



PUAD 3001AED

Public Sector Management in Hong Kong

Course Guide

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Contents

Introduction	1
Purpose of this <i>Course Guide</i>	1
Course aims	2
Course learning outcomes	2
Course overview	3
Unit 1: Public administration and new public management	4
Unit 2: Public sector reform in developed countries	4
Unit 3: An overview of public sector reform in Hong Kong	4
Unit 4: Trading fund reform	4
Unit 5: Human resources reform	5
Unit 6: Accountability in the public sector: Hong Kong reforms in a global context	5
Course materials	6
Printed materials	6
Course assessment	7
Assignments	7
How to do your assignments	7
Tutors and assignments	8
Final examination and grading	9
Student support	11
Tutors and tutorials	11
Tutorials and supplementary lectures	11
Online support	11
Conclusion	12
A note about the developers of this course	12

Introduction

Welcome to *PUAD 3001AED Public Sector Management in Hong Kong*.

PUAD 3001AED Public Sector Management in Hong Kong describes and examines the structure and functions of the public sector and civil service system in Hong Kong. You will first be introduced to the theories of public sector management and the experience of public sector reform in advanced countries in the West. You will then be guided to conduct your own critical analysis of reforms in various public sector organisations in Hong Kong. Upon completion of the course, you should therefore be able to identify important implications of the overseas experience of public sector management for Hong Kong, as well as assess the possible benefits and problems with the prevailing reforms of public sector organisations in Hong Kong.

This course is a full-year, six-credit-unit, 3000-level course for students of Hong Kong Metropolitan University (HKMU) seeking a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree in Public Administration.

The study units, readings, activities and self-tests will help you master the topics over a period of around 32 weeks.

Purpose of this *Course Guide*

If you have taken other courses through HKMU, you should now be well aware of both the study skills required for distance learning and how HKMU courses are organised. It is still recommended, though, that you read this *Course Guide* thoroughly before looking at the study units or your textbook. If this is your first HKMU course, then please read this *Course Guide* very carefully.

This *Course Guide* tells you briefly what the course is about and how you can work your way through the material. It suggests the amount of time you will likely need to spend in order to complete the course and it will give you a general idea of when your assignments are due. For details on assignments, however, please refer to the *Assignment File* and, for information on due dates for work to be submitted, please refer to the *Presentation Schedule*.

In distance learning as practised by HKMU, the study units are prepared in the distance mode of education. You do not need to attend lectures face-to-face with the lecturer. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning: you can read and work through specially designed study material at your own pace and at times and places that suit *you* best.

Think of it as reading the lecture instead of hearing it from a lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might give you some reading to do, the study unit will tell you when to read your textbook or other material. In the same way that a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise, your study

units will include activities for you to do at appropriate points. Do them all, as these activities and questions give you the practice necessary to achieve the objectives of the course and to pass the examination. In the distance mode of education, the course materials replace the live lecture notes and interaction.

Course aims

The principal aim of *PUAD 3001AED* is to provide you with a sound foundation of knowledge in public sector management in Hong Kong. It also enables you to assess Hong Kong's public sector reforms in the light of the theoretical frameworks that have been used to understand the radical changes in the management of the public sector in major developed countries in the West.

Course learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- *review* the essence of and differences between the traditional model of public administration and the new public management model (L01);
- *assess* theoretical frameworks which underpin public sector reforms in Western democracies (L02);
- *evaluate* why public sector reforms were launched in Hong Kong both before and after the handover (L03);
- *analyse* public sector reform initiatives in Hong Kong (L04);
- *assess* impacts of new public management inspired public sector reforms on the Hong Kong Government's accountability to the public (L05); and
- *reflect* on the possible benefits and problems in introducing new public management model into the Hong Kong public sector (L06).

Course overview

A shorthand version of the course is shown in the following table.

Unit	Title	Weeks	Assessment activity (end of unit)
1	Public administration and new public management	5	
2	Public sector reform in developed countries	5	Assignment 1
3	An overview of public sector reform in Hong Kong	5	Assignment 2
4	Trading fund reform	5	
5	Human resources reform	5	Assignment 3
6	Accountability in the public sector: Hong Kong reforms in a global context	5	
	Revision	2	
	Total	32	

The study units summarize key issues, explain the relevant concepts and examples, and comment on related readings. Each unit contains activities to reinforce your learning of the issues under discussion. Moreover, the assignments will provide you with further feedback and will help you achieve the learning outcomes of the course.

The course is structured so that each unit builds upon previous units. Each unit contains a variety of techniques to help you study. The following points will help you to get the most out of the information presented:

- 1 Read each study unit carefully, just as you would pay attention throughout a whole lecture.
- 2 Use the unit guide to help direct you in what to read in the textbook and when to read it.
- 3 Test your comprehension and analytical skills by working through the activities that appear in the units. Don't skip ahead to find the answers — you will learn more effectively by doing the thinking yourself.
- 4 Complete the assignments on time.
- 5 Have a look at the other sources of information referred to in the units. These other sources might include websites, videos, and so on.

