kong for students who aspire to develop expertise in both law and science.

This 5-year programme in Science and Law aims to fill the current knowledge gap by providing academic training for legal professionals with expertise in science while equipping scientists to understand complex legal processes associated with their research and inventions. There is no similar programme in Hong Kong at the moment, which gives HKU a head start in developing an innovative programme with unique characteristics.



"In my years of legal practice, I have often found lawyers of a broader knowledge base of particular strength in connecting with clients and understanding their needs and problems, and to advocate for them in a court of law or in front of an arbitration panel. For that reason, I have often encouraged aspiring lawyers to first pursue a non-legal degree in a discipline they may have a passion or strong interest in. In this age of technology, it is increasingly necessary for any outstanding lawyer wishing to serve the industry to be able to apply the law with the help of a certain level of technical knowledge. This double degree is launched in time to fill a long-felt gap in the legal services market." said Ms Winnie TAM SC, Barrister-at-law; Chairman, Communications Authority.

As an expert in dealing with intellectual property rights, Mr Ken NG, Intellectual Property Manager of HKU Technology Transfer Office remarked: "Intellectual Property is both a spear and a shield, especially patent. Patent is an intangible asset which can be used to seize the market share and prevent others from getting into your business field. Patent management requires talents with both science and law backgrounds. This double degree programme equips students with some necessary skills to become patent practitioners."

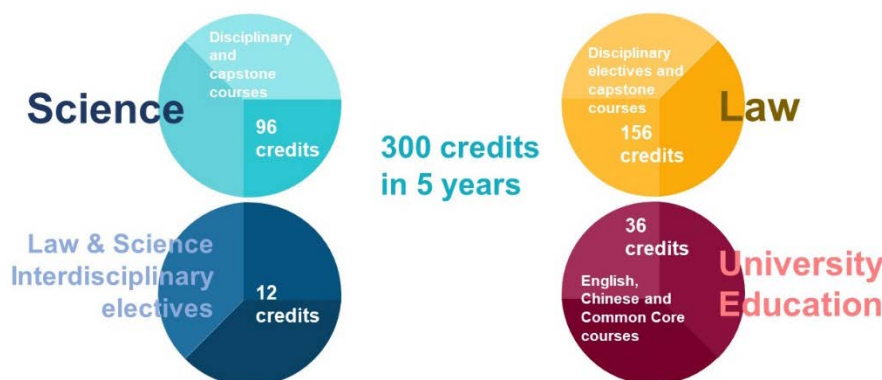
"One must comprehend both science and law while assuming important positions relating to innovation and policy-making, and a broad science background is definitely beneficial to the work of patent professionals. Staying close to science frontiers, getting exposed to breadth of topics, and working at the interface of science, law, and business are rewarding yet challenging – this is not something students with a mono skill-set can master easily. We are looking for talented individuals who have true potentials to excel in all these fields," said Dr Timothy BONEBRAKE, Associate Dean of Science (Teaching & Learning), HKU.

“Since we have entered the digital age, legal and compliance professionals may encounter more and more technology-related issues as part of their work. Meanwhile, companies in science/technology sectors may face legal challenges relating to regulation or intellectual property. Law and science are indeed closely connected. We hope that this double degree programme can nurture talents with knowledge in the disciplines of both law and science,” said Associate Professor Kelvin KWOK, Associate Dean (Academic Affairs), Faculty of Law.

### **What the programme covers**

Developed by Faculties of Science and Law in collaboration, this programme integrates scientific and legal expertise coherently. Students will have to study courses from each Faculty, and complete law-and-science interdisciplinary courses as well as capstone experiences for both Science Major and LLB professional core in his or her fourth or fifth year of study. The 300-credit programme comprises:

- 96 credits for the Science Major (Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Decision Analytics, Earth System Science, Ecology & Biodiversity, Environmental Sciences, Food & Nutritional Science, Geology, Mathematics, Molecular Biology & Biotechnology, Physics, Risk Management, Statistics) disciplinary courses including a capstone course
- 156 credits of the LLB professional core including 6 credits of capstone course, 18 credits of disciplinary electives, and 12 credits of interdisciplinary core courses
- 12 credits of law and science interdisciplinary electives
- 36 credits of University requirements



### **What students will learn**

Below are some of the highlights of the courses:

- Scientific knowledge and research skills
  - Lectures, laboratory and workshops courses
- Foundational legal concepts and essential legal skills
  - Courses on case reading, legal research and writing and statutory interpretation, etc.
- Cross-disciplinary knowledge, analytical and evaluation skills
- Independent research experience with original thinking
  - research courses
  - Field camps and project-based courses
- Compulsory Moot competition and mediation training
- Work experience
  - Internships
  - Placements

### **Where will this Programme lead our students to**

- Career developments
  - Joining commercial or intellectual property firms as patent agents or professionals focusing on business development in innovative and technology firms
  - Solicitors, barristers or in-house counsel specialising in intellectual property/technology matters
  - Entrepreneurs in biotechnology industry
  - Government/ policy-makers/ regulatory officials handling IT, copyright, data protection, etc.
  - Environmentalists specialising in animal and environmental law
  - Researchers or academics in the fields of science or law

- Transferable skills
  - Provides students with extensive subject knowledge and specialised training in law
  - Nurtures a scientifically literate population with legal knowledge to formulate solutions for challenges

### **How to apply**

#### **JUPAS Applicants**

Programme entrance requirements: Level 5 in English Language, Level 4 in Chinese Language, Level 2 in Mathematics, Level 2 in Liberal Studies and Level 3 in two elective subjects\* among Category A subjects and M1/ M2.

The programme will consider admissions based on the best 6 HKDSE subjects. The best 6 subjects must include English Language, best subject in Mathematics/M1/M2, the best Science elective subject, plus the best three among the remaining Category A subjects and M1/ M2.

\*One must be a Science elective subject: *Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Combined Science, or Integrated Science.*

#### **Non-JUPAS**

Applicants will be considered on their own merits and should give full details of educational background, qualifications and experience, as well as academic references, predicated results and performance.

Remarks: Applicants will be invited to attend interviews.

### **Supplementary Information**

**Quota:** 20

#### **Tuition fee\*:**

Year 1 – 4	HKD42,100 per year (local)	HKD171,000 per year (non-local)
Year 5	HKD85,000 per year (local) <sup>#</sup>	HKD171,000 per year (non-local) <sup>#</sup>

\*subject to review annually

<sup>#</sup> 2021-22 fees for reference

For programme information, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3DJYw4o>

Join our Admissions talk via Webinar at HKU Virtual Information Day(Sat October 30, 2021, 1 pm). For more information, please visit: <https://hku.zoom.us/j/99080688426>

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