To be an effective legal practitioner you need more than a good academic foundation. You have to learn how to apply your knowledge of the law to the problems and situations people encounter in everyday life.

I was the senior partner of a local law firm for over twenty-five years. In my experience, trainee solicitors were much more effective in their work if they had already acquired some basic legal skills before they began their training contracts.

The PCLL programme at CUHK bridges the gap in the transition from being a law student to a practising lawyer. The course will equip you to be an effective member of a team of legal practitioners, from the first day of your training contract or pupillage.

You will be taught in both large group sessions and small group sessions. The large group sessions will introduce you to key legal principles and skills. In the small group sessions it is over to you. You get first-hand experience by performing practical exercises both in groups and individually. These will be in compulsory subjects such as criminal and civil practice, and also elective subjects such as trial advocacy, alternative dispute resolution, and drafting.

Your performance will be reviewed by our team of experienced teachers. Most have been practicing lawyers and several are still in practice. They will give you constructive advice on how to improve the skills you have learned. Their teaching will be supplemented by talks given by distinguished guest speakers, including judges and lawyers acknowledged as experts in their areas of practice.

You will find the training intensive, demanding but also rewarding. When you have completed the programme, you will have acquired the practical skills and knowledge of correct professional practice for your career as a lawyer.

Join us, and let the PCLL programme of CUHK be the gateway to your future success.

Yours sincerely,
Christopher Knight
Programme Director of Postgraduate Certificate in Laws Programme

Christopher Gane
Simon F.S. Li Professor of Law and
Dean, Faculty of Law

Queenie Ying Lai
Deputy Programme Director of Postgraduate Certificate in Laws Programme
On the PCLL you will receive instruction from an accomplished pool of teachers. They hold legal qualifications from a number of jurisdictions, including Hong Kong, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Nearly all have practised, and in some cases held senior positions in leading law firms, chambers and companies. Most have extensive multi-jurisdictional experience across a broad range of practice areas. Some are still practising law as solicitors or barristers. A number of them have substantial teaching experience, both of substantive law and on professional courses, in various jurisdictions including Hong Kong and the UK.

You will find the curricula vitae of our teachers on our website at http://www.law.cuhk.edu.hk/en/people/staff-list.php.

The focus of the PCLL is on equipping you with the skills with which you can apply your knowledge of substantive law.

On the PCLL we teach via Large Group Sessions (LGSs) and Small Group Sessions (SGSs). The main purpose of LGSs is to introduce to you the legal principles and skills in each subject. LGSs tend to be, though are not exclusively, teacher-led. SGSs are classes of 10 to 15 students. In these small groups students go over material from their preparatory reading and LGSs. They also do SGS exercises on which teachers question students and give feedback. SGSs are heavily student-focused.

We employ various innovative methods to train and test students. On Trial Advocacy, for instance, we have numerous practitioners come in to give one-on-one feedback on students’ recorded advocacy performances. Invited “Judges” preside over the final mini-trial assessment: these have included CFA Judges, the Chief Judge of the High Court, and very senior practitioners. On Civil and Criminal Litigation Practice we assess not only on paper but also by getting students on their feet to make applications. We frequently have guest speakers from the professions and the judiciary visit to teach particular techniques or principles, or to speak generally on their areas of expertise.

We have adopted on the PCLL a policy of continuous assessment. Among other benefits, this helps students to develop incrementally and gives teachers another tool to monitor and assess students’ progress.

The Law Society of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Bar Association, a number of law firms and others have donated prizes for students who attain top marks in various subjects.
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

In Term 1 of the PCLL students read compulsory subjects. These form the bedrock of their training for practice.

COMMERCIAL PRACTICE
The important role of commercial lawyers in Hong Kong cannot be overstated. This course is designed to serve as a foundation course for would-be trainee solicitors and pupil barristers. It will cover the law and practice of basic commercial transactions that are most likely to be handled by junior lawyers.

