



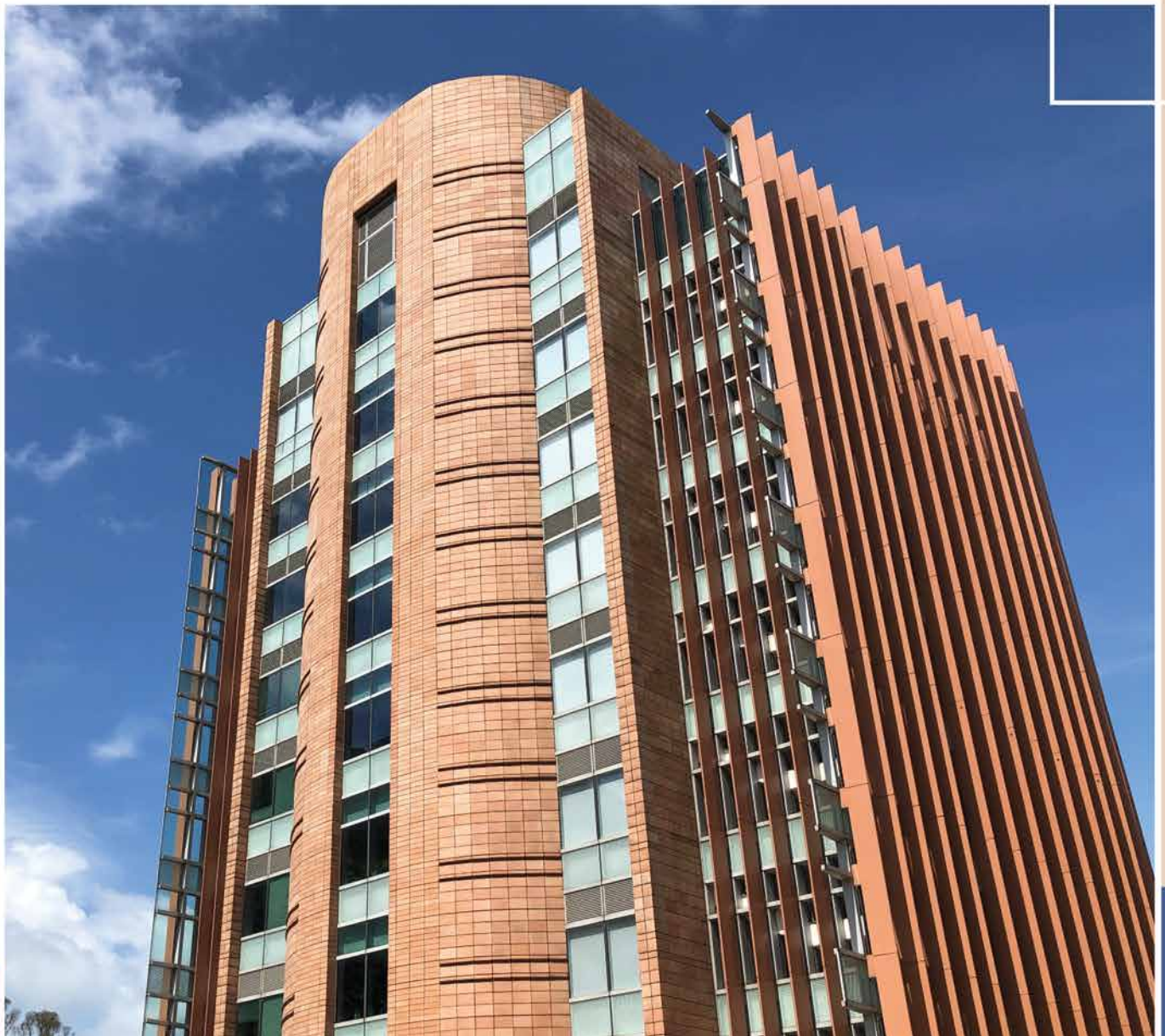
**HKU**  
**LAW**

# The University of Hong Kong

## Faculty of Law

### Postgraduate Certificate in Laws (P.C.LL.)

*The Leading Professional Legal Education Programme in Hong Kong*





## ○ WHY HKU PCLL?

Since its inception in 1972, the HKU PCLL has established its position as the leading professional legal education programme in Hong Kong. Over the years, the HKU PCLL has produced generations of distinguished legal practitioners, including judges, senior counsels, partners of local and international law firms and senior figures serving the business or public sectors.

The HKU PCLL is devoted to training the solicitors and barristers of tomorrow with the highest standards. Students who are successfully admitted possess strong academic credentials in their qualifying law degrees, both from Hong Kong and from law schools in other common law jurisdictions.

