Quick Reference Guide for Student Advisers
Quick Reference Guide for Student Advisers

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About AAO
The mission of the Academic Advising Office (AAO) is to provide quality and accessible advisory services to support and enhance the academic success and development of undergraduate students. AAO is staffed with seasoned academic advisers and experienced administrators who are committed to helping students, especially in the first year, to make a smooth transition and develop appropriate study plans.

AAO works closely with Faculties, CEDARS and halls of residence to co-ordinate and implement university-wide academic advising initiatives, adviser professional development, and sharing of best practices. In addition, it provides administrative support to the University Academic Advising Committee, which oversees the overall academic advising strategies for undergraduate students.

About this Guide
This guide is designed to provide a foundation for your role as a student adviser and offer quick references on university-wide academic issues. It supplements resources and training provided by your Faculty, Hall or Residential College.

Feedback
If you have any suggestions about this guide or comments on your experience as a student adviser, please email AAO at aaoffice@hku.hk.
Contact Us
Address: Room 07, Upper Ground Floor, Knowles Building, The University of Hong Kong
Website: http://aaoffice.hku.hk
Email: aaoffice@hku.hk
Tel: 2219 4686
Fax: 2858 2317

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Section 1
The Structure of the Academic Advising System at HKU

This section paints an overview of how the academic advising system is structured at HKU. After reading this section, you will understand how academic advising is defined at HKU and be able to distinguish various components of the academic advising network.

1 What is academic advising?
Academic advising is a developmental process in which students are provided with support in clarifying their academic, career and life goals, developing plans to achieve these goals, and evaluating their own progress. Academic advising is also a process in which students are empowered to think critically, explore available options, and take personal responsibility for decision-making with the guidance of their teachers and academic advisers.

2 How is the HKU academic advising system structured?
At HKU, the Academic Advising Committee oversees undergraduate academic advising strategies and initiatives across the University. Advising services are available to students via four channels: Faculty-based academic advising, central academic advising, residence-based academic advising and web-based academic. All interact with each other to form a comprehensive University advising network.
3 How do Faculties contribute to the academic advising system?

Faculties contribute to the academic advising system by:

- Appointment of an overall Academic Advising Co-ordinator to oversee academic advising in the Faculty and represent Faculty on the Academic Advising Committee. For the most current contact details of Faculty Academic Advising Co-ordinators, please refer to: http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/aca-adv/coord-admin/.
• Selection of advisers for each Major and Minor programmes, or for Faculties offering professional programmes, appointed advisers for each curriculum or year of study;
• Assignment of Faculty Academic Adviser (FAA) to every new student; Procedures on how to find the assignment of a FAA in SIS are featured in this video: http://aao.hku.hk/video/video-04/.
• Assignment of Faculty Temporary Academic Advisers (TAA) to help students explore available Major/Minor options.
• Development of Faculty Student Adviser (FSA) or peer support system.

Note: All first-year undergraduate students are assigned to a FAA upon registration at the University. Students are required to meet with his or her FAA at least once every semester in their first year of study.

4 What is the function of Academic Advising Office?
The Academic Advising Office (AAO) is a central unit that coordinates academic advising initiatives and developments across Faculties and advises students on the overall University requirements and general academic procedures and options.

5 How is residence-based academic advising offered?
Each hall of residence and the residential colleges on Lung Wah Street will appoint senior undergraduate students to serve as Residential Student Advisers (RSA) to help advise freshmen on hall or residential college matters and on striking balance between studying and hall activities. RSAs are supervised by the
Wardens / Masters of their respective halls of residence / residential college.

6 How is web-based academic advising supported?
- AAO academic advising website (http://aao.hku.hk/):
  It serves as the first point of contact for students looking for academic guidance. Each of the Faculties provides online programme and curricula information and may select to provide other web-based advising services.
- Advising features through SIS:
  SIS is an IT solution to support student administration operations. SIS includes several academic advising tools. For a complete student’s guide to the adviser/advisee functions in SIS, please check: http://intraweb.hku.hk/reserved_1/sisandhcm/sis/reference-materials/Adviser_advisee_guide(for_students).pdf.
- Annie, virtual student adviser developed by AAO:
  Annie is a virtual student adviser developed by AAO. She provides interactive and around-the-clock assistance on general academic information. Find Annie at http://aao.hku.hk.

