RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
@HKU SCIENCE
Pursuing research eminence at Asia’s World City
2024-25
THE most international university in the world (2023)

60% of academic staff members are from overseas

>650 research students from over 28 countries

THE World University Rankings

# 4 in Asia (2023)  
# 31 in the world (2023)  
# 41 in Life Sciences (2023)  
# 44 in Physical Sciences (2023)

QS World University Rankings

# 4 in Asia (2023)  
# 26 in the world (2024)  
# 10 World graduate employability (2022)

HKU Science’s world-leading research position

HKU Science’s performance in the latest Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2020 by the University Grants Committee (UGC) was very encouraging. Among the five Units of Assessment (UoA) to which HKU Science submitted, under the Panels of Physical Sciences and Biology, we outperformed other local universities and achieved the highest percentage of 4* ratings in three UoAs including Chemistry, Earth Sciences and other Physical Sciences, and Mathematics and Statistics, affirming our world-leading position in the aforementioned fields. Overall, 83% of the research submissions by HKU Science’s 118 eligible staff was rated as world-leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Assessment (UoA)</th>
<th>HKU Science</th>
<th>Sector-wide average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Highest in 4* in the UoA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics &amp; Astronomy</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Sciences &amp; Other Physical Sciences</td>
<td>85% (Highest in 4* in the UoA)</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics &amp; Statistics</td>
<td>82% (Highest in 4* in the UoA)</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Percentage judged to be “world-leading” (4*) and “internationally excellent” (3*).
- The exercise is held once every six years.
Top-notch Scholars

- 1 Nobel Laureate
- 5 State Natural Science Awards
- 6 Fellows of foreign academicians
- 6 Members of Chinese Academy of Sciences
- 3 Members of Hong Kong Academy of Sciences
- Plus many prestigious international awards and honours

18% of professorial staff are the world’s Top 1% scholars (Clarivate Analytics’ Essential Science Indicators for the past decade)

Research Eminence

- 6 Areas of Excellence (AoE) projects
- 3 HKU-CAS Joint Laboratories
- 1 State Key Laboratory in Synthetic Chemistry
- 2 Theme-based Research (TRS) projects

- Excellence in basic research, aiming high in applied and strategic research
- Most supportive of interdisciplinary research

Well-established Faculty

- >80 years of science education history
- >170 teaching staff
  *All teaching staff members have a PhD degree in their respective field*
- >2,650 undergraduate students
- >650 research postgraduate students
- >700 taught postgraduate students

- >28,000 alumni

- Extensive Collaborations with World-class Universities
- Cutting-edge Research Facilities

Robust Funding

Projected funding of HK$807 million for the following InnoHK projects:

- **Health@InnoHK programme**
  - The Laboratory for Synthetic Chemistry and Chemical Biology
  - Aims to produce innovative, high-impact and leading-edge interdisciplinary research in the area of drug discovery and development

- **AIR@InnoHK programme**
  - The Hong Kong Quantum AI Lab
  - Multi-disciplinary programme which combines big data/machine learning, computational science and experiments to discover new energy materials and devices
A generous package for recipients of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HKU Presidential PhD Scholar Programme (HKU-PS)</th>
<th>Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS)*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each HKU Presidential PhD Scholar receives:</td>
<td>*The package for recipients of HKPFS will be automatically upgraded to an HKU-PS one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash Award to support research &amp; living expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HK$40,000 in Year 1; HK$20,000/yr for the remaining normative study period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waiver of Tuition Fees for the whole normative study period</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i.e. HK$42,100/yr)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postgraduate Scholarship (PGS)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of HK$27,600/yr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conference &amp; Research-related Travel Allowance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of HK$13,800/yr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guaranteed Accommodation in Year 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall place guaranteed in Year 1, with possibility of renewal in Year 2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Applicable to: **selected full-time PhD entrants**

Funding value: over **HK$1.6M**

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**HKU Presidential PhD Scholar Programme (HKU-PS)**

As a part of the HKU Presidential PhD Scholar Programme, a prestigious scholarship package, namely, the HKU Presidential PhD Scholarship, is offered to attract top candidates from around the world to pursue full-time PhD studies at HKU.

The HKU Presidential PhD Scholars will receive strong academic and training support from the University, e.g. individualised advisory service, training in teaching, chances to rotate among different research labs/disciplines, and more opportunities to interact with leading scholars. A group of distinguished Faculty members will also give advice, provide additional mentorship and training opportunities, and oversee their academic career paths.

**Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS)**

Established in 2009 by the Research Grants Council (RGC), the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS) aims at attracting the best and brightest students in the world to pursue their PhD studies in Hong Kong’s universities.

Those who are seeking admission as new full-time PhD students in Hong Kong universities funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC), irrespective of their country of origin, prior work experience and ethnic background, should be eligible to apply. Applicants should demonstrate outstanding qualities of academic performance, research ability/potential, communication and interpersonal skills, and leadership abilities.