### **A Curriculum that Meets Your Needs**

The HKU PCLL recognizes our students' diverse strengths and backgrounds and that they may be interested in different areas or types of practice. Our programme strengthens the core competencies of legal skills and professional ethics required of solicitors and barristers practicing in Hong Kong. Besides the compulsory core subjects that you must study, we have a large number of electives on offer.



### **Excellent Team of Teaching Staff**

The HKU PCLL brings together a team of full-time teaching staff with considerable teaching and practical experience who are committed to providing high-quality professional legal education. In addition, many practitioners serve as our part-time teachers, bringing a wealth of practical insight to our students. A large number of judges and experienced practitioners also teach on the HKU PCLL and participate as external assessors.

### **Extensive Alumni Network and Career Prospects**

As the oldest law school in Hong Kong, the HKU Law Faculty has the strongest alumni network in the profession. Many of our graduates are now judges on the bench, high-ranking officers in the Department of Justice, senior counsels and partners of major local and international law firms. Our extensive alumni network is invaluable to our students for their future careers, interpersonal and social developments.

# ○ THE HKU PCLL CURRICULUM

The HKU Law Faculty believes that vocational preparation needs to be based on a framework of how legal work is done in practice. The HKU PCLL programme incorporates the following features: (a) a student-centred curriculum modeled on legal practice; (b) systematic teaching of legal skills and (c) a degree of specialization for students in pursuit of their respective career choices.



## **Objectives of the HKU PCLL**

- To provide students with a general professional education by equipping them with basic skills and knowledge to competently perform legal work in specified fields; and
- To provide students with a general foundation for subsequent practice by enabling them to develop new skills in response to employer and client needs.

## **A Snapshot of Curriculum**

The HKU PCLL is a one-year full-time or two-year part-time programme providing typical litigation and transactional knowledge as well as fundamental, core skills training to all students with a degree of specialization. Our curriculum ensures graduates are trained to meet the demands and expectations from various sectors of the profession.

## **Cores, Electives, and Pervasives**

- Compulsory Core Practice Areas focusing on essential procedural and transactional knowledge.
- Elective Practice Areas with specific focus so that students can receive training which is better suited to their interests and career choices, and the diverse needs of different sectors of the profession can be better provided for.
- Pervasive subjects including Professional Practice and Taxation with introduction by way of large group sessions (LGs) followed by small group practice sessions (SGs) and/or focused exercises (FEs).

## **Fundamental and Complex Skills**

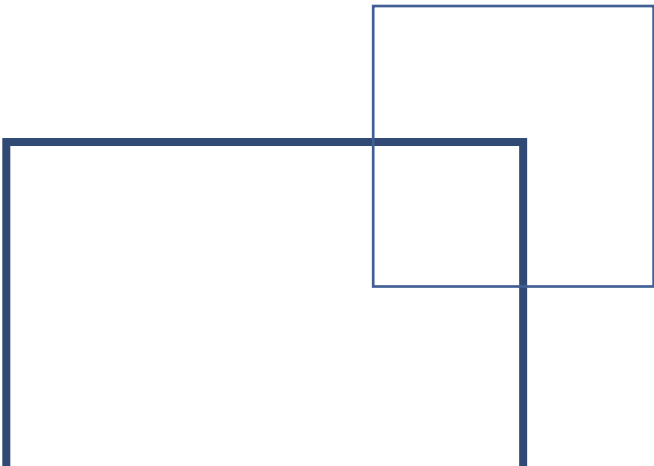
- A key set of fundamental lawyering skills which are non-practice specific but are building blocks for the practice of other and more complex skills.
- More complex lawyering skills taught in the context of specific practice areas.

## **Methodology**

LGs are more often used for introducing key topics, demonstrations and reviews. The main objectives of an LG are to introduce students to the subject matter and issues involved, to prepare them for the SGs and to sum up a learning module. SGs continue to provide the opportunities for skills learning, practices and feedback.

<b>First Semester</b> <u>Compulsory Core Practice Areas</u>	<b>Second Semester</b> <u>Compulsory Core &amp; Elective Practice Areas</u> <i>[Electives subject to minimum enrolment]</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Litigation*</li> <li>• Criminal Litigation**</li> <li>• Corporate &amp; Commercial Transactions</li> <li>• Property Transactions I</li> </ul> <p>* includes Civil Procedure, Litigation and Advocacy  ** includes Criminal Procedure, Litigation and Advocacy</p>	<b>Compulsory Core - Professional Practice and Management</b>	
	<b>Litigation-specific</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial Dispute Resolution</li> <li>• Personal Injury Litigation</li> <li>• Matrimonial Practice &amp; Procedure</li> <li>• Property Litigation</li> <li>• Financial Regulations and Practice</li> <li>• Employment Law &amp; Practice</li> <li>• Trial Advocacy</li> </ul>	<b>Transaction-specific</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafting Commercial Agreements</li> <li>• Listed Companies</li> <li>• Property Transactions II</li> <li>• China Practice</li> <li>• Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning</li> <li>• China Practice</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Chinese in Legal Practice</li> </ul>	