7 What are the different roles of academic advisers in the University?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Overview of Academic Advising Role</th>
<th>Targeted Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Faculty Academic Advisers | • Current professors and teachers in Faculty  
|                   | • Principal academic adviser of students                                  | Undergraduate students as assigned by Faculty |

http://aao.hku.hk/dl/sa-guide
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advise on Faculty and all study-related matters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate students enrolled in Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus attention on academic planning for first-year students</td>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate students enrolled in Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make appropriate referrals as necessary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Programme and Professional Programme Advisers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current professors and teachers in Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise on specific academic matters for the programme represented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Administrators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional administrative staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate students enrolled in courses within Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain policy, regulations and procedures of Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Temporary Academic Advisers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open to all undergraduate students upon request in SIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current teachers and administrators in Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise on academic matters for the Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized on helping students exploring Major/Minor and questions for a particular subject area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AAO Academic Advisers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open to all undergraduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional administrative staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise on overall University regulations, general academic requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Services provided to peers</td>
<td>Specific arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Student Advisers</strong></td>
<td>Students in second year or above with good academic standing</td>
<td>Services provided to peers studying in the same Faculty. Specific arrangements determined by Faculty. Supervision by the Faculty Academic Co-ordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selection determined by Faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide general support and explanation of academic procedures to peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct peers to appropriate units on campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Student Advisers</strong></td>
<td>Students in second year or above with good academic standing and active performance in hall / residential college life. Selection determined by Warden</td>
<td>Services provided to peers living in hall / residential colleges. Specific arrangements determined by Hall Wardens, masters and CEDARS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advice on academic matters and hall / residential college life, support academic activities in halls / residential colleges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct peers to appropriate units on campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 2
The Role of a Student Adviser

This section of the guide explains the concept of peer advising and outlines general advising responsibilities. In addition, you will be provided guidance on how ethical principles are applied to advising.

8 What is peer advising?
Most students already turn to fellow students for advice in informal ways. Peer advising is also centered on the notion of “students helping students” (Ender & Newton, 2000). However, a formal peer advising structure can help ensure that accurate academic information is being delivered in a way that students understand and channel appropriate referrals. Peer advising programmes are also notably different from student helper roles. “Peer advisers are students who have been selected and trained to offer academic advising services to their peers” (Koring & Campbell, 2005). Intentionally designed responsibilities towards attainment of academic goals are established.

9 What are the basic responsibilities of a student adviser at HKU?
This list outlines general responsibilities of student advisers. Your specific duties will be determined by your Hall warden, Master of Residential College or Faculty supervisor.

- To have a basic understanding of the curriculum structure and academic resources at HKU.
- To care about the academic success of fellow students and model this caring attitude when helping others.
• To provide support on the academic transition to the University and share successful study strategies with students.
• To collaborate with your Faculty or Hall/ Residential College to offer student activities of academic interest and assist in centrally organized academic activities.
• To maintain a high level of sensitivity to students of different cultures, needs and academic backgrounds.
• To make effective referrals and direct advisees to other available campus resources and support services as necessary. (Please check Question 15 in Section 3 of this guide for details.)

10 What are the advantages of being a student adviser?

Peer-to-peer relationships impacts students’ growth and typically build a positive association with the university experience. Advantages for peer advisers include: Build recognition around campus, form relationships with other peer advisers and advisees, develop personal leadership skills, gain valuable experience, and obtain additional access to mentors and supervisors.

11 How are ethical principles applied to academic advising?

The following points help guide ethical decisions related to academic advising. (Lowenstein, 2008)

• Enhance learning whenever possible
  Help your fellow students overcome obstacles and maximize the overall learning experience.
• Treat students equitably
  Do not play favourites among your fellow students, nor exert
more effort to those you like better or whose values are more compatible with your own.