In HKU, the package of recipients of HKPFS will be automatically upgraded to an HKU-PS one.

**For non HKU-PS / non-HKPFS Research Postgraduate (RPg) students**

- **Postgraduate Scholarship (PGS)**
  - **Applicable to:** full-time MPhil and PhD applicants
  - **Funding value:** HK$18,390/month or HK$18,890/month

- **Tuition Waiver Scheme (for local RPg students)**
  - **Applicable to:** full-time MPhil and PhD applicants
  - **Funding value:** HK$27,600/month

*for PhD students whose candidatures have been confirmed*
6 Science Departments/Schools

- Department of CHEMISTRY
- Department of EARTH SCIENCES
- School of BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
- Department of STATISTICS & ACTUARIAL SCIENCE
- Department of MATHEMATICS
- Department of PHYSICS

5 Interdisciplinary Research Units

- HKU-UCAS Joint Institute Theoretical and Computational Physics at Hong Kong
- HKU-TCL Joint Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence
- Institute of Mathematical Research (IMR)
- Laboratory for Space Research (LSR)
- The Swire Institute of Marine Science (SWIMS)
Programmes@HKU

Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Study period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPhil</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 years</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Candidates for MPhil degree will be required to follow an approved course of study and research, including coursework on discipline-specific knowledge, language and research skills. The coursework component is well designed to equip students for their research work and thesis writing.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Study period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-year PhD*</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year PhD*</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Those who already hold a research Master’s degree (e.g. MPhil) will only be considered for admission to a 3-year PhD programme.
* Applicants who have a good Bachelor’s degree with honours and/or a taught Master’s degree will be considered for admission to a 4-year PhD programme.

Candidates for 4-year PhD programme will be required to follow an approved course of study and research, including coursework on discipline-specific knowledge, language and research skills. The coursework component is well designed to equip students for their research work and thesis writing. Candidates for 3-year PhD programme may also be required to take courses and satisfy coursework requirements.

Joint PhD Programme

King’s College London

Programme features

Students admitted to the joint PhD programme will:
- be registered as full-time students at both universities and be able to enjoy their full range of academic and various facilities;
- be guided in their work by faculty members from both universities, and be examined to the standards of both;
- normally split their time of study equally between the two universities and spend the last six months of study in the home university; and
- be conferred a PhD degree jointly awarded by HKU & KCL.

Joint Educational Placement for PhD

In order to foster stronger collaboration with international institutions and allow PhD students to learn and work with renowned international scholars, the Faculty of Science has offered Joint Educational Placement programmes for our PhD students with the following institutions:

1. University of Toronto
2. Sapienza Università di Roma and McMaster University
3. Northeastern University

Programme features

Students admitted under the joint educational placement programme will:
- have to choose a home/lead institution and a host institution and have to meet the admissions requirements of both institutions;
- have to pay tuition fees to the home/lead institution only and are entitled to apply for scholarships at the home/lead institution;
- be co-supervised by faculty members from both institutions, and be examined to the standards of both;
- have the same access to facilities at both institutions;
- spend 6 – 24 months at the host institution upon mutual agreement of the two supervisors; and
- be conferred a degree awarded by the home/lead institution.
Hear from Our PhD Students

Qin Han TEO  
**Department of Chemistry**  
Recipient of HKPFS and HKU-PS  
Field of study: synthetic organic chemistry, focusing on making molecules with seven-membered rings  
Place of origin: Malaysia  
Supervisor: Professor Pauline CHIU  
This programme has trained me to thrive in challenging environments. I value and enjoy the process of adapting to the unknown. With time, this will improve my self-resilience and help me develop as a whole person.  
I am grateful for the annual cash award and research funding that were awarded to me to support my research and cover some of my living expenses.

Anyang DING  
**Department of Earth Sciences**  
Recipient of HKPFS and HKU-PS  
Field of study: biogeochemical cycling, focusing on iron cycling in Precambrian oceans and its interaction with the environment  
Place of origin: Mainland China  
Supervisors: Professor Guochun ZHAO, Dr Sean CROWE and Dr Yiliang LI  
I am grateful to have the guidance from my supervisor, Dr Yiliang LI, over the years. He is always there to listen, help, and offer guidance. We have had numerous inspiring conversations – it is he who gave me the confidence to explore any topics that interested me.  
Additionally, HKPFS allowed me to be free from financial restrictions and choose any topics I desire to focus on.

Elsie Chit Yu IU  
**School of Biological Sciences**  
Recipient of HKU-PS  
Field of study: metabolism, focusing on the metabolic adaptation of the skeletal muscle  
Place of origin: Hong Kong  
Supervisor: Dr Chi Bun CHAN  
The scholar programme has transformed my life. My supervisor Dr Chi Bun CHAN always initiates thought-provoking conversations that stimulate me to seek answers on my own rather than spoon-feed me information. He always offers comfort and guidance to help me overcome adversity.  
I appreciate the financial support and opportunities to participate in the international conferences, which allowed me to exchange ideas with researchers from other countries.