CIVIL LITIGATION PRACTICE
In Civil Litigation Practice you will see how what you studied in Civil Procedure operates in the real world. You will come out of the course knowing how in practice to conduct civil litigation from first instructions to trial, how to draft correctly the various documents you will need along the way, and how to conduct the various types of application you may encounter.

CRIMINAL LITIGATION PRACTICE
As a junior lawyer working in the field of criminal law in Hong Kong you will be expected to demonstrate various practical skills, whether as a solicitor or barrister. In this course you will begin to learn those skills by following two criminal cases from start to finish. Along the way you will be required to perform both oral and written tasks, which demonstrate your practical abilities and build upon your existing knowledge of both criminal law and procedure.

PROPERTY AND PROBATE PRACTICE
This course teaches you to represent clients in property and probate matters. You will learn to draft a will, advise on intestacy, administer an estate, buy, sell and mortgage a flat and enter into a lease. Through a series of practical tasks, you will learn to conduct transactions and develop your professional skills and experience.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
A sound knowledge of the principles of professional practice is essential for all lawyers. The public will not have confidence in the legal profession unless they know that every barrister and solicitor is bound by strict codes of professional conduct which, when necessary, will be enforced by disciplinary proceedings.

In this course, students study both the Code of Conduct of the Bar and the Solicitors’ Guide to Professional Conduct. They consider realistic practical problems involving ethical issues that lawyers are likely to encounter in practice. They then apply the principles of proper professional conduct in working out for themselves, how to resolve those problems.

Solicitors regularly handle substantial sums of clients’ money, for transactions such as the sale and purchase of real estate. To prepare students for the special responsibilities involved, this course also has a separate compulsory module on Solicitors’ Accounts and Understanding Financial Statements.

In Term 2 / Summer Term students read 5 elective subjects. Students choose electives according to their preferences, their career path (e.g. solicitor or barrister) and their firms’ or chambers’ requirements (if any).

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION
Alternative Dispute Resolution is becoming an increasingly important and technical area of practice, particularly in Hong Kong since the Civil Justice Reforms were implemented in 2009. Whether you intend to practise as a dispute resolution lawyer or as a transactional lawyer, this course will be useful to you in introducing the ADR legal framework in Hong Kong, as well as the skills involved in negotiation, mediation and arbitration.

CHINA PRACTICE
China practice has become one of the important practice areas in most major law firms and we recommend this course if you plan a career in such a firm. You will learn practical aspects relating to the latest developments in China’s foreign investment and mergers & acquisitions regime.

CONFERENCE SKILLS AND OPINION WRITING
All lawyers meet with clients in conferences. Lawyers, particularly dispute resolution practitioners, give legal opinions. In practice the skills of the two disciplines are closely related. Sometimes you use your case analysis, questioning and advising skills in conferences with clients before you prepare an opinion based on what you learned and discussed in conference. At other times you write preliminary opinions based on, say, documents before meeting your clients to discuss your initial advice and to find out more about their matters. This course prepares you for these situations.
**WRITING AND DRAFTING COMMERCIAL DOCUMENTS**

Remember that a badly drafted agreement or slavish reliance on precedents could get your client into trouble! It is one of the most important attributes of a commercial lawyer to be proficient at drafting commercial agreements. The course will endeavour to develop the skills necessary to achieve this in the context of joint venture, sale and purchase and guarantee agreements.

**WRITING AND DRAFTING COMMERCIAL DOCUMENTS (IN CHINESE)**

The ability to draft commercial documents in Chinese is a great asset for lawyers. This course provides intensive and skills-focused practical training in this respect. To cater for its unique nature which involves the application of both legal skills and Chinese language skills, the course will be taught by two teachers (one from the Faculty of Law and the other from the Department of Chinese Language and Literature).

**WRITING AND DRAFTING LITIGATION DOCUMENTS**

This course is divided into 2 modules, Civil and Criminal. You will undertake class exercises designed to teach you those written skills which you will need in order to confront some of the drafting tasks you will face upon entering practice. In the Civil module you will build upon the drafting skills already developed in Civil Litigation Practice in Term 1 by tackling more complex and challenging documents. In the Criminal module you will learn how to draft indictments, skeleton arguments and grounds of appeal, as well as learn how to prepare more general structured submissions.