- **Allow for autonomous decisions**
  This principle is derived from the ideal of respect for persons. Treat your fellow students as rational, autonomous decision-makers.

- **Respect confidentiality**
  Respect your fellow student’s confidentiality when advising and do not share issues discussed with other students. If concerns arise during advising, contact your supervisor or an AAO staff member.

- **Support the institution's policies and staff**
  By accepting the role as a student adviser, you undertake a commitment to abide by and to respect the regulations of HKU.

- **Maintain the credibility of the advising programme**
  Any behaviour that undercuts credibility runs a risk of harming a student’s educational experience and loss of credibility of the entire student advising programme. You will be trained to impart accurate information and make appropriate referrals, however if you are unsure how to handle a situation please ask.
Section 3
Advising Strategies and Referrals

This section of the guide outlines different advising methods, provides tips on effective communication, and highlights making referrals to other campus units.

12 What methods are used for student-to-student advising?

The most common advising methods are individual, group, and virtual. The method you use to conduct advising will depend on the goals of your Hall / Residential College or Faculty and needs of your advisees.

- **Individual Advising**
  Individual advising is a one-on-one meeting between the adviser and advisee. Individual advising is ideal for discussing specific academic issues and personalized goals of the advisee.

- **Group Advising**
  Most group advising sessions include a brief presentation and discussion. It is a particularly efficient method for offering general advice, collecting group feedback, and delivering key information to students in similar situations.

- **Virtual Advising**
  Virtual advising allows flexibility to accommodate a variety of situations and in a communication method you and your fellow students are already comfortable in using with one another. Instant messaging and other forms of social media can be utilized to support advising. Please refer to Question 6 for further
13 How can student advisers make use of effective communication strategies?

Communication is perhaps your most critical skill as a student adviser. When it comes to effective communication, being a good listener and asking questions are key aspects.

(1) Being a Good Listener

- **Give your undivided attention**
  If a student comes to seek your advice, stop what you're doing and turn your attention to the advisee.

- **Don't interrupt**
  Take the time to fully listen. When you interrupt, you give the impression that you are not interested in what is being said. Even if you think you have heard this type of academic issue before and know how to handle it, allow your fellow students to finish their explanation and ensure you comprehend their specific situations.

- **Respond verbally and non-verbally**
  When you respond verbally, you might summarize and ask related follow-up questions. Non-verbal gestures include nodding your head, smiling, eye contact, and mirroring the body language of the other person. All these indicate that you are interested in what is being said and in many cases make the person feel more comfortable.

(2) Asking Questions

You are encouraged to adopt a developmental approach to advising. That is, when your fellow student approaches you for
help, avoid quickly prescribing a solution. Asking open-ended question can allow time for your fellow student to reflect on their specific situation and help identify possible options. Common examples include:

- What do you enjoy about being a student at HKU?
- What have been your favourite courses at HKU?
- Tell me more about how you selected that Major.
- Explain to me more about how you prefer to study.
- Describe to me how you like to spend your time on campus.
- Help me understand what you want accomplish while you are at HKU.
- Why do you think this happened?
- What do you think would happen if you did that?
- What do you think you’ll do different next semester?
- How do you think this would impact your academic goals?
- What do you think will happen next?
- What does that mean to you?
- Why do you feel that way?
- How do you balance your studies and extra-curricular activities?
- Tell me about your adjustment in coming to Hong Kong/HKU.
- Which types of assignments did you enjoy most from that class?

Also, questions can be a great way to get the conversation started. Identify at least a few questions that you can regularly use. Don’t just rely on questions from this list — create your own and ask related questions based on the specific situation.
14 What should I do when advisees have very specific academic questions that are difficult to answer?
If your fellow students encounter some specific study issues which you find hard to address, don’t panic. There are multiple campus services and resources that you can refer them to:

- **Faculty Academic Advisers**
  Every new student has been assigned a Faculty Academic Adviser. If your fellow students have any concerns regarding their studies, encourage them to contact their Faculty Academic Advisers. They can view their advisers in SIS under Self Service>Student Centre>Adviser Section:
- **Temporary Academic Advisers**
  If your fellow students need advice on deciding a Major or Minor, please encourage them to request Temporary Academic Advisers, who are current teachers specializing in helping students explore specific discipline options, through SIS. Check out this video to find out more: [http://aao.hku.hk/video/video-03/](http://aao.hku.hk/video/video-03/). For a listing of available majors or minors, refer to [http://aao.hku.hk/plan-of-study-major-and-minor/](http://aao.hku.hk/plan-of-study-major-and-minor/).