<b>First Semester</b> <u>Skills</u>	<b>Second Semester</b> <u>Skills</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue identification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal research</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research memo writing</li> <li>• Advice writing</li> <li>• Pleadings drafting</li> <li>• Affidavit drafting</li> <li>• Interviewing</li> <li>• Conferencing</li> <li>• Advocacy (non-trial)</li> <li>• File and case management</li> </ul>	<b>Litigation-specific</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pleadings drafting</li> <li>• Affidavit drafting</li> <li>• Opinion writing</li> <li>• Advocacy (non-trial and trial)</li> <li>• Interviewing / Conferencing</li> <li>• Negotiation / Mediation</li> </ul>	<b>Transaction-specific</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document drafting</li> <li>• Letter writing</li> <li>• Interviewing</li> <li>• Negotiation / Mediation</li> </ul>		
<p><i>In each practice area, student will carry out practical exercises involving the use of different skills sets relevant to the context. Hypothetical transactions or case files adopted from real-life cases form the basis on which skills are being learnt and practiced.</i></p>				



# FAQ ABOUT OUR PCLL PROGRAMME

## **Why study the PCLL at HKU rather than one of the other PCLL providers?**

HKU's law school is ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the world in the 2024 international QS rankings and is the highest ranked law school in Hong Kong. We have an excellent reputation within the profession and a long-standing history of training PCLL students. We are also the only PCLL provider to offer a part-time programme and have more PCLL places available than any other provider with 300 full-time and 100 part-time places.

## **Is it difficult to gain entry to the HKU PCLL?**

Each PCLL provider always receives more applications than they have places for. As such, there is competition for a place on the PCLL at all PCLL providers. That said, admission to the HKU PCLL is no more difficult than entry to the PCLL elsewhere in Hong Kong.

## **I've heard HKU has higher cut-offs than the other providers.**

### **Am I more likely to be rejected if I apply to the HKU PCLL?**

While this may have been true some 10 years ago, it is no longer the case today. We admit the majority of students to the PCLL based on academic merit and while of course, we seek to admit the best students, in the last few years, lower cut-offs have meant there is now no real difference between our cut-offs and those of the other PCLL providers.

## **Is it true that the standard of entry is high?**

The legal profession has set a benchmark for admission to the PCLL of "at least a 2.2" degree and all three law schools have been following that benchmark. Our focus in admissions is on academic merit and in this regard, we look primarily at an applicant's All Law Average (the average mark of all Law subjects studied over the entirety of an applicant's qualifying law degree) in light of relevant grading practice rather than just by the class of their degree. This means that applicants are treated equally, with their marks compared, as much as practicable, on a like-for-like basis. In past years, applicants with a mid-range 2.2 degree have been offered a place on the PCLL. We also hold a limited number of interviews for the last 10-15 places on the part-time programme for those applicants whose marks are not sufficiently competitive but who are able to demonstrate genuine legal working experience. Such legal working experience must be of a least 2 years in total duration, involve the use of legal skills such as research, drafting and advising clients and does not include internships or mini-pupilages.

## **Are non-HKU applicants disadvantaged in gaining entry?**

No. HKU graduates have to compete for admissions with overseas and other applicants for places. We do not reserve places for HKU students or for any particular group of students.

## **Is it necessary to make HKU my first choice?**

We strongly advise you to put HKU as your first choice. We have agreed with the other two PCLL providers that each of us will only consider applicants in the first instance who have put us as first choice. We will only consider applicants listing us as second or third choice in the event that not all places are filled by first choice applicants. The reality is that students ranking a provider as second preference rarely get a place at that provider since all the places each year are usually filled by first preference applicants.

## **When will an applicant know the outcome of his or her application?**

We will make conditional offers as early as possible and throughout the period from April to August (and perhaps even earlier). The sooner an applicant sends in the necessary application with supporting documentation, the earlier we can consider it. Borderline applicants may be waiting until mid-August for a decision.





### **Will a master's degree help?**

This is of marginal relevance. Academic results in your qualifying law degree are the primary consideration. Only in borderline cases or when the academic merits of applicants are similar will we take into account "other factors", which include the results of a relevant LLM degree and genuine legal work experience. Additional "other factors" we consider for borderline applicants are: the average mark of your 6 core subjects (Criminal, Contract, Tort, Equity, Land law and Constitutional), law school ranking, admission to practice in another jurisdiction and reference letters. When it comes to reference letters, the quality of the letter is more important than the quantity of letters.