**WRITING AND DRAFTING LITIGATION DOCUMENTS (IN CHINESE)**

This course will provide practical training in writing and drafting litigation documents in Chinese in civil and in criminal proceedings. In light of the growing use of Chinese in litigation, in particular in cases involving litigants in person, this course will provide you with a good solid foundation in the use of Chinese in drafting litigation documents for your future professional development.

**CORPORATE FINANCE**

Hong Kong has in recent years overtaken New York and London as the world’s top initial public offering (IPO) destination and is the key offshore capital-raising centre for Chinese companies. Corporate finance is, and will continue to be, a major area of practice in Hong Kong law firms. In this course, through examining case studies of real IPOs that made newspaper headlines, you will learn how to draft a prospectus and what insider dealing and market manipulation are. Most importantly, you will gain commercial awareness of the Hong Kong equity capital markets essential for a successful career as a corporate lawyer. At the end of the course, you will be equipped with drafting, project management and client-handling skills – and be confident that you are ready for a corporate training seat!

**LENDING AND FINANCE**

Lending and Finance focuses on matters of concern to transactions involving money including various forms of loan and facility agreements, real securities and quasi-securities, the terms of the relevant contracts, and the obligations, duties and powers of the parties. Background matters which interact with the topics in this course include contract law, property law, equity and trusts, company law, and insolvency. The course will also look at new forms of transactions and developments in the law relevant to maintaining Hong Kong’s position as a leading international centre for financial transactions.

**PERSONAL INJURIES PRACTICE**

Personal Injuries Practice accounts for a significant proportion of civil claims filed in the courts of the Hong Kong SAR. It is an important area of practice for many barristers and solicitors. However, the procedures differ from those of civil litigation generally. The courts have a separate Practice Direction for personal injury cases as well as a specialist Personal Injury List. This means that all claims for personal injuries will be placed in the Personal Injury List and those trials will be before a judge with special expertise and experience in personal injury law and practice.

Civil Litigation Practice is a compulsory course during Term 1 of the PCLL Programme. It provides an introduction to civil litigation generally. It does not cover the specialist topics required by a solicitor or barrister to handle personal injury litigation.

This course is taught by a practitioner with extensive experience in acting for both plaintiffs and defendants in fatal and non-fatal cases. Students will study the special procedures relating to this area of litigation and will acquire practical knowledge of how to pursue and defend personal injury claims.

**TRIAL ADVOCACY (Taught over an intensive 2 weeks in the Summer Term)**

Whether you become a litigation solicitor or a barrister, developing as a trial lawyer is a rewarding but arduous lifelong endeavour. In this course we teach you the fundamentals. The techniques and secrets of case preparation, opening and closing speeches, direct examination and cross examination are yours for the taking. The final assessment is a mini-trial in courtrooms in the High Court before real judges, senior barristers and solicitors.
We deliver the PCLL in the CUHK Graduate Law Centre (GLC). This is on the second floor of the Bank of America Tower in Central. The GLC is in the heart of Hong Kong’s central business district. It is thus in amongst its major law firms and companies, and a stone’s throw from the High Court. The GLC is equipped with facilities designed to optimise your learning experience. It has, for instance:

- the Warren Chan Moot Court, in which students practise advocacy skills.
- interactive lecture theatres and classrooms. These are all equipped with state-of-the-art facilities.
- an open student common area and a computer laboratory with online PCs for student use.
- breakout rooms for student study and discussion.
- Wifi internet access.