- **Faculty Offices**
  If your fellow students have questions on policies, regulations or procedures, you can suggest them to contact their Faculty Offices. The contact information can be found at [http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/contacts/](http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/contacts/).

- **Academic Advising Office**
  AAO Academic Advisers can help students with overall University regulations, general academic requirements, development of an academic plan, and academic progress. To contact AAO, please call 2219 4686 or email them at aaoffice@hku.hk. For further contact details, please look at [http://aao.hku.hk/contact-us/](http://aao.hku.hk/contact-us/).

15 **What supporting units on campus are available for referrals?**
Advising relies on a partnership between the adviser, advisee, and supporting units across the campus community. In addition to directing your peers to their Faculties and Halls / Residential Colleges, it is essential to know what other units on campus are also available to help students.
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<th>Academic Services / Procedural Matters</th>
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<tr>
<td>Units</td>
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<td><strong>Academic Advising Office</strong></td>
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| Examinations Unit | ▪ Examination regulations  
▪ Examination timetable | Tel:  
2859 2439 /  
2859 2434  
Email:  
exam@hku.hk  
Website:  
http://www.exam.hku.hk |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Common Core and Language Support | ▪ Common core curriculum | Tel:  
2219 4957  
Email:  
commoncore@hku.hk  
Address: Room 136, 1/F,  
Main Building  
Website:  
http://commoncore.hku.hk |
| Common Core Curriculum Office | ▪ Self-directed English learning opportunities  
▪ Compulsory credit bearing English courses  
▪ Special English courses (summer programme, one-off workshop, etc) | Tel:  
3917 2004  
Email:  
caes@hku.hk  
Address: Room 6.60, 6/F,  
Run Run Shaw Tower  
Website:  
http://caes.hku.hk  
http://www2.caes.hku.hk/advisors/  
(CAES for Academic Advisers) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School of Chinese</th>
<th>Tel: 3917 1199 (General) / 3917 8476 (Chinese Language Enhancement Programme) / 3917 2048 (Chinese Language Centre)</th>
<th>Email: <a href="mailto:chinese@hku.hk">chinese@hku.hk</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese language courses</td>
<td>Address: Room 801, Run Run Shaw Tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese language enhancement programme</td>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.hku.hk/chinese">http://www.hku.hk/chinese</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese language courses for international undergraduate students</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Modern Languages and Culture</td>
<td>Tel: 3917 2000</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:smlc@hku.hk">smlc@hku.hk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign language courses</td>
<td>Address: Room 5.01, 5/F, Run Run Shaw Tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.smlc.hku.hk/">http://www.smlc.hku.hk/</a></td>
</tr>
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</table>
# Student Life and Non-Academic Matters

## Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>If students have issues with</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CEDARS, Campus Life Section</strong></td>
<td>▪ Financial assistance and fee deferment</td>
<td><strong>Tel:</strong> 2859 2305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Personal finances and budgeting</td>
<td><strong>Email:</strong> <a href="mailto:cedars@hku.hk">cedars@hku.hk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Accommodation needs</td>
<td><strong>Address:</strong> 3/F, Meng Wah Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Support for non-local students</td>
<td><strong>Website:</strong> <a href="http://cedars.hku.hk">http://cedars.hku.hk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Visa formalities (for Mainland students, please contact China Affairs Office, Tel: 2241 5886)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Adjustment issues</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CEDARS, Careers and Placement Section</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Career planning resources</td>
<td><strong>Tel:</strong> 2859 2314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Career preparation (training workshops, individual career advice, job application review, mock interview)</td>
<td><strong>Email:</strong> <a href="mailto:careers@hku.hk">careers@hku.hk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Job opportunities and job notices</td>
<td><strong>Address:</strong> 3/F, Meng Wah Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Recruitment talks and career fairs</td>
<td><strong>Website:</strong> <a href="http://cedars.hku.hk">http://cedars.hku.hk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Graduate employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|.stats| Internship opportunities
|---|---|
|CEDARS, Counselling and Person Enrichment (CoPE), Section| Counselling services to students on personal, emotional or non-academic issues
Person enrichment workshops
Study Smart Series—generic study skills
SEN Support for students with disabilities or special educational needs
Inclusion funds|
|Tel:| 2857 8388
Email: cedars-cope@hku.hk
Address: 4/F, Meng Wah Complex
Website: http://cedars.hku.hk|
|CEDARS, Student Development Section| Educational funds
Sustainability leadership programme
Community engagement programme
Empowerment education|
|Tel:| 2857 8387
Email: cedars-programmes@hku.hk
Address: Room 216, 2/F, Knowles Building
Website: http://cedars.hku.hk|
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>If students have issues with —</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Graduate School                           | MPhil and PhD programmes        | Tel: 2857 3470  
Email: gradsch@hku.hk  
Address: Room P403, Graduate House  
Website: [http://www.hku.hk/gradsch](http://www.hku.hk/gradsch) |
| Office of International Student Exchange  | Exchange programme  
Summer programme  
Special programme | Tel: 2219 4121  
Address: Global Lounge, G/F, Fong Shu Chuen Amenities Centre  
Website: [http://www.hku.hk/exchange](http://www.hku.hk/exchange)  
Outgoing General Enquiries: Email: goabroad@hku.hk  
Incoming General Enquiries Email: exchange@hku.hk |
For general administrative support regarding student study, please contact Faculty Office:

| Hall Education Development Office | Hall education courses  
Residence-based Academic Advising System | Tel: 3604 2302  
Email: HEDO@hku.hk  
Website: http://www.hedo.hku.hk/ |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| SIS Project Office | Technical issues regarding the Student Information System (SIS)  
Students’ guide to SIS | Tel: 2819 0777  
Email: AskSIS@hku.hk  
Website: http://www.its.hku.hk/service-desk/sis |

**For general administrative support regarding student study, please contact Faculty Office:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Faculty Office</strong></th>
<th><strong>Contact Information</strong></th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Architecture | Tel: 2859 2149  
Email: faculty@arch.hku.hk  
Address: 4/F, Knowles Building |
| Arts | Tel: 3917 8977  
Email: arts@hku.hk  
Address: Room 4.05. 4/F, Run Run Shaw Tower |
| Business and Economics | Tel: 3917 5343  
Email: fbeinfo@hku.hk  
Address: Room 401, K. K. Leung Building |
<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Dentistry</td>
<td>2859 0390</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dental@hku.hk">dental@hku.hk</a></td>
<td>Prince Philip Dental Hospital, 34 Hospital Road, Sai Ying Pun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2859 2357</td>
<td><a href="mailto:edfac@hku.hk">edfac@hku.hk</a></td>
<td>Room 219, Runme Shaw Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>2859 2803</td>
<td><a href="mailto:enggfac@hkucc.hku.hk">enggfac@hkucc.hku.hk</a></td>
<td>Room 529, Haking Wong Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>3917 2951</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lawfac@hku.hk">lawfac@hku.hk</a></td>
<td>10/F, Cheng Yu Tung Tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>3917 9175</td>
<td><a href="mailto:medfac@hku.hk">medfac@hku.hk</a></td>
<td>6/F, William MW Mong Block, 21 Sassoon Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3917 2683</td>
<td><a href="mailto:science@hku.hk">science@hku.hk</a></td>
<td>G/F, Chong Yuet Ming Physics Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>39171234 / 39171235</td>
<td><a href="mailto:socsc@hku.hk">socsc@hku.hk</a></td>
<td>11/F, The Jockey Club Tower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16 Are there other ways of providing outreach to support academic advising?

