

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**  
**FACULTY OF LAW**  
**POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN LAWS (PCLL)**

**Notes for Applicants (2024-2025)**

1. The Postgraduate Certificate in Laws (PCLL) is a full-time curriculum extending over one academic year from September to June inclusive. The PCLL is also available as a part-time course spanning over two years also from September to June in each academic year. The PCLL course at the University of Hong Kong is taught mainly by members of the Department of Professional Legal Education with contributions from practising members of the legal profession.

**QUALIFICATION FOR PRACTICE IN HONG KONG**

2. An intending solicitor or barrister who passes (a)(i) the degree of Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) or Juris Doctor (J.D.) or equivalent or (ii) the CPE examinations or equivalent or (iii) the Advanced Diploma for Legal Executives (Graduate Level) (SPACE) and (b) the PCLL programme, is then required to complete satisfactorily two years' employment as a trainee solicitor or twelve months' pupillage in order to be eligible for admission to practice in Hong Kong as a solicitor or a barrister respectively.

**ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION TO THE PCLL**

3. To be eligible for admission to the PCLL programme at the University of Hong Kong, an applicant:

(a) shall at least (i) hold a degree of Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) or Juris Doctor (J.D.) or equivalent, or (ii) pass the CPE examinations or equivalent, from a university or comparable institution or (iii) pass the Advanced Diploma for Legal Executives (Graduate Level) (HKU SPACE). The law degree must be in common law, normally from a Hong Kong or Commonwealth institution; *and*

(b) will have to demonstrate competence in the following nine 'Core' subjects: Contract, Tort, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Land Law, Equity, Evidence, Business Associations, and Commercial Law; and three 'Top-up' subjects: Hong Kong Constitutional Law, Hong Kong Legal System and Hong Kong Land Law. From the academic year 2021 - 2022 onwards, Civil Procedure and Criminal Procedure will be taught on the PCLL and will no longer be PCLL prerequisites to entry.

Applicants should contact the Hong Kong Conversion Examination Board ("the Conversion Board") to determine whether their law degree meets the criteria for eligibility to the PCLL. Their Conversion Board's contact details can be found at: <http://www.pcea.com.hk>. The Conversion Board will issue Applicants with an evaluation letter detailing whether an Applicant needs to sit any Conversion Examinations. This evaluation letter must be submitted along with the Results Notice of any Conversion Examinations taken by an Applicant (whether passed or failed) by the Documents Deadline as set out below (except where the results of the June Conversion Examinations taken in the year of application are not yet available, in which case an Applicant should contact us for a decision on when to submit such results.)

4. Applicants who:

(a) hold a LL.B. or J.D. degree from one of the three universities offering such degrees in Hong Kong must be able to demonstrate competence in the nine ‘Core’ subjects and three ‘Top-up’ subjects by passing such subjects as part of their law degree. They are not permitted to take the Conversion Examinations offered by the Conversion Board in any of the nine ‘Core’ or three ‘Top-up’ subjects.

(b) hold a law degree or other recognized law qualification acceptable to the Conversion Board, from a university, other than one of the three universities offering such degrees in Hong Kong, may be able to demonstrate competence in the nine ‘Core’ subjects by passing such subjects as follows:

- (i) as part of their non-Hong Kong common law qualification; and/or
- (ii) as a visiting “internal” student in one of the three universities awarding LL.B. and/or J.D. degrees in Hong Kong and passing the requisite examination; and/or
- (iii) by passing the relevant subject in the *Hong Kong Conversion Examination for PCLL Admission*.

(c) hold a law degree or other recognized law qualification acceptable to the Conversion Board, from a university, other than one of the three universities offering such degrees in Hong Kong, must pass all of the three ‘Top-up’ subjects and can do so in any of the following ways:

- (i) as a visiting “internal” student in one of the three universities awarding LL.B. and/or J.D. degrees in Hong Kong; and/or
- (ii) as part of the Graduate Diploma in English and Hong Kong Law taught and awarded in Hong Kong; and/or
- (iii) by passing the relevant subject in the *Hong Kong Conversion Examination for PCLL Admission*.

5. **All applicants (including native English speakers) must take the International English Language Testing System (*IELTS*) test (the Academic module) and submit the test results obtained as soon as possible and in no case later than the first Friday of August each year, i.e. for a 2024 application, you must submit the IELTS test results by 2 August 2024 at 5:30 p.m. Hong Kong time (the “Documents Deadline.”) No further extension to submit your IELTS test results will be allowed. No other English language test (e.g. TOEFL) will be accepted. We do not accept IELTS tests taken online; you must attend one of the authorized IELTS test centres to take your IELTS test. IELTS test results may be submitted to us directly by the IELTS test centre in hard copy format only.**

A minimum standard of the IELTS test must be achieved as a requirement for admission to the PCLL. At present the **prescribed minimum IELTS overall band score is 7**. This is a requirement of the Hong Kong Standing Committee on Legal Education and Training. **No exemptions will be granted.** The PCLL Admissions Office accepts an IELTS test result as valid where it is obtained within three years of the application deadline, i.e. for a 2024 application, the test date shown on the IELTS Test Report Form cannot be earlier than 30 April 2021.

