Master of Science in the field of

FOOD SAFETY AND TOXICOLOGY

Addressing risks of food toxicology in broad dimensions

Apply now for entry in September 2021
Established by the School of Biological Sciences in 2009, the MSc in the field of Food Safety and Toxicology programme:

- provides comprehensive training on a multi-disciplinary field involving general toxicology, food toxicology, regulatory toxicology, and food safety management
- emphasises on basic knowledge and practical skills in recognition and evaluation of human exposure to potentially hazardous chemicals and pathogens in our living environment and via intake of food
- makes particular reference to food safety evaluation and regulation

World-class Rankings of HKU

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)  
World Rankings 2021: #22  
Asia Rankings 2020: #3

Times Higher Education (THE)  
World Rankings 2020: #35  
Asia Rankings 2020: #4

Top-notch Scientists in the Faculty

Clarivate Analytics’ Essential Science Indicators 2019
15.4% of our professoriate staff are the world’s top 1% scholars

Why this Programme

- First multi-disciplinary postgraduate Toxicology programme of its kind in Hong Kong designed to address specifically on food safety
- Focuses on general principles of toxicology, chemical and microbial hazards in food, toxicity evaluation, exposure assessment, risk assessment and management
- Taught by a teaching team with considerable experience in the fields of policy development, law enforcement, and research and consultancy for industry and government
- Internationally renowned visiting lecturers to give lectures and workshops

Where will this Programme Lead You

- Students are required to pay Caution Money (HK$350, refundable on graduation subject to no claims being made) and Graduation Fee (HK$350)
- Composition fee: HK$140,000 (subject to approval)
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Tuition fees

- Composition fee: HK$140,000 (subject to approval)
- Programme duration  
  Full-time: 1 year  
  Part-time: 2 years*

Study load

- Credits: 69 credits
- Learning hours: 1,690 hours (including 360 hours for project and contact hours of 271 hours)

Class schedule

- Each 9-credit course is an intensive workshop offered over 2 weeks, consisting of about 40 contact hours, each class will last for 3 hours and will be held between Monday to Saturday
- Preceded by preparatory study of carefully-selected distance-learning material and followed by consolidation and assessment, each course is self-contained and is individually assessed

Medium of Instruction

- English

Assessment

- Written work forms an integral part of the programme
- Most courses in the programme are assessed by examination and by coursework
- The project report will be assessed by examiners and participation in the seminars at which students present their work is one of the requirements for the completion of this component of the degree curriculum

Host

School of Biological Sciences

The School was founded in 2007 following the merger of the Departments of Zoology, Botany, and Ecology & Biodiversity. Through a range of approaches from molecular, chemical and microbiological techniques to food-web analyses, we are committed to undertaking research on food safety and health of the highest standard that will be read, cited and applied by colleagues internationally.

Study in food security is an innovative programme that entails scientific and social approach in food toxicology and management, allowing students to relate global challenges in industry, society and government levels.

Network

The programme offers students the opportunity to communicate and form a network with guest lecturers who are world-class leaders in the field of Toxicology.

Transferable skills

- Communicate ideas effectively both orally and in writing
- Analyse and appraise the relevant literature in a critical manner
- Utilise appropriate numerical and statistical problem-solving skills
- Utilise information technology resources (information retrieval)
- Work independently and as part of a team
- Manage time and resources to complete all aspects of the programme

Career development

- Researcher in food toxicology and related fields
- Regulator (risk assessor/manager) in food safety authorities
- QA/QC manager in food industries

Times Higher Education (THE)

World Rankings 2021: #22  
Asia Rankings 2020: #3

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)

World Rankings 2021: #3  
Asia Rankings 2020: #4

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

FSTX7001 Principles of toxicology I
This course focuses on the basic principles, mechanisms and common methods underpinning the science of toxicology. Selected target organ systems are studied for understanding how representative chemicals damage and impair their ability to function. Students will develop a fundamental understanding of how chemicals may exert toxic effects and gain insight into the importance of organ-specific toxicity.

