From the Editorial Team

This document has been prepared by the PG Secretariat of the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs to disseminate information that may be of interest to faculty, administrative personnel in various offices who deal with matters concerning PG studies as well as PG students and will be updated regularly. Please check the site from time to time to see if new items have been posted. We welcome suggestions and questions from all who are interested in PG matters. Please send comments and questions to pgsec@ust.hk.

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Which grading scheme should be used when both PG and UG students enroll in the same class?

(Approved by the Committee on Postgraduate Studies and the Committee on Undergraduate Studies in May 1998)

You may notice that the grading schemes at the PG and UG levels are different – in the PG grading scheme, the letter grades C-, D and E do not exist. Here comes the problem: If a PG student enrolls in a UG course, should the instructor grades the student according to his program level or the course level?

In May 1998, the Committee on Postgraduate Studies (CPS) and the Committee on Undergraduate Studies (CUS) jointly endorsed the recommendation that students be graded according to the course level, irrespective of the composition of the class. This means when a PG student enrolls in a UG course, the UG grading scheme should be used, and vice versa.

Relaxation of regulations on advanced standing for taught postgraduate programs

(Approved by the Senate on 13 October 1998)

As stipulated in the Academic Calendar, advanced standing may be granted to students in recognition of studies completed successfully elsewhere. Applications must be made to their major department during their first semester after admission. No more than one-third of the required course work for students on taught postgraduate programs can be granted advanced standing credits.

The recommendation to relax the regulations governing advanced standing for taught PG programs was approved by the Senate in October 1998. Now taught PG students can apply for advanced standing of up to one-half of the required course work, subject to the approval of the department.
PGS rate for 1999/2000

Together with a freeze in the tuition fees, the rate for PG studentship (PGS) for the 1999/2000 academic year will remain unchanged at $15,500 per month. PGS is a scholarship award given to full-time research PG students. It is not a salary paid to research students. That being the case, departments are free to award full PGS or pro-rate it for students who arrive in the middle of a month. As newly arrived students would need funds to acquire their daily necessities, departments should not pro-rate PGS payment for the first month if students arrive a few days after a month has begun.

Policy on course withdrawals and add-drop periods
(Approved by the Senate on 8 April 1998)

Previously, a student who wished to withdraw from a course after the add/drop period might do so up to six weeks before the commencement of the examination period. An amendment to this rule had been approved by the Senate. The new policy is now in line with that used for UG courses. The add/drop period has been extended from eight days to two weeks after the start of a semester with the proviso that the last day is for adding courses only. Withdrawal from courses after the end of the add/drop period will only be permitted in very exceptional circumstances, such as medical emergencies or withdrawal from the University, with the approval of the dean and instructor concerned. In such cases, the withdrawal will be noted on the transcript as a “W” (withdrawal) grade.

Digital theses

In Fall 1998/99, the HKUST Library unveiled to the university community an innovative digitization project, the Electronic Theses. The primary goal of the project is to provide effective searching and online display of the HKUST Theses Collection. Almost all the doctoral and master’s theses have been scanned and included in the online database.

Through the HKUST Intranet, faculty and students can access the electronic theses from the library home page at http://library.ust.hk. Once on the Library home page, users can click “Library Resources” and then select "HKUST Electronic Thesis”. A wide range of searching capabilities including any words in author, title and abstracts, department, year, degree type and call number are available. Users can also define the sorting sequence by title, author, department and year of the record display once the search result has been completed. There are “Help” screens to assist users through the searching process. Links have also been created from the Library Online Catalog to the Electronic Theses Database, so that anyone retrieving thesis records on the WebPac can immediately call up the full text of the work.

Opportunities for International Scientific Collaboration

The Royal Society’s international program provides grants for scientific research visits to and from the UK. Overseas scientists can apply through the Society’s partner organizations overseas where formal exchange arrangements exist, or the UK host may apply for grants for visiting colleagues. Grants are for individuals and the main criteria are the quality of the individual and the proposed scientific research. There are different types of grant, including study visit grants, fellowships grants, and joint project grants. Please refer to the URL site of the Royal Society at www.royalsoc.ac.uk for details.

Postgraduate Students Conference/Seminar Grants

The RGC has set aside an amount of $0.5 million annually for the Postgraduate Students Conference/Seminar Grants. The overall aims of this scheme are:

1. to support and promote inter-institutional and inter-disciplinary contacts among postgraduate students of the UGC-funded institutions;

2. to provide opportunities for postgraduate students of the institutions to meet and interact with eminent scholars from outside Hong Kong; and

3. to facilitate the organization of inter-institutional conferences/seminars targeted at and organized by or for postgraduate students by providing funding support for the travel and associated costs of inviting eminent visiting scholars to attend and speak at such conferences/seminars in Hong Kong.

Applications for the grant are now accepted all year round. Please visit OCGA’s home page at http://www.ust.hk/~webocga/rfp/rgc/pscg/intr_psc.html for details.