## **STUDY MODES AND SCALE OF FEES**

6. (a) One-year Full-time (Government-funded):

Fee: HK\$42,100\* ('local' students); HK\$182,000\* ('non-local' students)

*For Government funding purposes, a 'non-local' student is a person entering Hong Kong for the purpose of education with a student visa/entry permit issued by the Director of Immigration.*

- (b) One-year Full-time (self-funded):

Fee: HK\$220,000\*

*(Successful applicants may, subject to means tests, apply for bursaries.)*

- (c) Two-year Part-time (self-funded):

Fee: HK\$220,000\*, payable in two annual instalments of HK\$110,000\* each

*\* Subject to the approval by the Council of this University.*

## **APPLICATION**

7. Your application must be made online at <http://www.hku.hk/tpg>. **For admission in September 2024, the application deadline is 12:00 noon (Hong Kong time) on 30 April 2024 (the "Application Deadline"). ALL application forms must be submitted by the Application Deadline. Please note that the PCLL application webpage will shut down promptly once the Application Deadline has expired so all applications must be completed by this time. As such, you should not leave your application until the last minute, however, you do not need to submit all of your supporting documents by the Application Deadline; only your online application. Your supporting documents must be submitted by the separate Documents Deadline (see paragraphs 11-13 below.)**

**We do not accept late applications nor requests for an extension of time to apply. You must ensure that your application is submitted by the Application Deadline.**

8. Applicants may apply to more than one provider i.e. to the University of Hong Kong, City University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, however, all applicants must specify their preference of PCLL provider on each application form. Applicants who apply to more than one PCLL provider must be consistent in their preference of provider and **cannot list more than one provider as their first preference. Applicants who do not adhere to this rule will have their applications disqualified at all three providers in that year.** Applicants are not permitted to change their preference of PCLL provider after they have been rejected by their first preference choice.

9. Applicants are recommended to apply for both a full-time and part-time place at the University of Hong Kong (unless you are sure you do not want a place on one of the programmes) and must complete two separate applications. **We cannot consider you for a place on either the full-time or part-time programme if you have not submitted the relevant application by the Application Deadline.** Applicants who apply for both programmes must also select their programme mode preference i.e. whether a part-time self-funded place is their first preference or whether a full-time place is their first preference. **There is no strategic advantage to be gained in the selection of one programme mode as first preference over another; i.e. it is not easier to get a place on either programme by selecting it as first preference. An Applicant's selection of programme mode preference is purely an indication of how they would prefer to study for their PCLL.** Post application, applicants will also not be permitted to change their programme mode preference, absent exceptional circumstances. **Applicants who wish to change their preference of programme mode will first be placed on a waiting list and only permitted to change, provided they have (i) applied to the programme they now wish to study before the Application Deadline; (ii) there are sufficient places available on that programme once all of the places have been allocated to first preference applicants; (iii) they satisfy the minimum all law average cut-off mark for admission to that programme and (iv) they provide compelling reasons for the change.**

10. Applicants in their final year of study may apply (with their latest interim results) before their final results are known but must inform the PCLL Admissions Office of all their degree results by the Documents Deadline [see paragraphs 11 to 13 below]. **Despite the Documents Deadline, Applicants are strongly advised to send us all their supporting documents as soon as possible to speed up the processing of their application and to permit us to consider making an early conditional offer to you. Applicants do not need to wait until they have all their supporting documents to send them to us but may send them individually.**

11. Applicants must arrange to send **by registered post** to the PCLL Admissions Office not later than the Documents Deadline Date, (i) a transcript<sup>1</sup> of their academic record showing all the subjects taken for their law qualification and whether they have passed each subject along with the relevant certificate; and/or (ii) the Result Notice of all the Conversion Examinations they have taken; and/or (iii) the official letter of evaluation noting whether an Applicant is exempt from taking any Conversion Examinations issued by the Conversion Board; and (iv) a satisfactory IELTS results certificate (see paragraph 5.) Applicants should also provide transcripts and certificates of any non-law degrees including those covering periods of time studying overseas. **We do not accept documents submitted to us in person and cannot perform a document checking service to confirm that you have submitted all required documents. The onus is on an Applicant to ensure that their application is complete.** Sending documents by registered post ensures there is a record of dispatch and receipt in the event that a supporting document is lost and is strongly advised.

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants who are current students of law degrees at this University are not required to submit their academic transcripts (of their University of Hong Kong law degrees) as the PCLL Admissions Office will obtain their academic results from the University's database. However, such applicants must still submit all other supporting documents, for example, valid IELTS test results, exchange's transcripts and the "Certificate of Completion" of PCLL pre-requisite(s) for exchange.

12. The PCLL Admissions Office may also ask individual applicants to send copies of regulations, syllabuses and such other documents as may be needed to check their eligibility and suitability for admission. If so requested, applicants will be responsible for supplying the required materials, without which, their applications will not be considered further.

