

**REGULATIONS FOR THE  
MASTER OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE (PSYCHOSIS STUDIES)  
(MPsyMed)**

*These regulations apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Psychological Medicine (Psychosis Studies) in the academic year 2021-22 and thereafter.*

*(see also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)*

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**PM.1 Admission requirements**

To be eligible for admission to the curriculum leading to the Master of Psychological Medicine (Psychosis Studies), a candidate shall:

- (a) comply with the General Regulations; and
  - (b) comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and
  - (c) hold the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery or a Bachelor's degree in Psychology/Nursing/Social Work/Occupational Therapy or another healthcare related field of this University, or other qualifications of equivalent standard from this University or from another University or comparable institution accepted for this purpose; and
  - (d) satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination, if required.
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**PM.2 Qualifying examination**

- (a) A qualifying examination may be set to test candidates' formal academic ability or their ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent and may include a project report; and
  - (b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.
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**PM.3 Award of degree**

To be eligible for the award of the Master of Psychological Medicine (Psychosis Studies), a candidate shall

- (a) comply with General Regulations; and
- (b) comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and
- (c) complete the curriculum and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below.

Advanced standing may be granted to a candidate in recognition of prior studies completed at a comparable level before admission to the Master of Psychological Medicine (Psychosis Studies) subject to the following conditions:

- (a) such course(s) should be completed no more than 3 years prior to the candidate's commencement of the Master of Psychological Medicine (Psychosis Studies) curriculum; and
- (b) advance standing for up to 12 credits may be granted.

A candidate may choose to exit the curriculum after having successfully completed a minimum of 60 credits of the curriculum and be considered for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Medicine (Psychosis Studies). Those who have been granted a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Medicine (Psychosis Studies) as an exit award shall not be re-admitted to the curriculum leading to the Master of Psychological Medicine (Psychosis Studies).

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#### **PM.4 Period of study**

The curriculum shall normally extend over two academic years of part-time study. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration of four academic years of part-time study, unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty.

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#### **PM.5 Completion of curriculum**

To complete the curriculum, a candidate shall:

- (a) satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and
- (b) take not less than 75 credits in the manner specified in these Regulations and the syllabuses; and follow the instructions in the syllabuses prescribed for the curriculum and complete satisfactorily all required written and practical work;
- (c) satisfy the examiners in the courses by continuous assessments and written examinations; and
- (d) complete and present a satisfactory capstone project report on an approved topic.

A candidate who fails to fulfill the requirements within the prescribed maximum period of study shall be recommended for discontinuation under the provision of General Regulation G12.

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#### **PM.6 Assessments**

- (a) A candidate who has failed to satisfy the examiners in a course in the first attempt may be permitted:
  - i) to attend a re-examination; or
  - ii) to re-submit the failed coursework
  - iii) to re-take the course and the prescribed examination(s); or
  - iv) to enroll in another course in lieu if the failed course is not a core course
- (b) A candidate who
  - i) is not permitted to retake the prescribed assessment(s) or repeat a course which he/she has failed, or present himself /herself from re-examination(s), or re-submit a revised capstone project report; or
  - ii) fails to satisfy the examiners in written examinations at the third attempt

may be recommended for discontinuation of studies under the provision of General Regulations of G12, or may be required to exit the curriculum by the Faculty Board, on recommendation of the Board of

Examiners, with an award of Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Medicine (Psychosis Studies) in accordance with PM.3

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**PM. 7 Grading system and assessment results**

- (a) Individual courses shall be graded as “Pass” or “Fail”.
  - (b) On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction as determined by the Board of Examiners and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates’ degree diploma.
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## **SYLLABUS FOR THE MASTER OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE (PSYCHOSIS STUDIES)**

The curriculum consists of 2 core courses (12 credits), 8 elective courses (48 credits) and a capstone project (15 credits), making a total of 75 credits. Taking reference from the norm for a 3-credit course as to embrace 60 hours of student learning activity (including both contact hours and all other forms of student learning activity), the taught courses are 6-credit (120 learning hours), and the capstone project is 15-credit (300 learning hours).

The mode of assessment for core and elective courses comprises continuous assessments (40%-100%) and written examinations (0-60%). Candidates are also required to submit a capstone project report to the satisfaction of the examiner(s).