Maximum period of stay for Chinese Mainland students

Some students from the Chinese Mainland may wish to enroll in a PhD program after they have completed an MPhil degree at the University. Other MPhil students may consider transferring to a PhD program midway in their MPhil programs. They should note that until now all applications from Chinese Mainland students to extend the validity period of their HKSAR Entry Permit beyond the sixth year have very rarely been successful. This is something supervisors and non-local students should be aware of. We already have had cases of students having to leave Hong Kong because they had failed to extend their HKSAR Entry Permit or their student visa.
Career education programs for postgraduates organized by the Career Center in 1998-99

To cater for the special needs of postgraduate students of the University in their career planning and job hunting, starting in 1998-99, the Career Center began to develop a series of postgraduate career education programs.

1. Postgraduate Career Link
   This is a monthly newsletter sent to all PG students through email to keep them posted on career-related resources and programs. The first issue was released in November 1998.

2. Postgraduate Career Exhibition
   A large-scale exhibition consisting of 12 board displays was organized during the period 24 to 30 November 1998 at the Academic Concourse. It presented the major findings of the three surveys, namely the Employment Survey of HKUST Higher Degree Graduates 1997, Postgraduate Students Survey, and Employers Survey 1998.

3. Postgraduate Career Forum
   The forum, held on 28 November 1998, aimed at enhancing postgraduate students’ understanding of the employment outlook and employers’ expectation on postgraduate candidates. Three employers with extensive experience in various fields were invited to present their views at the forum, followed by a brief Q & A session. The forum was attended by over 120 postgraduates.

4. Postgraduate Job Search Workshops
   A series of job search workshops for postgraduates were conducted during the Winter Session and throughout Spring Semester, 1998/99. Topics included covering letter and résumé writing, interview skills, creative job search, and how to start a business. Special focus was on assisting postgraduate students in identifying their competitive edge and understanding the employers’ expectation.

Suggestions and comments from both faculty members and students are most welcome. Please contact the responsible student counselor, Ms Cheryl Lee, by email sawklee@ust.hk or call 2358-6657.
TOEFL on computer introduced

Some of the PG programs of the University may require applicants to take the TOEFL test. The computer-based TOEFL test* was introduced in July 1998 in many parts of the world. It combines many of the same question types as the traditional paper-based test with new question types that can be offered only on the computer. The new TOEFL uses a different range of test scores which does not overlap with that of the conventional TOEFL. A comparison of the total range-to-range scaled scores of the paper-based and computer-based tests is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper-Based TOEFL Test Score Range</th>
<th>Computer-Based TOEFL Test Score Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>660 – 677</td>
<td>287 – 300</td>
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<tr>
<td>640 – 657</td>
<td>273 – 283</td>
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<tr>
<td>620 – 637</td>
<td>260 – 270</td>
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<td>600 – 617</td>
<td>250 – 260</td>
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<td>580 – 597</td>
<td>237 – 247</td>
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<td>173 – 187</td>
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<td>47 – 57</td>
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<tr>
<td>310 – 317</td>
<td>40 – 47</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

At present, students in Hong Kong can only take the paper-based TOEFL test. Please visit TOEFL’s URL at www.toefl.org for further information.

* Information obtained from TOEFL’s home page at http://www.toefl.org/cbabtff.html.

Membership of the Committee on Postgraduate Studies

The Committee on Postgraduate Studies (CPS) is a committee established by the Senate to advise and make recommendation to the Senate on policies and regulations, and to monitor and review procedures, quality and performance relating to postgraduate studies. Members on CPS include representatives from the four schools and the Students’ Union.

In order to better reflect the needs and views of students from the four schools offering postgraduate degree programs, the Senate approved the increase in the number of student representatives on Committee on Postgraduate Studies from one to four beginning Fall 1998/99, with one postgraduate representative from each of the four Schools. The student membership will be staggered – half of the student representatives will be appointed for one year and half for two years for the initial appointment to allow for continuity in student representation.

The terms of reference and membership of the Committee can be found on p.528 of the 1999-2000 Academic Calendar. As of 1 September 1999, the membership of CPS is as follows:

Chairman:
Prof Tongxi YU (Assoc Dean of Engineering)

Member and Secretary, ex-officio:
Prof Nelson CUE (AVP-AA)

Members:
Science –
Prof Nancy Y. IP (Assoc Dean)
Dr Karl W. K. TSIM (BIO L)

Engineering –
Prof Chin-Tau LEA (ELEC)
Dr Dik L. LEE (COMP)

Business & Management –
Dr Steven J. DeKREY (Assoc Dean)
Dr Kalok CHAN (FINA)

Humanities & Social Science –
Dr Chi-Cheung CHOI (HUMA)
Dr Gaochao HE (SOSC)

DARR, ex-officio – Mr Robert BRASHEAR

One postgraduate student each from the four schools –
Science – Vacant
Engineering – Vacant
Business & Management – Vacant
Humanities & Social Science – Mr Naubahar SHARIF

Visiting Internship Students

(A approved by the Senate on 8 April 1998)

From Fall 1998-99, there has been a new category of students referred to as “Visiting Internship Students”. These Visiting Internship Students come to study at HKUST to fulfill their directed research assignments or internship requirements of their home institutions. The semester systems of their home units may be different from that of the University’s. This new type of students may help stimulate cultural understanding among researchers and students of different origins. Details on the policy governing Visiting Internship Students are available from the Admissions, Registration and Records Office.