13. All examination results, final transcripts, graduation certificates and other documents required must reach the **PCLL Admissions Office by the close of business (namely 5:30 p.m. Hong Kong time)** on the following Documents Deadline date:

**All candidates**

○ **transcripts of final results, graduation certificates, IELTS test results and all other supporting documents**

**- by Friday, 2 August 2024**

**All supporting documents must be sent to us by REGISTERED POST**

**Applicants who are not current students of law degrees at the University of Hong Kong should, however, provide all examination results, and interim and final transcripts as soon as possible. Interim transcripts should preferably be provided by the Application Deadline of 30 April 2024.** The PCLL Admissions Office aims to make early decisions on PCLL applications whenever possible. **Failure by an applicant to provide all the necessary documentation as soon as available will result in a delayed decision or possibly even the rejection of the application.** In any event, applicants must inform the PCLL Admissions Office if there are any difficulties in meeting the Documents Deadline; otherwise **applications which are still incomplete by that time will be rejected due to incomplete documentation.**

14. The University will **ONLY** accept originals or copies of documents that have been duly declared as true copies before a notary public, a solicitor or other person who can administer oaths e.g. a Commissioner for Oaths. A declaration before a Commissioner for Oaths at a Public Enquiry Service Centre of the Home Affairs Department in Hong Kong (that the copies provided are true copies of the originals) is also acceptable. Copies of documents may be certified by the appropriate officials of your home institution if you are an overseas applicant.

**No uncertified photocopies will be accepted.**

**All application forms and supporting documents are non-returnable. If your application is unsuccessful, all documents will be destroyed after the admission process has concluded.**

## **ADMISSION CRITERIA**

15. Selection for the PCLL programme will be carried out by the PCLL Admissions team in accordance with the criteria laid down by the Admissions Committee of the PCLL Academic Board (which comprises representatives of the Judiciary and two branches of the legal profession) and the Board of the Faculty of Law.

16. PCLL admission is primarily based on academic achievement in the primary law qualification, i.e. the first degree in law (such as the LL.B or JD) or CPE examinations or other diploma courses or graduate programmes recognized as being equivalent. Generally speaking, candidates admitted to the PCLL need to attain a minimum of a 2.2 standard in their law qualification (or equivalent). We do not take classifications of degrees, e.g. upper second class (2:1), at face value but will take into account the grades/marks obtained in all law subjects.

17. Please note that interviews are not normally conducted. We hold a limited number of interviews for the last 10-15 places on the part-time programme via the work experience route for those applicants whose academic grades are not sufficiently competitive but who are able to demonstrate genuine legal working experience. Such legal working experience must be of at 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-pupillages. Interviews for a place on the part-time PCLL via the work experience route are usually conducted in August of the year of admission.

## **OFFERS OF ADMISSION**

18. Offers of admission may be made to eligible applicants at any time after the start of the application period. Indeed, strong applicants may be given firm or conditional offers prior to the Application Deadline. Offers of admission will lapse on the date specified in the offer letters and may be subject to conditions. **Please read the offer letter carefully and ensure compliance with ALL conditions stated therein.** Applicants who will be absent from Hong Kong after submission of their applications should therefore arrange for their correspondence with this University to be dealt with on their behalf. Should an applicant fail to meet the conditions in a conditional offer of admission, the offer of admission shall terminate. However, this does not necessarily mean the applicant will not be granted a place in our PCLL programme. Depending on your final average mark, we may give the applicant another offer for our PCLL programme.

## **CONCURRENT REGISTRATION**

19. University regulations prohibit concurrent registration by a student of the University of Hong Kong for another post-secondary qualification, either at this University or at another institution, unless approval of the University's Senate has been obtained **in advance**. Moreover, as the PCLL is a very demanding programme, the Faculty of Law will not normally support requests for approval to be registered on another programme. A candidate in breach of this regulation may be required to discontinue his/her studies at this University.

20. If you are presently enrolled in a programme leading to a post-secondary qualification which will not be completed by August 2023, you should disclose this on your application and state whether it is your intention to seek permission to be concurrently registered. **Failure to provide full disclosure of your concurrent or potential concurrent registration on another programme may lead to the disqualification of your PCLL application or your removal from the PCLL programme if such non-disclosure is discovered post admission.**

### **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). Please visit our website: <http://www.ple.hku.hk> for further information and updates. Formal notices of offers and rejections will normally be sent by post only. Please inform us if your address details change and arrange for someone to collect your mail for you if you are traveling overseas so that any offer or rejection from us comes to your attention as soon as possible.

**Please note that due to the number of applications received, the PCLL Admissions Office cannot provide a document checking service to ensure that an application is complete. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they submit all necessary supporting documents by the Documents Deadline.**

*PCLL Admissions Office*  
Faculty of Law  
The University of Hong Kong

### **GENERAL ENQUIRY**

PCLL Admissions Office  
Faculty of Law  
The University of Hong Kong  
10/F., Cheng Yu Tung Tower  
Centennial Campus  
Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong.  
Fax: (852) 2559 3543  
Email: [pcll@hku.hk](mailto:pcll@hku.hk)

**January 2024**