FSTX7002 Principles of toxicology II
This course is a continuity of Principles of toxicology I. Selected toxicants and disease processes are studied with respect to their source of exposure and mechanisms of effects, and the understanding of their basic pathways and common mechanisms respectively. Selected fields are also presented to give students insight into the applications of toxicology and its relationship with other fields.

FSTX7003 Toxicity tests and hazards evaluation methods
This course equips students to investigate the effect of chemical and microbial toxins and environmental pollutants on living systems with a state-of-the-art methodology. Topics include exposure estimate, animal tests for acute toxicity, short-term and long-term toxicity, for mutagenicity, genotoxicity and carcinogenicity, reproductive toxicity, teratogenicity, developmental toxicity and delayed neurotoxicity. Major focus is on the fundamental principles underpinning each test method including the test rationale, protocol design, limitations and data interpretation.

FSTX7004 Regulatory toxicology: risk assessment, risk management and communication
This course provides students with an intensive training to develop the necessary practical skills to measure and model the extent to which human populations come into contact with toxic agents in the environment and foods, to conduct risk assessments, to set safe levels of chemical exposure in foods, and to implement effective risk management in protecting human health and the environment.

Design of curriculum (full-time)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Year (69 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSTX7001 Principles of toxicology I</td>
<td>(9 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSTX7002 Principles of toxicology II</td>
<td>(9 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSTX7003 Toxicity tests and hazards evaluation methods</td>
<td>(9 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSTX7004 Regulatory toxicology: risk assessment, risk management and communication</td>
<td>(12 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSTX8005 Chemical and microbial hazards in food</td>
<td>(9 credits)</td>
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<td>FSTX8006 Food safety management</td>
<td>(9 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSTX8007 Project</td>
<td>(12 credits)</td>
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Remarks:
- Students in part-time mode will require to complete the core courses listed above in two years
- Part-time mode will not be offered in 2021-22
- The programme structure will be reviewed from time to time and is subject to change

Programme Structure

Programme Highlights

Who should Take this Programme

Students are expected to have basic knowledge in physiology, biochemistry, chemistry or molecular biology for understanding the topics covered in the programme.

The programme is intended for those with relevant experience in the food, chemical, pharmaceutical and public health sectors, including but not limited to:
- supervisory positions in the aforementioned industries or consultancy
- environmental, food and health officers, technical officers in local/national regulatory authorities
- officers in diagnostic or analytical laboratories
- graduates who completed relevant undergraduate degrees, looking for career opportunities in the aforementioned industries/government agencies

Hear from our graduates

Alvyn Klein Alpuerto MANA-AY
Class of 2018

The programme was delivered by highly distinguished professors and lecturers who come from a wide range of disciplines and expertise which, in turn, allowed us to develop a more complete appreciation of how food safety as a study is transformed into practice. My experience at HKU is valuable in terms of improving my teaching and training methods as well as my ability to do research. This will also allow me to contribute to the Philippines as we seek to build more capacity in implementing laws and regulations related to food safety.

Johnson LOK
Class of 2018

The diversity of this programme is beyond compare, and it was such a privilege to learn from experts around the globe. I also had a wonderful time working in the lab with my partner as we shared sweat and joy. Thanks must be given particularly to the programme director’s connections, enabling me to land the prestigious position of Early Stage Researcher in the H2020 Marie Sklodowska Curie programme. I wish to express my sincerest gratitude towards all those who had contributed to the success of this programme which helped steer me in the direction I am going.
WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

FSTX8005 Chemical and microbial hazards in food
This module will introduce the chemical and microbial hazards in food and their effects on human health. Special reference is made to heavy metals, pesticides, food additives, persistent organic pollutants and natural food contaminants of current public concern. An emphasis will also be placed on understanding the actual impact of food and waterborne pathogens, their epidemiology and factors contributing to the increase in their incidence. Determination of exposure pathways and linking food hazards to human health is the primary focus.