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### **CORE COURSES**

#### **PSYS6001 Introduction to Psychotic disorders: Epidemiology and Aetiology (6 credits)**

This course will start with an introduction to the history of the study of psychotic disorders, covering how the concepts and approaches have evolved in the last 150 years as a result of technological and societal progress, as well as highlighting the important challenges in the last decade. General principles of epidemiology will be introduced. The incidence and the prevalence of psychotic disorders in different populations will be considered, highlighting the way potential aetiological mechanisms might be suggested from epidemiological data. Using the example of the season of birth effect, the exploration will develop to cover the current findings of early and late environmental risk factors for psychosis (such as maternal influenza, high paternal age, migration, urban upbringing, and substance abuse). It will highlight the different pathway through which these factors might act. The evidence for genetic factors will be reviewed in detail, with an appreciation of the extent to which genetic factors determine the risk for psychosis. Potential mode of inheritance and examples of gene-environment interaction will be discussed. The partial expression of traits in genetically related individuals, as well as in schizotypal disorders will also be described. The potential role of stress in the onset and relapse of the disorder will be reviewed in the context of the stress-vulnerability approach.

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#### **PSYS6004 Critical appraisal and evidence base approaches in Psychosis (6 credits)**

This course will systematically cover skills required for critical appraisal of research reports, particularly applied to the field of psychosis. This include considerations of sampling, sample size, statistical analysis, presentation of data, potential confounders, selection of outcome variables, interpretation of findings, and generalization of results. The importance as well as limitations of the evidence-based approach towards clinical knowledge will be discussed. This course also provide an introduction to the varieties of investigational techniques that has been applied to study the nature, causes, outcome, and intervention of psychotic disorders, so that participant will develop a capacity for assessing research evidence, as well as to plan how to address questions encounter in real-life clinical situations using appropriate methodology. Approaches will include longitudinal studies, randomized controlled studies, explanatory studies, survey, and qualitative studies.

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## **ELECTIVE COURSES**

### **PSYS6002 Descriptive Psychopathology (6 credits)**

This course will introduce the nature of the psychotic symptoms, as well as common non-psychotic symptoms. It starts with principles and techniques of symptoms assessment using the phenomenological approach. Factors important to the process of assessment and ascertainment of symptoms, and their roles in diagnosis of psychotic disorders will be discussed. The definition and classification of key psychotic symptoms such as hallucinatory and delusional experiences will be enriched by discussions of their significance and key features. Related subjective phenomena (such as imagery, pseudohallucinations, over-valued ideas, confabulations) will also be explored and contrasted with core symptoms. Assessment of negative symptoms and language disorganization will also be discussed, with introduction to the use of common instruments, as well as reliability and validity issues in measuring these symptoms.

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### **PSYS6005 Neurocognitive dysfunctions in Psychosis (6 credits)**

This course explores neurocognitive impairments in psychosis. Starting with a basic introduction to cognitive functions and ways to study them, it reviews methodological issues and conceptual assumptions of using neuropsychological methods to characterize brain function impairments in psychosis. The nature of neurocognitive dysfunctions observed, including long term memory, working memory, semantic memory, selective attention, sustained attention, and executive functions will be studied. Implications of their impairments in psychotic disorders will be discussed. The course will cover how these functions were assessed, including issues in psychometrics and measurement principles (such as double dissociation and learning effects). The relationship between neurocognitive dysfunctions and functional outcome will be highlighted. This course also reviews the current use of cognitive theories to account for symptoms of psychosis, such as the inner speech theory for auditory hallucinations, failure of internal monitoring for passivity phenomena, the probabilistic reasoning theory of delusion formation.

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### **PSYS6006 Neurobiological processes in Psychosis (6 credits)**

This course considers the current understanding of neurobiological processes involved in psychosis. It reviews brain systems implicated in psychosis, their anatomy and physiology. The role of the dopamine system is explored, particularly in relation to the processing of salience information in the environment. Involvement of different brain systems in psychosis is also considered in the light of functional and structural neuroimaging studies. The use of neurocomputation modeling to explore information processing failures involved in psychosis will also be discussed.

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### **PSYS6007 Early intervention for Psychosis (6 credits)**

General concepts of indicated and preventative interventions in medicine will be introduced. The importance of a phase specific approach is highlighted with reference to distinctive cost benefit considerations in screening and intervention for different phases of a disorder. Principles of Early Intervention for Psychosis will be discussed; key concepts such as the critical period, duration of untreated psychosis, early detection, at risk mental state, phase specific intervention, and prodrome intervention will be discussed. The rationale behind each of these approaches will be discussed. Factors affecting duration of untreated psychosis and pathway to care will be explored, leading to a consideration of potentially modifiable factors. Specific implementation examples will be illustrated by case studies of Hong Kong and International early psychosis projects. Effectiveness in achieving these aims will be considered by evidence based empirical data.

