

Ph.D. Degree Programme (Full-time and Part-time)

Study Scheme Applicable to students admitted in 2026-27

1. Coursework Requirement

- (a) Excluding COMM 8200, students are required to complete a minimum of 30 units of courses for graduation.

<u>Required Courses</u>		24 units
COMM 5220	Communication Theories I	
COMM 5250	Writing for Research and Publication	
COMM 5310*	Statistical Analysis in Communication	
COMM 5320	Quantitative Communication Research	
COMM 5330	Qualitative Communication Research	
COMM 6110	Independent Studies in Communication	
COMM 6220	Communication Theories II	
COMM 6320	Digital Research	

* Students who have taken statistics courses in Social Science or related disciplines may apply for course exemption from the Division Head.

<u>Elective Courses</u>		6 units
COMM 5110	Topical Studies in Communication I	
COMM 5111	Topical Studies in Communication II	
COMM 5650	Journalism Theory and Analysis	
COMM 5775	Cultures in Media	
COMM 5831	Theories in Advertising and Communication	
COMM 5942	New Communication Technologies: Trends and Impacts	
COMM 6111	Advanced Statistical Analysis in Communication	
COMM 6120	Topical Studies in Communication III	
COMM 6121	Topical Studies in Communication IV	
COMM 6330	Advanced Qualitative Communication Research	

Students who have taken similar required or elective courses listed in the study scheme may apply for course/unit exemption. A maximum of 12 units of unit exemption can be granted upon approval of the Division Head.

Total: 30 units

- (b) Thesis Monitoring Course
Students are required to take COMM 8200 Thesis in Progress every term starting from the time of admission, throughout the preparation of thesis, until its completion. Students will gain the units each time they pass COMM 8200.

2. Qualifying Examination

- (a) Qualifying examination
Advancement to Ph.D. candidature is conditional upon passing qualifying examinations. The examinations consist of three parts. Part I is on Theory and Methodology, Part II is on Area of Specialization and Part III is a Proposal Defense.
- (b) Every year we have a fixed timetable for Ph.D. students to take qualifying examinations. The examinations time cannot be changed unless for specific reasons.
- (c) A student will be discontinued from studies if s/he cannot pass the qualifying examination within the maximum period (not less than one year from the admission date and at least six months before the normative study end date). However, in special cases, the Graduate Council may on the recommendation of the Graduate Division concerned grant a student extension beyond the above maximum period.
- (d) Students are required to pass the qualifying examination within the maximum period as listed below:

With research Master's:	Full-time	30 months
	Part-time	42 months
Without research Master's:	Full-time	42 months
	Part-time	58 months

3. Study plan

Students must submit a study plan, with the advice of the supervisor, for the approval of the Graduate Panel of the Board of School of Journalism and Communication within six months after registration. The Division Head will help the student search for a supervisor within the first semester of study.

4. Thesis

(a) Thesis proposal

A full-time Ph.D. student with research Master's degree must submit a thesis proposal by the end of the 1st term of the 3rd year whereas a part-time Ph.D. student must submit a thesis proposal by the end of the 1st term of the 4th year. Students are NOT allowed to change their thesis topic after the proposal defense (unless under special circumstances).

(b) Thesis supervisors

Students are NOT encouraged to change their supervisors after the 2nd academic year begins (unless under special circumstances).

(c) Students are required to submit a research thesis and pass an oral examination for graduation.

5. Other Requirements

(a) Students must fulfill the Term Assessment Requirement of the Graduate School. For details, please refer to Section 13.0 "Unsatisfactory Performance and Discontinuation of Studies" of the General Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies which can be accessed from the Graduate School Homepage: <https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/>.

(b) Students must achieve a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 in order to graduate, unless special approval is granted by the Graduate Council.

Students are required to complete the following Improving Postgraduate Learning (IPL) in their first year of study for partial fulfillment of candidacy requirements:

(c) Students are required to complete and pass an IPL module on "Basics of Research Data Management" in their first year of study, with effect from the 2022-23 intake. This is an online module and relevant information can be accessed from the website: <https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/ipl.html> (under "Research Skills").

(d) Students are required to submit a Data Management Plan (DMP) for partial fulfillment of candidacy requirements, with effect from the 2025-26 intake. The guide is available on Library's website: <https://libguides.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/rdm/mandate-support>.

Students are also required to complete the following IPL modules for graduation:

(e) Complete an IPL module on "Observing Intellectual Property and Copyright Law during Research". This is an online module and relevant information can be accessed from the website: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/ipl.html>.

(f) Complete an online Research Ethics Training (RET) module on "Publication Ethics" offered by the Research Office (RO) and obtain a valid Publication Ethics Certificate for graduation. Relevant information can be accessed from the RET website at <https://www.research-ethics.cuhk.edu.hk/web/>.

(g) The final DMP should have been shared to the CUHK community on DMPTool or the relevant platform that CUHK provides when submitting the final version of the thesis/portfolio to the Graduate School. The guide is available on Library's website: <https://libguides.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/rdm/mandate-support>.

(h) Students should at least have one refereed international conference presentation that requires submission of full paper (e.g. Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, National Communication Association Annual Convention or other equivalent conferences) and one single-authored or coauthored refereed Chinese or English-language journal article of any tier accepted/published before their graduation.

6. Unsatisfactory Performance

A student whose thesis/portfolio is not passed but re-submission is allowed and re-examination is required must re-write and re-submit the thesis/portfolio to the satisfaction of the Thesis/Assessment Committee before being recommended for the award of degree. Such re-submission must be made within twelve months from the date of the official notification of the result of the first examination and within the student's prescribed maximum period of study. Only one re-submission of thesis/portfolio is allowed.

7. Remarks

With the approval of the Division Head, in lieu of the courses on the elective course list, students can take other courses within and/or outside the Division of Communication.

Please read the Study Scheme in conjunction with the following emails:

1. "Completing certain Improving Postgraduate Learning modules in the first year of study (for fulfilment of Ph.D. and Taught Doctoral candidacy requirements) with retroactive effect from 2022-23 intake" dated 27 October 2023: <https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/download/IPL.pdf>.
2. "Amendments to Research Data Management Practice and Requirements for Candidacy and Graduation -- applicable to RPg and taught doctoral students admitted in 2025/26 or thereafter", dated 20 February 2026: <https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/download/Amendments.pdf>.