

The University of Hong Kong
Department of Psychology
An Overview of Independent Study in Psychology (PSYC4007)
(For students admitted in 2025/26 or thereafter)

(For psychology major) Students will each conduct an independent empirical research project. Regular attendance for research supervision is required. The project write-up should be about 8,000 to 10,000 words (exclusive of tables, bibliographies and appendices) and should follow the practice of communication in top psychology journals. Approval by Department Head is required for admissions into this course. Assessment: 100% coursework.

Prerequisites: PSYC2060 and 4 core courses from PSYC2009, PSYC2019, PSYC2020, PSYC2022, PSYC2007 or PSYC2051.

Objective

The course aims at preparing students to plan, conduct an independent empirical research project in Psychology. A thesis writing or an independent research project is usually required by postgraduate programme(s).

Supervision

You will do an individual research project under the supervision of an advanced research postgraduate student or a demonstrator.

The Project

This will be a good learning opportunity to aim at writing up a high standard and a publishable article. Your project should be written like a journal article including:

- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Abstract
- Acknowledgement (if needed)
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Reference

The grading criteria will be based on:

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| ● Knowledge of the research topic | 10% |
| ● Critical analysis | 20% |
| ● Potential contribution and significance | 10% |
| ● Design of study | 20% |
| ● Data analysis and presentation | 20% |
| ● Writing and organization | 20% |

Eligibility

A student needs to have an average GPA of 3.00 or above in advanced psychology courses (except PSYC2072, PSYC2073, PSYC2075 and PSYC2112) taken in HKU by the end of the 3rd year in the 4-year curriculum. Eligible students will be invited by the department at the beginning of July.

Application

A student, who wants to take this course in the final year, will need to submit an online [Research Area Ranking Form](#) **before the end of enrollment period in mid-August**. Please rank the order of research areas to indicate your preferences for supervisor assignment on the form. The results of supervisor assignment will be announced before the end of add/drop period in September. Late application will not be considered.

If you will participate in an exchange programme and want to take PSYC4007 in the same year, you have to seek prior approval by completing a [Special Approval Application form](#) for the special arrangement **before the end of enrollment period in mid-August**. Late application will not be considered.

Presentation of Research Project Proposal

Around the end of November or early December, each student has to present his/her research project proposal to a small group of fellow students and one member of the departmental teaching staff. Each presentation and discussion will last about 20 minutes. This offers each student an opportunity to get more input before finalizing the research design for data collection.

Ethics Application

All undergraduate research is required to undergo ethics review by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee. Applications should be submitted on or before **two weeks after the research proposal presentation**.

Students on overseas exchange and have applied to start doing their project in the 2nd semester, have to submit their application on or before **1st March**.

Failure to submit an ethics application will lead to a failure in the course. Please read the [Overview of Ethics Application](#) for more details.

Submission of IS report

1. Please submit your IS report to Moodle before the deadline.
 - a) Please submit as one single file in PDF format including all the chapters.
 - b) All covering pages, pictures, tables and charts must be included in appropriate position of the file.
 - c) There is no need to submit SPSS, Excel or other files separately.
2. The deadline of submission is **23:59, 15th April**.
3. The penalty for late submission is 2 marks for each calendar day, including Saturday, Sunday and public holidays providing that the student has informed his/her supervisor(s) regarding the late submission of thesis report at least 24 hours prior to the original submission deadline. If the student fails to inform his/her supervisor(s) about the late submission 24 hours prior to the original deadline but submits the thesis after the deadline, the late submission will result in an “F” grade.
4. Requests for deadline extension will not be permitted, except for medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances, students should submit a formal application for an extension of the thesis report submission deadline, with strong justifications supplemented by supporting document(s), to the supervisor(s) and the Chief Examiner for consideration and approval.
5. Make sure that due acknowledgement is given when referring or quoting from literature, books, webpages, essays or any other information sources.
6. The softcopy will be checked for plagiarism against a database of articles, books, webpages, and essays submitted by students at HKU and other universities. No credit will be given if the work contains plagiarized materials. Further penalties will also be applied, including a zero mark for the course. Plagiarism will also be reported to your Faculty for consideration of possible disciplinary action. Please be sure to read the website to know more about how to avoid plagiarism: <https://tl.hku.hk/plagiarism/how-to-avoid-plagiarism/>.
7. All raw data and research materials must be retained. The department may invite you for an oral examination in addition to the submission of the IS report.

Presentation of Research Project

In the revision week of the second semester, students will be invited to present his/her research project findings in the form of a poster presentation.

Standard Timeline for PSYC4007

Before the end of enrollment period in mid-August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students to complete the online <u>Research Area Form</u>. ● Late application will not be considered.
Before the end of add/drop period in September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Department to announce the results of supervisor assignment to students via email.
Late November or early December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students to present his/her research project proposal.
Two weeks after the research proposal presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students to submit <u>ethics application</u>.
After presentation and ethics approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students to work on his/her research project and write up the IS report.
23:59, 15 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>IS report submission deadline</u>
Revision week	Poster Presentation (Optional)