### **Must an applicant have IELTS or will another English qualification do?**

All applicants (whether native English speakers or not) must achieve an overall band score of 7 in the academic module in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) by the relevant deadline in August. We accept IELTS results within 3 years of the Application Deadline and can make early offers conditional upon applicants achieving the required IELTS standard. The Standing Committee on Legal Education and Training does not allow the result in any other examination in English such as TOEFL.

### **Does the PCLL at HKU adequately prepare me for practice as a barrister or solicitor?**

We don't like to make comparisons but we can say that our course is extremely well respected, very practical and has received praise from the legal profession. Our teaching materials are based on case studies and case files and are vetted and approved by our external examiners who are practitioners. Nearly all our teachers have experience as lawyers and many of them retain their practice at the Bar or as solicitors. We have lectures and classes led by current practitioners. Almost all our part-time teachers are working lawyers or former magistrates and judges. Our method of teaching concentrates upon practical exercises carried out by students under supervision. The feedback from former students is that they find those materials useful when they start traineeship (or pupillage) and are grateful for the help they received.

### **I'm not sure if my law degree meets the pre-requisites for entry to the PCLL.**

#### **What should I do?**

You should contact the Hong Kong Conversion Examination Board (see their website at [www.pcea.com.hk](http://www.pcea.com.hk)). They will advise you on the eligibility of your law degree, issue you with exemptions from taking the conversion exams in some subjects (if applicable) and advise you whether you need to take any conversion exams. Only the Conversion Examination Board can decide whether your law degree is eligible; the three PCLL providers cannot. You must provide us with the Results for Evaluation letter from the Conversion Examination Board as well as the Results Notice of any conversion exams you have taken as part of your PCLL application. You may take the conversion exams as many times as you need to pass them but you should plan ahead as they are typically only held twice a year in January and June in Hong Kong. Students whose qualifying law degree was obtained in Hong Kong will not need to take the conversion exams.

### **Should I apply for both the full-time and part-time programmes?**

You are strongly advised to apply for both programmes so that if your academic marks are not strong enough for admission to the full-time programme, we may be able to admit you to the part-time programme for which the cut-offs are generally lower. The only exception is if you are absolutely sure you would not want a place on one of the programmes. We cannot admit you to a programme you did not apply for, nor allow you to apply after the Application Deadline. You should apply early to the PCLL and well before the Application Deadline. There is a separate deadline in August by which to submit your documents; you do not need to submit these when you apply, however, the earlier you submit your required documents, the more likely it is that we can make you an early conditional offer.



## ○ FLEXIBLE STUDY MODES

### **Full-time Mode**

The full-time PCLL programme is normally completed over a period of one year commencing from September every year and ending in June in the following year.

### **Part-time Mode**

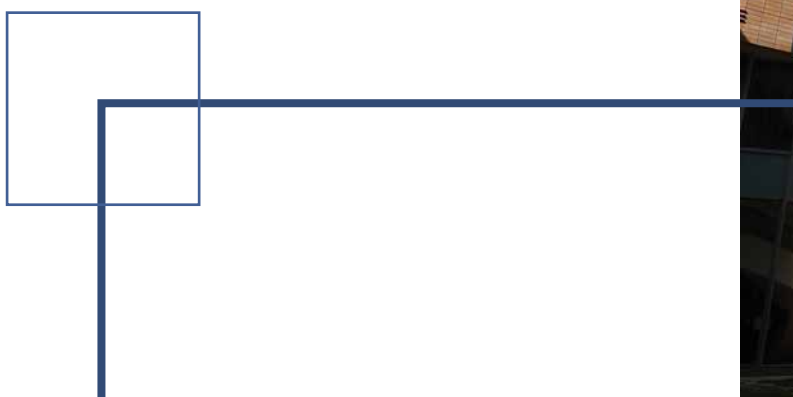
The curriculum is exactly the same as that for the full-time PCLL and is normally completed over a period of two years. The first year of the part-time PCLL covers the subjects taught in the first semester of the full-time programme; the second year covers those taught during the second semester. The materials, lectures and assessments are identical to those on the full-time programme.

Students need to attend three to four evening classes (mostly 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.) on weekdays, and classes on Saturday afternoons. There will also be scheduled court visits, mid-term assessment, examinations and occasionally other learning activities during the daytime.

### **Enquiries and Further Information**

All enquiries must be in writing and should be sent to the PCLL Admissions Office via email at [pcll@hku.hk](mailto:pcll@hku.hk) or by fax to (852) 2559 3543. Please visit our website: <http://www.ple.hku.hk> for further information and updates.

*You should read through the Notes for Applicants and the FAQ section on our website before completing your PCLL application.*





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香港大學法律學院

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