Student advisers might also be involved in other activities, such as:

- Conduct workshops on academic matters (e.g., study skills).
- Participate in first year experience programme and orientation events to promote the academic advising system. For the first year experience programme, please visit: http://wp.cedars.hku.hk/web/fye/.
- Develop social media outreach to disseminate information on academic procedures and events.
- Arrange information booths at university-wide events or specific locations on campus.
- Write articles on academic success for student publications.
- Organize social events to celebrate academic achievements.

Should student advisers have any ideas or need any help in outreaching their peers, please contact the AAO.
This section of the guide gets into the details of the undergraduate curriculum structure.

17 **What is the structure of the undergraduate curriculum?**

The HKU curriculum adopts an enabling structure. The main components and credits requirement are summarized in the following table:

### 4-Year (2012) Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Number of Credits</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Courses</td>
<td>Common Core[^3]</td>
<td>36 credits</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English[^4]</td>
<td>12 credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese[^1]</td>
<td>6 credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialization</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>72-96 credits</td>
<td>30% – 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>36-48 credits</td>
<td>15% – 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>Electives for all students</td>
<td>Remainder to complete 240 credits</td>
<td>17.5% – 32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Required Credits[^2]</td>
<td></td>
<td>240 credits</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^1]: Putonghua-speaking students of the 4-year (2012) curriculum should take CUND9002 “Practical Chinese and Hong Kong Society” or CUND9003 “Cantonese for Non-Cantonese Speaking Students”. Students who have not studied Chinese language during their secondary education / who have not
attained the requisite level of competence in the Chinese language to take the curriculum-specific Chinese language enhancement course can apply (i) to take credit-bearing Cantonese or Putonghua language courses offered by the School of Chinese especially for international and exchange students (as listed at http://web.chinese.hku.hk/putonghua%20and%20cantonese/c1.html); OR (ii) to be exempted from the Chinese language requirement and take an elective course in lieu.

2 Students are allowed to take additional credits up to 6 credits per semester, or 12 credits per academic year, including the summer semester.

3 Students registered for double degree studies are required to successfully complete 24 credits of courses in the Common Core Curriculum within the curriculum of the first degree, as appropriate. However if they opt out of the double degree to focus on one degree only, they will need to make up the 12 credits of Common Core courses.

4 For Core University English, students who have achieved Level 5** in English Language in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, or equivalent, may at the discretion of the Faculty be exempted from this requirement and should take an elective course in lieu; For the English in the Discipline (ED) requirement, (i) students who have passed the ED courses for a Major but subsequently change that Major are required to pass the ED course for the new Major, or either of the double Majors finally declared upon graduation irrespective of whether the second Major is offered within or outside of the candidates’ home Faculty; (ii) students declaring double Majors can, if they fail in the ED course for one of the Majors, either (a) re-take and successfully complete that failed ED course, or (b) successfully complete the ED course for the other Major, irrespective of whether the Major is offered within or outside of the students’ home Faculty; (iii) students who undertake studies in double Majors or double degrees are not required to take a second ED course but may be advised by the Faculty to do so.
18 In which year of study are the different components typically taken?

This model shows the distribution of the major components in the 4-Year (2012) Curriculum. There may be variations in some curricula including determination of which components are non-compulsory (e.g., international experience).

![Progression of Studies](image)

19 What are the common learning experiences of the curriculum?

(1) Common Core
- An essential part of academic induction to facilitate the transition from secondary school to university.
- Designed to provide key common learning experience for all HKU students and to broaden their horizons beyond their chosen disciplinary fields of study.

http://aao.hku.hk/dl/sa-guide
Includes four Areas of Inquiry (AoSs) in which students are required to take 36 credits of Common Core courses with at least one course from each of the AoIs.

Normally completed within the first three years of study.

Up to 12 credits of comparable courses earned on exchange, of one semester or one year, can be applied for transfer.

For further information, please look at the website of common core at http://commoncore.hku.hk/

(2) Capstone Experience

Integration of knowledge in senior years of study, which may take the forms of undergraduate research, field work projects, internship and so on, and is an integral part of the Major programme or the “professional core” for professional curricula.

Carries a minimum of 6 credits and is a graduation requirement.

