POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN LAWS (PCLL)

Faculty of Law
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
# Table of Contents

Welcome ........................................... 2  
Summary of Key Facts .......................... 4  
Teaching ......................................... 5  
Course Descriptions ............................ 6  
Facilities and Resources ....................... 10  
Broader Education and Student Activities at CUHK ............................ 11  
Career Success / Careers Facilities .............. 11  
Comments from the Professions .......... 12  
Comments from CUHK PCLL Graduates ....... 13  
Admission Requirements ....................... 15  
Tuition Fees .................................... 16  
When and How to Apply .................... 16  
Contact Us .................................... 16
Welcome

The vocational stage of your legal education is very important to you and we place great emphasis upon giving you the start that you need in your legal career. We are confident that you will find our PCLL to be a first-rate offering.

The Programme was designed over a two-year period in consultation with the Law Society of Hong Kong and the Bar Association of Hong Kong to address the needs of today’s profession. It is accordingly up to date, innovative and an excellent preparation for practice. The old emphasis upon learning more and more law has been replaced by a focus on the acquisition of generic skills, skills that you will carry with you into your chosen career. On our PCLL, you will draft commercial documents, write opinions and advices, engage in negotiation and practise the skills of alternative dispute resolution. At every stage you will be engaged in classroom settings which emphasise interaction and participation.

In many ways, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. One important measure of the success of our Programme is that our students are eagerly sought by the profession as evidenced by our nearly-perfect placement success.

I look forward to you joining our Programme and to working with you for a successful future.

Mike McConville (Professor)
Simon F. S. Li Professor of Law and
Founding Dean, Faculty of Law
Having been a Hong Kong practising solicitor for many years I am extremely proud to be Director of CUHK’s PCLL. We are a new Law Faculty and this gave us the opportunity to write all our programmes to embrace fully the recommendations for the improvement of legal education contained in the Roper Redmond Report. Nowhere is this more fully demonstrated than in our PCLL. The PCLL was written with great involvement of the professions to cater for the needs of the professions. It is a truly vocational course where you learn the skills you will need in practice. All our teachers have been practising lawyers and some still are, so they are uniquely qualified to teach you those essential skills. On our PCLL you will draft commercial documents, conveyancing documents, civil and criminal litigation documents and so on. You will get on your feet to make applications in proceedings; you will conduct negotiations and mediations. And you will be assessed on the skills you have acquired in the classroom. Much of our teaching on the PCLL is conducted in small tutorial groups which greatly aid the skills focus of the course.

Our PCLL is written and delivered with a view to ensuring that you will enter your training contract or pupillage confident, professional and with the ability to be useful from day one. Our placement statistics over our first three years have been impressive, demonstrating the very high regard in which the professions hold our PCLL.

I very much look forward to welcoming you to this exciting, new and highly relevant programme.

Richard Morris
Director, PCLL

You have put many hard yards into your legal education. One remains: the PCLL.

The PCLL is your last hurdle before you begin your career in law. But it is more than that. When you enter the profession, you will be subjected to trial by fire. The profession’s demands are severe. Supervising partners, judges, adversaries in court, clients - their standards and expectations will be pitilessly taxing.

That is why our PCLL programme is more than finishing school to your legal education. In this programme we shall teach you what you need to put your substantive law into practice. We shall train you to survive the frequent questioning of your understanding and competence that you will experience in practice. Large Group Sessions, Small Group Sessions, mock trials, mock conferences; they all come to the same thing. We give you this rigorous education with only one aim in mind: to arm you for what is to come.

If you are ready to learn, we are ready to teach. Let us now see what you are made of. Welcome to the PCLL.

Matthew P Cheung
Assistant Director, PCLL
Our PCLL programme is a rigorous and innovative skills-based course that complements the traditional legal education you have thus far received. We design and teach the PCLL to give you a thorough and relevant working knowledge of the substantive and procedural law and skills that will serve you in practice.

Some key facts about the PCLL:

- Our PCLL is a one-year full-time programme.
- We have up to 150 places for the 2012 – 13 class.
- We will offer UGC and Distinguished Scholarship places to the most meritorious applicants.
- You will read for the PCLL in the Graduate Law Centre in the Bank of America Tower in the heart of Hong Kong’s central business district.
- You will study a number of compulsory subjects and get to choose from a broad selection of elective subjects.
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, Canada and the United States. All have practised, and in some cases held senior positions in leading law firms, chambers and companies. Most have extensive multi-jurisdictional practice 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/people/academic-staff.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 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 some 30 practitioners come in to give one-on-one feedback on students’ recorded advocacy performances. On Civil and Criminal Litigation Practice we assess not only on paper but by getting students on their feet to do applications, again often before practising lawyers and judges, including a Justice of the Court of Final Appeal. 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, the Bar Association and a number of firms have donated prizes for 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**

Good lawyers today are expected to be much more than skilled legal technicians. They also need a sound foundation in legal ethics. Thus the Professional Practice course explores legal practice from an ethical but also from a societal and professional perspective. In the course students focus on the problems that practitioners encounter in their work and learn how those problems may be best managed or avoided. Part of the course is also devoted to understanding the financial aspects of today’s running of a law firm.

*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.
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 security and quasi-security, terms of the relevant contracts, and the obligations, duties and powers of the parties. Background matters include contract, property law, equity and trusts, and insolvency.

