

# PG UPDATE

Issue 22

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To all PG students,

As we are close to the start of the new academic year 2011-12, we would like to extend a warm welcome to new PG students who are soon to start their first term of studies with the University. For continuing students, we hope they have had a fruitful summer and are all ready to realize their plans, both study and personal, for the year ahead!

Editorial Team  
PG Secretariat  
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## 1. Release of the QAC Audit Report

The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) is a unit set up by the University Grants Committee (UGC) to oversee quality assurance matters of UGC institutions. Among the eight UGC-funded institutions in HK, UST was the fourth one audited by QAC in March 2010. The public report of the audit visit was subsequently released in November 2010. The University has been greatly encouraged by the numerous positive commendations made particularly on the teaching quality and the strong sense of community among our faculty and students. In particular, the QAC was impressed by the University's robust quality assurance processes for postgraduate research education and the extensive support provided to research students.

Seizing the opportunities for enhancement of its program quality, the University will continue to grow from strength to strength in its commitment to excellence in education and research. To view the full version of the audit report, please visit [http://qa.ust.hk/qac\\_audit\\_report.html](http://qa.ust.hk/qac_audit_report.html).

## 2. Result of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme 2011/12 announced

Launched by the Research Grants Council (RGC) in 2009, the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS) is a

government-funded initiative aimed to attract top students to pursue doctoral study in Hong Kong. This Scheme is intensely competitive as it recruits from worldwide sources in a wide variety of study areas and sectors. Recipients are generally in the top 10 -15% of the student populace in their home countries. THE Scheme provides each awardee a monthly stipend of HKD20, 000 for 3 years, plus a conference travel allowance of HKD10, 000 a year. The HKPFS will soon enter its third year of operation. RGC has recently announced the results of the 2011/12 exercise, HKUST has successfully secured 32 awards out of a total of 125 for the whole of Hong Kong. For more details about the HKPFS, please visit <http://www.ust.hk/hkpfs>.

## 3. PGS Rates Increased for 2011/12

In view of rises in the cost-of-living in Hong Kong, the standard rate for postgraduate studentship (PGS) for 2011/12 will be raised from HK\$13,000 to 13,600 a month. For PhD students who have passed their qualifying examination and have done well in their research work, a higher PGS rate of HK\$14,000 may be offered by program offices. It should be noted that the award of the higher PGS rate is not automatic, nor is it an entitlement for post-qualifying PhD

students. The actual PGS rate for these PhD students is determined by the home department. Apart from academic performance, the availability of funding is also a factor affecting the topping-up reward. Copies of the PGS Terms and Conditions for 2011/12 are now available at the general office of academic departments. It can also be viewed or downloaded from the PG Studies homepage: [www.ust.hk/provost/pg](http://www.ust.hk/provost/pg).

#### **4. End-of-program survey for RPg Graduates**

Research postgraduate education is a key component of the work of the University. Feedback from graduates for continuous improvement and better planning of RPg education is highly valued. As a part of the University's continuous efforts to review and enhance the quality of its PG education, the PG Secretariat of the Office of Provost, jointly with the Center for Enhanced Learning and Teaching (CELT) have recently launched an "End-of-Program Survey for Research Postgraduate Graduates". A trial-run was conducted in late February 2011. Students who graduated in Summer Semester 2009/10 were invited to participate in this round of survey exercise. Among 266 graduates approached, about half (52%) responded. These graduates provided very useful feedback about their studies and student experiences. A summary of graduates' feedback will be shared with relevant Schools and supporting offices for possible review and improvement to be made to their student programs and related services. The end-of-program survey will be conducted once a year starting from this summer. This will become a regular exercise for the University to solicit feedback from graduating RPgs on their programs of study, as well as the related supporting services provided for them. We hope graduating students will all support this exercise by taking the survey.

#### **5. Career Building Course for PG Students**

The Career Center of Student Affairs Office is dedicated to helping students plan and navigate their career at different stages of their studies. Our experienced career counselors and staff, programs, and resources are available to help and offer advice on career planning. Range of recruitment talks and career development workshops are offered every semester. In particular, PDEV502 is a Career Building Course specifically tailored for postgraduate students who are interested in pursuing a career outside of academia or research. The course covers all aspects of career building, including self understanding exercises, resume and cover letter writing, interview and aptitude test practices, and understanding of the latest job market trends and requirements. Alumni from all walks of life are also invited to share their personal career stories and shed light on how to cope with transitioning from school to the workplace. Lectures are highly interactive and students participate actively discussion sessions.

More details about PDEV502 and other career building courses can be viewed at [https://career.ust.hk/career\\_building.html](https://career.ust.hk/career_building.html). You are also welcome to check out the Career Center website at <https://career.ust.hk/>.

#### **6. Online RPg Annual Progress Reporting**

To keep track of the study progress made by RPgs in terms of coursework, their research and thesis preparation, the University requires all RPgs to submit through their home department an online study progress and self-evaluation report form around May/June every year. Following the submission of their progress reports, RPgs receive feedback from their supervisors. Please refer to the ARRO's notice on the submission deadline of the report which was sent to all RPg students around early April.

## 7. Employment Restrictions for Students receiving PGS

Although the Hong Kong Immigration Department has relaxed employment restrictions for non-local students from Summer 2008, RPs should note that the restrictions imposed on them about taking up paid or unpaid work as stipulated under the Terms and Conditions of Postgraduate Studentships (PGSs) 2010/11 are still valid. The PGS award is provided to ensure that students need not concern themselves with looking for other sources of income to support themselves. Recipients of PGS should devote full efforts to their studies. They are NOT allowed to take up any employment, full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid with the University or any other employers during the academic year. Violation of the above rulings may lead to the immediate termination of their PGS award. For details of the Terms and Conditions of PGS, please visit <https://www.ust.hk/provost/pg/forms stu/>.

## 8. Academic Integrity

At the end of Fall Semester 2010/11, serious cases of cheating involving a group of UG students were discovered during the final examination period. These cases are now being dealt with through the University's disciplinary process. Sanctions will be imposed on students found to have violated regulations governing academic integrity and honesty. Academic integrity is a part of the ethical stance basic to members of an academic community. Students of the University must observe and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty in all the work they do throughout their program of study.

For more information on academic integrity, you may wish to visit the website <http://www.ust.hk/provost/integrity>.

Alternatively, you may also read Section 12 "Regulations Governing Student Academic Discipline" under Section B "General Regulations" on p.25 of the *Academic Calendar 2010-11*.

## 9. Channels for handling Grievances

Pursuing PG studies may not be an easy undertaking. If students run into difficulties related to their studies or other personal matters, they should share their feelings with someone they trust. Alternatively, they may access the URL (<https://sao.ust.hk/counseling>) of Student Life Center of the Student Affairs Office and make a booking to meet with one of the student counselors. Cases will be handled in strict confidence. For more information, please refer to "Appeals and Grievance Channels" section in the *Hand-book for Research Post-graduate Studies*.

### COMMENTS WELCOME!

This newsletter has been prepared by the PG Secretariat, Office of the Provost. Please send us an email at [pgsec@ust.hk](mailto:pgsec@ust.hk) if you have any feedback or suggestions on this newsletter.