FSTX8006 Food safety management
Good manufacturing practice (GMP) has a significant impact on the daily operation of a food processing facility. This course will focus on issues arising from GMP and aspects of the physical design of a food processing facility which impact the safety of workers and products. In food supply chain, traceability is the ability to follow the movement of a food product through the stages of production, processing, and distribution, and is a crucial component of the food safety management system. As a core quality management tool in the food industry, the relevance, impact and use of ISO 22000 and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point in manufacturing and catering will be discussed.

FSTX8007 Project
All students are required to undertake or to attend training (up to 6 months) in one of the following areas:
- Academic institutions, to carry out basic research project using the most advanced techniques in molecular biology, analytical chemistry and biomedical sciences
- Food, chemical and pharmaceutical industries, to overlook industry procedures on ensuring that the emerging/newly developed food and chemical products meet regulatory standards and requirements and are safe for consumers; their potential health implications
- Government agencies, to gain knowledge on the procedures implemented by the local/national authorities in formulating science-based policies, laws and regulations to ensure the safe production and use of food and chemicals
Each student shall make a formal presentation on the subject of his/her training during the final semester of the programme.

YOUR PROGRAMME EXPERTS

Programme Director
Dr Hani S EL-NEZAMI
BSc ALEXU; MAppSc, PhD RMIT
Dr El-Nezami was the recipient of the prestigious Academy of Finland Fellowship, for his research excellence in investigating human exposure and dietary approaches to counteract the health hazards associated with exposure to food toxins. He holds an adjunct Professor post at the University of Turku, Finland, and Misr University for Science and Technology, Egypt. He is the Assistant Coordinator of consortium funded by the European Union aiming at the modernisation of Traditional Chinese Medicine, an active member of the Finnish Society of Toxicology and the American Society of Microbiology, and also the consultant for several firms in Finland and Egypt.

Programme Manager
Dr Stephanie W Y MA
BSc, MSc HK; PhD Br Col
Dr Ma has extensive experiences in conducting research in chemical toxicology, in toxicological evaluation and safety assessment of chemicals to human health, and in policy development for the control and management of toxic chemicals. She served as an Advisor to various international food safety organizations including the Joint Meeting of Pesticide Residues and the International Programme on Chemical Safety, WHO. Dr Ma was a Research Scientist at the National Research Council of Canada, a Senior Toxicologist at Health Canada, a Senior Environmental Protection Officer of the Environmental Protection Department and a Senior Food Toxicologist of the Centre for Food Safety, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in the HKSAR Government.

Course Coordinator
Professor C Y MA
BSc, MSc HK; MSc, PhD Br Col
Professor Ma has extensive experiences in conducting applied research in food science and technology. He was a Senior Research Scientist at the Food Research Institute, Agriculture Canada; a Consultant to many food companies in North America and Hong Kong; and a Professor of Food and Nutritional Science in the School of Biological Sciences, HKU. Professor Ma served as the chairman of the HKSAR Expert Committee on Food Safety for six years and a member of many government consultative bodies including the Food and Environmental Hygiene Advisory Council and the Midwife Council. He was also a panel member on Promoting Testing and Certification Services in Food Trade, a member of the Task Force on Food Safety Management System, and a Standard Board Advisor to the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre.

More course information at:
https://www.sci.hku.hk/programme/tpn/FSTX
Admissions

Requirements

◊ A Bachelor’s degree with Honours in Science
◊ Preference will be given to those who possess a Bachelor’s degree in physiology, biochemistry, biotechnology, food science, chemistry, biological sciences, clinical laboratory science, environmental sciences, pharmacology or other related disciplines

How to apply

Application opens in late December 2020
Deadline for local and non-local applicants is extended to: 12 noon, May 14, 2021 (GMT +8)

Further Information

Enquiries

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