In addition, the Faculty has substantial resources on its main campus in Shatin. The facilities on the main campus are similar to those of the GLC. The main campus also houses the Lee Quo Wei Law Library, which PCLL students are welcome to use. The Lee Quo Wei Law Library contains one of the fastest-growing law collections in Asia. It has around 118,600 volumes of books and bound periodicals on law and law-related subjects, including 79 current print journal titles and over 400 multimedia items. The Lee Quo Wei Law Library provides seating for students in a mix of individual study desks, open plan tables and 8 group study rooms. The Lee Quo Wei Law Library also contains 61 PCs and a fully wireless network for use by students with their own laptops. This collection is complemented by a growing array of online sources, 3,718 e-journal titles, 106 law databases, as well as the interdisciplinary collections housed by the Chinese University of Hong Kong Library. The Learning Garden, located at LG/F of the University Library opens 24 x 7 for most of the year. The Research Commons at 1/F of the University Library is an area for research and collaborative activities for postgraduate students.

PCLL students will also have access to the Legal Resources Centre (LRC). The LRC is a service point of the Lee Quo Wei Law Library. It serves the legal information needs of the students and teachers at the GLC. It contains multiple copies of essential texts for courses run at the GLC, a small reference collection and various sets of case law and legislation. The essential texts are drawn from the main collection of the Lee Quo Wei Law Library and rotate in and out of the LRC according to the courses offered at the GLC each term. Students may request delivery of other books from the Lee Quo Wei Law Library free of charge. The 106 law databases for student use can be accessed from the PC facilities at the GLC, LRC, on campus and from home or other locations.

Library resources aside, PCLL students are also entitled to use the University sports facilities on campus and the University Health Service.

On the PCLL you are at an advanced stage of your postgraduate studies. That does not, however, relegate you to the edge of university social life or broader educational development. The CUHK’s general learning philosophy, in particular its emphasis on whole person development, applies as much to those just beginning their university education as it does to those on the cusp of entering the professional world.

Our PCLL students have been active in extracurricular educational and social activities. For example, PCLL students formed part of inter-programme Jessup Moot Competition teams.

Furthermore, in each year the PCLL students have themselves arranged a graduation party at various venues. These have been hugely successful and an opportunity for the students to celebrate with their teachers their completion of a very tough course and their attainment of that crucial certificate.

**CAREER SUCCESS & CAREERS FACILITIES**

**LAW STUDENT CAREERS OFFICE**

**The Service**

The Faculty’s Law Student Careers Office provides students with guidance on career choices and in both career preparation and professional development. The Director, Mr. Paul Mitchard QC, has prepared a programme of seminars on career and professionalism topics and presentations by outside speakers including representatives of law firms and barristers’ chambers and other prospective employers.

**Virtual Careers Resource Centre**

The Law Student Careers Office also maintains the Virtual Careers Resource Centre (VCRC) which serves as a contact point for prospective employers, teaching faculty members and students. The VCRC contains a Legal Careers Directory with up-to-date information on law firms and chambers and on internships and other employment opportunities for students. The VCRC website also notifies career seminars and other events as well as providing students with information on matters such as job applications and CV preparation and with a wide range of other career-related resources designed to ensure that Faculty of Law students are fully informed and equipped for entering into government or industry. Others remain in academia. Their achievements are testimony to their hard work and the quality of their education.

**Mr. Paul Mitchard QC**

Director of Career Planning and Professionalism

After graduating from the PCLL, most of our students move on to careers in legal practice, many in top firms and chambers. Some graduates choose to go into government or industry. Others remain in academia. Their achievements are testimony to their hard work and the quality of their education.

**Summary of employment status of PCLL graduates in the 2015-16 academic year:**

- Law firms 80.3%
- Barristers’ chambers 6.0%
- Department of Justice 1.7%
- Mainland legal employment 0.8%
- Other sector (non-law) 2.6%
- Further studies 2.6%
- Others 6.0%

* These figures comprise 117 student responses out of 147 graduates of the 2015-16 cohort.

**E-mentoring**

The Careers Office also supports an e-mentoring programme through which students may connect with Law Faculty alumni in their chosen field for career guidance and issues concerning professionalism.
COMMENTS FROM THE PROFESSIONS

“PCLL is a very important stage of the legal training process leading to entry to the legal profession. As President of the Law Society and an External Examiner on the PCLL course, I maintain regular contact with PCLL students at CUHK. My general impression on them can be summarized in 3 Cs – Courteous, Confident and Competitive.”