Pauline DUFOUR  
**School of Biological Sciences**  
Recipient of HKPFS and HKU-PS  
Field of study: wildlife conservation, focusing on conservation physiology  
Place of origin: France  
Supervisor: Dr Timothy BONEBRAKE  
My supervisor, Dr Timothy BONEBRAKE, has granted me his trust from the start and allowed me to develop my ideas at my own pace. I am very grateful for the opportunities and advice I received from him over the years.  
This programme has also provided me with opportunities to join various international conferences, allowing me to meet people beyond papers including renowned researchers in my field. The whole experience was rewarding.

Huaqing JIN  
**Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science**  
Recipient of HKPFS and HKU-PS  
Field of study: biostatistics, focusing on analysing of the medical data and clinical trials  
Place of origin: Mainland China  
Supervisor: Professor Guosheng YIN  
My supervisor Professor Guosheng Yin has given me valuable advice on developing my career.  
The travelling allowances also enabled me to attend more overseas conferences, and even amidst this pandemic situation, I could still make online and exchange ideas with intellectual researchers around the globe.

Aneesh JATAR  
**Department of Mathematics**  
Recipient of HKPFS and HKU-PS  
Field of study: complex analysis  
Place of origin: Hong Kong  
Supervisor: Professor Tuen Wai NG  
The experience of working with my research group has been very rewarding and encouraging. My supervisor Professor Tuen Wai NG has provided me with ample support both personally and professionally, and the questions being prompted by him and my group during presentations and discussion are invaluable to me, as they serve to point out errors in my thinking, as well as deepen my understanding of my studies.  
I am excited at the prospect of continuing to conduct research in mathematics.

Jinn Ming YAP  
**Department of Physics**  
Recipient of HKPFS and HKU-PS  
Field of study: nuclear physics, focusing on nuclear isotopes that are important in stellar processes  
Place of origin: Malaysia  
Supervisor: Dr Jenny LEE  
The programme has broadened my network to other scientific areas and enriched my student life. With the strong ties of my supervisor Dr Jenny LEE in the international nuclear physics community, I am given the opportunity to collaborate with researchers worldwide. She has also motivated me to follow in her footsteps to produce the best possible research work to my capabilities.  
Additionally, HKPFS enabled my overseas research by removing a huge financial burden.
Admissions

General admissions requirements

The basic qualification necessary for admission to research postgraduate studies:
- **MPhil:**
  - a Bachelor’s degree with honours (or equivalent qualification) from a recognised university.
- **PhD:**
  - a Bachelor’s degree with honours and a Master’s degree (or equivalent qualification) from a recognised university; or
  - a Bachelor’s degree with first class honours (or equivalent qualification) from a recognised university.
- applicants with qualifications other than an honours degree are considered on their individual merits.
- applicants who apply with a qualification from a university or a comparable institution whose teaching medium is not English are required to fulfill additional language requirements.

Tuition fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study mode</th>
<th>Tuition fees (per annum)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time (non-local)</td>
<td>HK$42,100*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*subject to revision

How to apply?

01 SEARCH
Search for potential supervisor(s) of your research area*

02 CONTACT
Contact potential supervisor(s) to discuss your proposed research areas

03 SUBMIT
Submit the online application for admission & the HKPFS application

For more information, please visit:
- Online application: rb.gy/qtrzwi
- Programme website: bit.ly/3bDQktU
- Graduate School website: bit.ly/3diR82F
- FAQ: bit.ly/2RjwVUy

Important Dates for Application

- **SEP**
  - Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS)
    Initial Application to RGC & Full Application to HKU

- **DEC**
  - HKU Presidential PhD Scholar Programme (HKU-PS)
    Candidates who are nominated for HKPFS will be considered for HKU-PS. Separate application for HKU-PS is not required.

- **AUG**
  - 1st Clearing Round
    Application deadline for MPhil & PhD
  - 2nd Clearing Round
    Application deadline for MPhil & PhD

*For details of major research areas, contact persons and postgraduate admissions advisors in each department/school, please visit: [https://bit.ly/3d6uixi](https://bit.ly/3d6uixi)
**Hong Kong**

Located on the south-eastern tip of China’s coast, Hong Kong is a unique place where East meets West and old meets new. As Asia’s World City and a long established international business and finance hub, it draws talents from all corners of the globe, and offers the world’s best and brightest students an ideal place to study, live and work. Come experience the vibrancy of exceptional culture, and immerse yourself in a city that never stops.

**HKU**

The University of Hong Kong, Asia’s Global University, delivers impact through internationalisation, innovation and interdisciplinarity. It attracts and nurtures global scholars through excellence in research, teaching and learning, and knowledge exchange. It makes a positive social contribution through global presence, regional significance and engagement with the rest of China.

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**Faculty of Science**

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