### **PSYS6008 Pharmacological interventions for Psychosis (6 credits)**

This course will provide comprehensive understanding of pharmacological interventions for psychosis. After introduction of basic concepts in pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics, basic concepts in neurochemistry will be introduced. It will then consider the efficacy of conventional and atypical antipsychotics medications, with discussions on current understanding on the mechanisms of actions will be discussed. Neurotransmitter blocking profile of antipsychotic medications will be introduced. Side effects of antipsychotic medications, their classifications, and their underlying mechanisms will be studied. Assessments and monitoring of side effects, clinically, as well as using standard research instruments, will be covered. Use of antipsychotics in the treatment phase and the maintenance phase will be highlighted. The process of drug development and clinical trials, as well as potential biases and ways to avoid them, will be outlined to enable an ability to critically review evidence based information for particular medications. Patient's perception of medication treatment, as well as adherence behavior, will be discussed together with local empirical findings. Ways of improving medication adherence will be discussed.

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### **PSYS6009 Psychosocial interventions for Psychosis (6 credits)**

This course will introduce the principles and skills in common interventional strategies to improve outcome in psychotic disorders, including cognitive behavioural approach, life coaching, psychoeducation, cognitive remediation and supportive psychotherapy. The framework, potential indications, and evaluation of these approaches will be discussed. Emphasis will be placed on how to determine needs and provide optimal therapeutic input to patients in different clinical scenarios.

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### **PSYS6010 Specialized case intervention for Psychosis (6 credits)**

In this course the principles and practice of case management in psychotic disorders will be introduced. The importance of ongoing acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as adoption of optimal practice guidelines will be discussed. The role of case manager in the context of the multi-disciplinary care team will be discussed. This course will also cover specific practical skill involved in management of cases with psychotic disorder, such as engagement and risk assessment. The specialized case management for early psychosis cases will be considered particularly in terms of the critical period and the phase-specific needs for early psychosis patients. Specific skills such as community work, clinical records and communications will also be covered.

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### **PSYS6012 Psychosis and society: diagnosis, stigma, legal and ethical issues (6 credits)**

This course will start with a in-depth consideration of what constitute health and disease in mental health, and will clarify the distinction between psychotic symptoms and psychotic disorders. It will also consider the utility and costs of the current diagnostic systems. Two major diagnostic systems, the ICD and the DSM systems will be reviewed. Wider implications of the diagnostic systems in mediating research, legal, insurance, and pharmaceutical developments will be considered. The nature and impact of stigma and self-stigma will be explored, using examples from local data, the influence of culture and societal values are considered. The role and impact of the media will also be reviewed. Principles of ethics and the skills in practical application of ethical principles to specific clinical situations will be discussed. Particular issues such as confidentiality, compulsory treatment as well as mental capacity for decision making, will be

considered. The course will also discuss use of mental health status as defense in criminal cases and the principles involved. The skills in using a structured instrument for capacity assessment will be included in the course.

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### **PSYS6013 Advanced Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) for Psychosis (6 credit)**

This course aims to familiarize the students with the basic knowledge and skills in the field of Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) for psychosis. The basic knowledge will enable the students to have understanding of the principles of cognitive-behavioural therapy for psychosis and its related disorders. This course covers cognitive models of delusions, auditory hallucinations, negative symptoms, depression, anxiety symptoms and maintenance of low self-esteem in psychosis. Skills of building rapport and engagement with patients suffering from psychosis and CBT skills for distressing emotions and relapse prevention will also be covered.

*Pre-requisite: PSYS6009 Psychosocial interventions for Psychosis*

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### **PSYS6101 Capstone Project (15 credits)**

The Capstone Project will demonstrate the acquisition and synthesis of skills and competencies acquired in the curriculum. Each candidate will undertake a capstone project on a topic approved by the capstone supervisor and submit the capstone project report that contains 3,000 to 5,000 words.

The capstone project report should demonstrate 1 of the following 5 competencies below:

- To assemble, critically review, synthesize and interpret published literature (including grey literature) on a topic related to psychosis
  - To identify and collect or retrieve relevant information about the service gaps of patients with psychosis locally and internationally
  - To assess effectiveness and efficiency of resource use for mental health services or mental health promotion activity with particular emphasis on psychosis
  - To synthesize and reflect on patient's journey of recovery through active participation in running community activity in supporting patient
  - To collect and synthesize new knowledge in various aspects about psychosis and related illness in a research project
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