Huen Wong JP
Past President
The Law Society of Hong Kong

“I have had the pleasure of being the mentor for a number of Chinese U PCLL and JD students and I have also participated from time to time in the University’s advocacy examinations. I have also been fortunate enough to have some of their graduates as my pupils.

I can say at once, that the standard of those I have come across is extremely high and is a tribute to the quality of the instruction that they receive at Chinese University.”

Clive Grossman
Senior Counsel

“This PCLL/PCLL has offered me an absolutely fruitful year for my legal studies. It provides a thorough training programme for law students to become legal practitioners. The curriculum combines theoretical knowledge with practical application. The small group sessions are delicately designed for us to apply what we have learned in lectures. It listened and further sharpened my practical skills, through drafting legal documents, participating in client-facing simulations and conducting legal research.

Our teachers are enthusiastic and devoted to their teaching. I am grateful that they enlightened and motivated me to strive for the best, with their warm-hearted support.

It is a very rewarding programme and offers great flexibility to satisfy students’ individual aspirations. It provided me with a wide range of elective to explore different legal practice areas, formulates a personalised curriculum, and ultimately best equip myself for the challenges ahead.”

Katrina Tsoi
PCLL graduate 2016-17
Morrison & Foerster

“Practical skills are a big feature of the CUHK PCLL. From legal drafting to advocacy exercises, students are tasked with applying the law to hypothetical cases based on real cases. The coursework is challenging, but teachers are always available to help and provide tailored feedback. What makes the programme unique for me, however, is the interaction with my classmates in small group sessions. These sessions provide a platform for in-depth discussions and the opportunity to perfect the skills taught in lectures, through repeated practice and peer critique. Learning is enjoyable because the CUHK PCLL attracts high calibre students from all walks of life. Everyone is incredibly supportive and there is a strong sense of community.

It is a very rewarding programme and offers great flexibility to satisfy students’ individual aspirations. It provided me with a wide range of electives to explore different legal practice areas, formulates a personalised curriculum, and ultimately best equip myself for the challenges ahead.”

Andrew Lau
PCLL graduate 2016-17
Pupil Barrister

“The CUHK PCLL is a hands-on programme which allowed me to develop an excellent understanding of legal practice. Through continuous in-class exercises and assessments, students acquire the practical skills of a lawyer, such as interviewing and advising clients, writing and drafting legal documents, as well as advocacy. The classes are highly interactive, with experienced practitioners and the faculty’s supportive tutors providing us regular individual feedback. I am sure that students at the CUHK PCLL will be sufficiently prepared for their career and challenges ahead.

Apart from the intensive curriculum, what I have benefitted the most from the programme is the support to our career development. From attending professional networking events to receiving one-to-one advice from the career planning team, I am confident that these opportunities from the Programme have set me apart from other candidates during my career development.”

Agnes Yeung
PCLL graduate 2016-17
DLA Piper

“The CUHK PCLL is a hands-on programme which allowed me to develop an excellent understanding of legal practice. Through continuous in-class exercises and assessments, students acquire the practical skills of a lawyer, such as interviewing and advising clients, writing and drafting legal documents, as well as advocacy. The classes are highly interactive, with experienced practitioners and the faculty’s supportive tutors providing us regular individual feedback. I am sure that students at the CUHK PCLL will be sufficiently prepared for their career and challenges ahead.

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Agnes Yeung
PCLL graduate 2016-17
DLA Piper

“Veteran soldiers are hardened on the battlefield; good sailors are made on rough seas. The same is true of lawyers. Law school programmes understandably tend to focus on the theoretical side of law. I’ve benefitted from the JD programme of CUHK to gain a glimpse into the academic structure of the legal discipline. But as I came to the law as my second or third career, I know that’s not enough. That is where the PCLL programme comes in to fill the gap between theory and practice, to provide for the transition from students to practitioners.

Particularly worthy of praise is the course “Trial Advocacy”. It’s not just useful but also fun. I think everybody should take it, whether one wants to be a barrister or solicitor, because advocacy is a core competence for lawyers.”