TRIAL ADVOCACY

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.

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 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.
Facilities and Resources

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:

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

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 83,000 volumes of books and bound periodicals on law and law-related subjects, including 630 active serial titles and over 300 multimedia items. This collection is complemented by a growing array of online sources, 2450 e-journal titles, 53 databases, as well as the interdisciplinary collections housed by the University library system.

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 every term 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. There are also over 50 law databases for student use.

Library resources aside, PCLL students are also entitled to use the University sports facilities on campus and the University Health Service.
**Broader Education and Student Activities at CUHK**

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 in May; in 2009 at the Yacht Club, in 2010 at the Jockey Club and in 2011 at the Hong Kong Club. 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 critical certificate.

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**Career Success / Careers Facilities**

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 2010 – 11 academic year:**

- Law firms 79%
- Barristers’ chambers 10%
- Department of Justice 5%
- Other sector (non-law) 1%
- Further degrees 4%
- Other plans 1%

*We have facilities and run events to help students find job opportunities. For instance:*

- The Faculty runs career talks advising on the job application process.
- Many of our teachers have extensive practice experience. They are able to advise on the many aspects of job applications.
- Our teachers will also, if asked very nicely, provide references.
- Our Virtual Careers Resource Centre is unique to our Faculty of Law. It serves as a contact point for prospective employers. It also provides students with information that helps them find their careers.*
“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_
_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_
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:

“The knowledge I gained from the PCLL is very useful in my work. The corporate finance and commercial practice courses were especially useful to me during my last six months of training in my firm’s corporate department. Armed with the fundamental concepts taught in the PCLL on the Companies Ordinance, Securities and Futures Ordinance and other corporate-related issues, I was able to understand quickly complicated issues with a clearer mind. The drafting skills I learned on the PCLL benefit me in my everyday work. The civil and criminal litigation courses were also very interesting courses.

In addition to the learning experience, I enjoyed the PCLL very much. It was a very important year in my life. I met great teachers and made a lot of good friends. I am very proud to be a CU PCLL graduate.”

Rachel Huang, PCLL graduate 2008-09
Linklaters

“Hugely practical and relevant to actual practice.”

Karen Leung, PCLL graduate 2008-09
O’Melveny & Myers

“I appreciate its practical, no-nonsense approach.”

James Wong, PCLL graduate 2008-09
Barrister

“The PCLL at CUHK is well structured and the courses provide a natural stepping stone to practice as a trainee solicitor. Most importantly the teachers were very helpful and their support was excellent.”

Peter Kim, PCLL graduate 2009-10
Baker & McKenzie
“The course structure and content of the CUHK PCLL Programme are designed to be challenging yet manageable...It provided me with the necessary skills and training to tackle the challenges I face in my traineeship.”

Terence Siu, PCLL graduate 2009-10
Richards Butler

“I remember a friend once said to me: “legal practice is no walk in the park”. Three months into my training contract, I cannot agree more. Strong grounding in law is the least an employer can expect of you. This is why it is of critical importance to enrol on a good PCLL programme. The CUHK PCLL has some of the most experienced lawyers in town teaching this practical course; they have shared their valuable experiences - both in their personal and professional contexts - with us on many occasions and have given us great insight into legal practice. We have even had the luxury of having some of the most prestigious members in the legal field give presentations to us (thanks to our teachers having great connections). Additionally, the CUHK PCLL is designed to be flexible; there was a good choice of subjects to choose from to accommodate students with different ambitions. The list can go on but the gist is: what more can you expect from a PCLL course?”

Cathy Kwok, PCLL graduate 2009-10
Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe

“I thoroughly enjoyed the PCLL courses that effectively integrated an interesting skills-based, hands-on approach with the substantive laws and theories learned during my LLB. This was done in a dynamic environment filled with enthusiastic students and engaging teachers with lots of practical experience to share that I can readily apply in my training. I’m glad to keep in touch with my classmates and teachers beyond my PCLL year. It has definitely built the foundation for a solid support network and given me a head start to my legal career.”

Winifred Ho, PCLL graduate 2009-10
Baker & McKenzie
Admission Requirements

Admission to the PCLL is primarily 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.

*Your law qualification will be assessed by reference to:*

- its classification, including grades, marks or other indicators of merit; and
- the standing of the awarding institution.

Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements for admission to the PCLL set out in the statement issued by the Standing Committee on Legal Education and Training (available at [http://www.pcea.com.hk](http://www.pcea.com.hk)). They must also hold a valid International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Certificate (academic module) with an overall score of 7 or above taken on a date which is not earlier than three years preceding the closing date for applications in the academic year in which applicants are seeking entry to the PCLL.
### Tuition Fees

Tuition fees are subject to annual review.

*For the 2012-13 academic year, tuition fees* are as follows:

- UGC-funded places (for local students) and Distinguished Scholarship places: HK$42,100
- UGC-funded places (for non-local students): HK$100,000
- Self-financed places: HK$132,000

* Subject to approval.

### 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/programmes/postgraduate-certificate-of-laws.php](http://www.law.cuhk.edu.hk/programmes/postgraduate-certificate-of-laws.php)) 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 ([http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/gss/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/gss/)).

### Contact Us

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