For further information, please look at: http://tl.hku.hk/staff/capstone-experience-and-urfp/

(3) Experiential Learning

Requires students to tackle real-life issues and problems by drawing on theoretical knowledge that they have learnt in the formal curriculum.

Forms of experiential learning include service learning, practicum, and internship.

The Gallant Ho Experimental Learning Centre (http://ghelc.hku.hk/) is responsible for facilitating and promoting experiential learning at the University.

For further information, please look at: http://tl.hku.hk/reform/experiential-learning/
(4) International Experience

- Nurturing global citizens through education opportunities to work or intern in organizations overseas.
- Participating in reciprocal academic exchange with over 180 partner institutions in 25 countries.
- For further information, please contact the Office of International Student Exchange (OISE) at http://www.als.hku.hk/admission/exchange/

20 What are the study load requirements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4-Year (2012) Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normative Period of Study</td>
<td>Maximum Period of Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Study Load</td>
<td>240 credits (60 x 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Study Load (credits x years)</td>
<td>288 credits (72 x 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>360 credits (60 x 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>432 credits (72 x 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Maximum period of registration for individual degrees is specified in the curriculum regulations.

21 Can students take courses that are not offered by their home Faculties?

One important aim of the enabling curriculum is to “open up” the non-home Faculty curricula to all students.
To facilitate students taking non-home Faculty courses, the following principles have been adopted:

- Except for courses belonging to the “professional core” of professional curricula, all compulsory and elective courses in Major programmes of curricula that are offered as a second Major or Minor should be made available to all students to enable them to declare a Major or Minor, if they so choose.
- Some courses in the “professional core” may also be open to students of all Faculties.
- Students enrolled in “professional curricula” can also take courses offered by other Faculties as electives, a Minor or even a Major, within the credit limits specified by the University.

Note: Students are expected to meet pre-requisite requirements of courses, and no timetable clashes for courses are permitted.

22 How can a student learn more about a study programme and its courses and assessment?

Every undergraduate curriculum and Major/Minor programme has provided a Credit Unit Statement for First Degree Curricula defining the requirements (in terms of learning modes, study hours, contact hours, output requirements, etc.) of its standard 6-credit courses, the types of courses offered and the modes of assessment which students will find useful during programme/course selection.

23 How is GPA calculated?

“Grade Point Average” is a numerical measure of a candidate’s academic achievement over a specified period of time, and is
calculated by the total of the product of grade points earned for each course attempted (including failed courses) and its credit value being divided by the total number of credits attempted. For the exact GPA calculation formula, please see http://aaohkuglossary/ under the term “Grade Point Average”. Although official GPA calculations are displayed in a student’s SIS account, advisees can plan ahead with the GPA calculator at http://aaohkuglossary/sy3/plan-of-study/cgpa-calculator/.

24 How is honours classification determined?

Honours classification shall be awarded in five divisions: First Class Honours, Second Class Honours Division One, Second Class Honours Division Two, Third Class Honours, and Pass. As approved by Senate, the classification of honours of students admitted in 2012-13 shall be determined by the Board of Examiners for the degree in accordance with the following Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) scores, with all courses taken (including failed courses) carrying equal weighting.
### Class of honours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of honours</th>
<th>CGPA range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GP Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class Honours</td>
<td>3.60–4.30</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Class Honours Division One</td>
<td>(2.40–3.59)</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.59)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Class Honours Division Two</td>
<td>3.00–3.59</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.40–2.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class Honours</td>
<td>1.70–2.39</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>1.00–1.69</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Where can I find more information about academic policies and the curriculum structure?

- General Regulations, and Regulations for First Degree Curricula [http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/cur-reg-date/syllabus/](http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/cur-reg-date/syllabus/)
- Undergraduate Degree Regulations and Syllabuses [http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/cur-reg-date/syllabus/](http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/cur-reg-date/syllabus/)
FAQ

Some of the most common questions you and your fellow students might ask about your studies are listed at http://aao.hku.hk/faq/. You may also refer to the videos on academic success at http://wp.cedars.hku.hk/web/faqvideos/. For other questions, please refer to your Warden or Faculty Office.

References