LK Shiu
PCLL graduate 2016-17
Pupil Barrister

COMMENTS FROM CUHK PCLL GRADUATES

We hope our students’ association with our Faculty lasts well beyond their education. It is important that their memory of their time with us is both lasting and pleasurable. Some of the comments we have received from graduates after they have left us are:

“PCLL is a very important stage of the legal training process leading to entry to the legal profession. As President of the Law Society and an External Examiner on the PCLL course, I maintain regular contact with PCLL students at CUHK. My general impression on them can be summarized in 3 Cs – Courteous, Confident and Competitive.”

Huen Wong JP
Past President
The Law Society of Hong Kong
“After taking the PCLL at CUHK, I can proudly say that I had made a right decision to have chosen this programme. This programme serves to link students’ academic mindset to a practical mindset. Our legal knowledge became the foundation upon which we apply practical skills to solve clients’ problems. Although good practice can only be achieved through years of experience, we gained a solid foundation for future practice. This would be impossible without the strong support from our teachers, who are all very experienced and passionate in their teaching. Now, we are equipped with both core legal knowledge and basic practical skills to begin our legal careers with confidence.”

Terence Wong
PCLL graduate 2016-17
Department of Justice

“After reading law at Cambridge, I was ready to transition from the academic and theoretical study of law, to the practical. The CUHK PCLL has proven to be instrumental in helping me work towards achieving this goal. The structure of the programme allowed students to benefit from interactive, and intensive, small group sessions whilst also being able to engage with professional course leaders in a lecture setting. The interesting breadth of course options, ranging from Conference Skills and Opinion Writing to Drafting Commercial Documents, allows you to hone in on particular skills that you consider to be most relevant to your future career as a practising lawyer.

Another aspect of the PCLL that I appreciated is the fact that the instructors consist of current and former practitioners who are not only experienced lawyers, but also distinguished lecturers. Their support throughout the course was incredible, and their eagerness to make sure you will be equipped (as far as possible) for everyday tasks as a lawyer was inspiring. All in all, choosing the CUHK PCLL was not only a decision I will never regret, but one I would encourage more people to make.”

Natasha Brown
PCLL graduate 2016-17
Allen & Overy

Admission to the PCLL is almost invariably founded on academic merit. The most important indicator of academic merit is your law qualification, usually a Bachelor of Laws degree or a Juris Doctor degree, though we also consider applicants with CPEs or GDLs.

Term and Conditions

The CUHK PCLL programme eases the transition from classrooms to real life. Through lectures and small-group sessions, distinguished and experienced faculty members help students hone their advocacy and drafting skills, conference skills, and drafting skills. Students are also taught court etiquette, professional conduct codes, and how to deal with clients. Overall, CUHK recognizes that excelling in the legal industry is about much more than just knowing the law. Its comprehensive PCLL programme ensures that its students are well-prepared for a bright future ahead, by equipping them with the necessary practical knowledge and skills, and providing a supportive environment within which to refine this skill set.”

George Mok
PCLL graduate 2016-17
Clifford Chance
WHEN AND HOW TO APPLY

Competition for entry into the PCLL is intense. Applications begin in November and close in April in the following year. We only accept online applications.

Before submitting an application, please visit our website http://www.law.cuhk.edu.hk for details of the application procedure. Please note in particular the following two links on that page:

- How to make your application.
- Important notes to applicants.

To submit an application, please use our online application process at the University’s Graduate School webpage.

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Facebook: CUHK Law
LinkedIn: CUHK Faculty of Law

TUITION FEES*

For the 2017-18 academic year, tuition fee levels are as follows:

- UGC-funded places and Distinguished Scholarship places (for local students): HK$42,100
- UGC-funded places and Distinguished Scholarship places (for non-local students): HK$145,000
- Self-financed places: HK$165,000

Fee levels for the 2018-19 academic year are to be announced.

* Subject to annual review

This brochure contains information as at August 2017. The University has the right to change its rules, regulations and procedures at any time.