Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – see end for specific FAQs re employment prospects

Q: Are the majority of the courses offered in the evening during the week and in the morning/afternoon on Saturdays to cater for the PT students?

A: Yes. The intention is to lecture largely in the evenings and perhaps also on Saturdays, but it will depend on the number of PT students we eventually get.

Q: Does the program have any face-to-face participation requirement for tutorials?

A: Tutorials will be face to face ideally though we are open to the possibility of participation by Zoom or related technologies.

Q: Are tutorials compulsory and how many will there be?

A: Nothing is compulsory but as this is a Taught Postgraduate program it is your financial investment. It is clearly in your best interests to engage in the lectures and tutorial so you can pass your courses and earn the MSc. Each course coordinator will set their own tutorial requirements but as a guide expect 6-8 tutorials per course.

Q: Are visits to the mainland required?

A: Most of our internship opportunities (and local employment prospects) are in the Chinese Mainland but there is no obligation to take an internship, they are just opportunities for our enrolled students we have organized. We do have a close relationship with Zhejiang University in Hangzhou and there will be opportunities to visit the Zhejiang University Microsatellites research group and have a few lectures there is also likely on campus in Hangzhou but this is not an enforced activity.

Q: When does the semester start and finish?

A: We will be following HKUs standard semester timetable. [Academic Calendar 2020-2021]  

Q: How many students does the program intend to take? How big on average is the class size?

A: This is an elite program so we intend to enroll no more than 50 full-time (50 FTEs) and 20 part-time (10 FTEs) students.
Q: Can I apply if I have an undergraduate degree in mathematics?

A: We have had a few enquiries from students with a degree in Mathematics. We consider such qualifications favourably, but acceptance into the program will depend on your overall educational qualifications (e.g. GPA) ... BUT having a first class honours degree in mathematics would make you a strong candidate, in principle.

Q: Can I apply if I have an undergraduate degree in geographic science(s)?

A: Same reply as the previous question.

Q: Are internships only available for FT students?

A: Internships will be open to ALL enrolled students. However, only one internship is likely over the 2 years if doing the MSc part time. Most internships will be in the mainland for 6-12 weeks, either between semesters or over the summer break.

Q: Are scholarships only available for FT students? If no, what will be the application criteria?

A: This is a good question. If we do expand the scholarship program to PT students the scholarship amount would be halved and a second application for the 2nd year would be needed. Scholarships will be awarded on either academic merit or academic merit AND financial need.

Q: How should I apply for a scholarship?

A: To be considered for a scholarship, please upload a letter (< 2 pages) through the online application system, providing a strong justification under either i) or ii) or indeed both.

Q: What is the amount of the scholarships available? How many are available?

A: We have about 8-10 scholarships to offer at this stage. Their values will be ~$50,000HKD. They will be awarded on academic merit and/or financial hardship. Of course not every student can get a scholarship.

Q: Will there be an induction session for enrolled students at the beginning of the course?

A: Yes. Details will follow.
Q: I am curious about the courses being taught in the new MSc in Space Science. Are some of these courses similar to ones in “Physics and Astronomy” taught at HKU between 2008 and 2017?

A: The MSc in Space Science at HKU is a brand-new offering, so it does not include any courses previously offered by HKU.

Q: Will the MSc in Space Science qualify for the “Tertiary Student Finance Scheme” (TSFS) in 2020-21?

A: No, unfortunately, our programme does not qualify for this scheme. There are however some scholarships available that you can apply for (see some of the questions above).

Q: I have applied to the MSc in Space Science but my referees tell me they did not receive a referee link. How can they send their references?

A: As our Programme does not require reference letters, if you wish to include reference letters as the supporting documents of your application, please follow one of the following methods:

1. Ask your referee to send you the reference letter, so that you may upload the letter directly onto the online system on his/her behalf; or
2. If the referee prefers to keep the reference letter confidential, please provide him/her with the upload link (e.g. http://www.aal.hku.hk/tpg/login.html) and your account information (username and password), and ask him/her to directly upload the reference letter onto the online system. Please note that neither you nor the referee would be able to view the content of any uploaded documents, but you could see the file name(s).

Reference letters submitted using other methods would not be viewed during the selection process. As reference letters are not required for admission, you and your referee are free to decide on the format etc. of the submission.

Please note that the Department would not view any documents emailed or mailed to us during the selection process.

Q: Can I examine in detail any of the course content now?

A: You will need to be an enrolled student to access course content.

Q: Given the current situation with the corona virus pandemic, will the courses still be offered face to face? Will they be online instead?

A: The course is due to start in September, still months away. We hope by then the worst of the CoVid-19 situation will have passed. Hence, at this stage we still intend to commence as
scheduled. We can also offer the lectures on-line with Zoom and other technologies, if necessary.

Q: Due to the current situation in my country, with the Covid-19 pandemic, I am not able to take the required English language exams. Will this disqualify me from applying?

A: Given the current situation, anyone in this situation should write us a letter explaining their circumstances, so that we can apply for a specific waiver on their behalf. We anticipate that HKU will show flexibility regarding this general English language requirement (as well as certain others, such as obtaining transcripts, etc), given the extremely challenging circumstances many of our applicants have found themselves under.

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

Q: What can expect in terms of future job opportunities?

A: There are excellent internship opportunities with our Mainland and Global partners and we expect a decent fraction of our enrolled students to find an internship. Internships within large organisations and companies can and often do lead to offers of employment. So our program and internship opportunities are an excellent potential conduit to employment in the sector.

Q: What potential employment opportunities will I have after completing your programme? Do you target specific companies that may be cooperating with your MSc? Can all students access the career opportunities after completing the one-year study?

A: Indeed, there will be a significant number of internship opportunities through our Masters programme, with several of our key partners, including (but not limited to):

- Beijing Institute for Space Mechanics and Electricity (BISME),
- The Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology (SAST),
- DFH Satellite Co., Ltd,
- The Center for Space Utilization (CSU) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences,
- Padova CISAS (Italy).
- internships at our own Laboratory for Space Research (LSR) at HKU.

These opportunities will very much depend on the networking that students (i.e. you) and faculty establish. We cannot guarantee that any of these internships will lead to employment. This will very much depend on the outcome of the internship and the needs of the internship provider, but we do believe that if the interns demonstrate their value, then it will be in the interest of the companies hosting our students to employ them upon graduation.