Each unit has specific learning outcomes, subject matter, activities, and a summary of the materials covered.

Unit 1: Public administration and new public management

This opening unit looks at the difference between the traditional model of public administration and new public management, and the trend of moving from the former to the latter. It discusses the theoretical bases of new public management (NPM) and offers criticisms of the NPM paradigm, with a view to establishing a foundation that can be drawn upon later when analysing Hong Kong's public sector management and reform.

Unit 2: Public sector reform in developed countries

This unit looks at public sector management in greater depth, using ideas for reform and the experience of reform in two developed countries, namely the United Kingdom and the United States, to illustrate major areas of public sector reform. It highlights in particular the themes of: (1) change of political environment, including governing ideology, and (2) financial concerns of government.

Unit 3: An overview of public sector reform in Hong Kong

Unit 3 gives a general overview of various reform measures implemented in Hong Kong's public sector since 1989. This trend of modern public sector reform in Hong Kong was initiated by a report entitled *Public Sector Reform* published by the then Finance Branch in March 1989. With reference to the public management theories examined in *Unit 1*, this unit analyses the nature of Hong Kong's public sector reform and relates it to the themes discussed in *Unit 2*.

Unit 4: Trading fund reform

This and the next units have as their foundation two chapters in the textbook in which the authors critically analyse two aspects of public sector reform in Hong Kong. This unit presents a thorough examination of the trading fund reform in Hong Kong. Under the *Trading Fund Ordinance* (1993), trading funds were set up in five departments, including the Companies Registry, the Lands Registry, the Office of Telecommunications Authority, the Post Office, and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. Trading fund departments would operate on a commercial basis and aim at recovering costs. The

implementation of and the merits and demerits of trading fund reform will be fully reviewed in this unit.

Unit 5: Human resources reform

This unit takes a similar approach to *Unit 4* but focuses on human resources management (HRM) in the civil service system in Hong Kong. This unit studies the concepts of HRM and personnel management in the public sector, and then reviews major civil service reform initiatives both before and after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). It also evaluates whether the ideas of new public management are applicable to reforming the civil service system, the backbone of Hong Kong's public sector.

Unit 6: Accountability in the public sector: Hong Kong reforms in a global context

Unit 6 is the final unit of this course. It draws all the themes examined in the previous units together and looks at Hong Kong public sector management, with which you will be familiar, in a wider international context. This unit examines the issue of accountability in the Hong Kong context and assesses the applicability of the new public management model to Hong Kong's public sector reform. At the end of this unit, an attempt will be made to evaluate whether the benefits of public sector reform have been oversold.

Course materials

In addition to this *Course Guide*, please ensure that you have the following important course components from HKMU:

- six study units (*don't panic* if you haven't received all six units in the first mailing you get from HKMU — it is normal to receive your study units in separate packages);
- assigned readings;
- a *Presentation Schedule* — online version only; and
- an *Assignment File* — online version only.

Printed materials

Set textbook

There is one required textbook for this course. The textbook is:

Cheung, A B L and Lee, J C Y (eds) (2001) *Public Sector Reform in Hong Kong: Into the 21st Century*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

Major reference:

Scott, I (2022) *Public Sector in Hong Kong*, 2nd edn, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Supplementary readings

There will be a small number of supplementary readings associated with each unit, but these readings are very important as they provide alternative insights into the complex organisational and societal issues addressed in this course.

Course assessment

The course assessment is designed to help you progress easily from the study units and the associated readings through to the assignments and examination. You will be required to apply the information and techniques learned during the course when doing the assignments. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the *Assignment File*. The non-assessed unit activities are not part of your formal assessment, but these should be done before progressing to the assignments.

Assignment File

Assignment details for this course are contained in your *Assignment File*. The nature of these assignments is described in the 'Assignments' section below. You are required to complete your assignments and upload them to the Online Learning Environment (OLE) in accordance with the due dates printed on the assignments.

Presentation Schedule

The *Presentation Schedule* is available on the OLE. In this schedule, you will see the times for your tutorials and supplementary lectures, and for your tutor's receipt of your assignments. Please note that you must submit all your assignments in time to reach your tutor by the dates shown in the *Assignment File*.

Assignments

There are three assignments altogether. You are advised to study the unit(s), including the activities (and their answers), before attempting to solve the problems or answer the questions in the assignments. More specific instructions will be found in the *Assignment File*.

You are required to finish all three assignments for tutors to grade. All of the three grades obtained on your assignments count for the continuous assessment portion of the course. Fifty per cent (50%) of your final grade will depend on your assignments.

How to do your assignments

For each assignment, please read through the question, and the instructions accompanying the question, in the *Assignment File*. Please read each question *carefully* and make sure you understand what is required before attempting it.

Once you have completed each assignment, you are required to upload it to the OLE. Please make sure that each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline. However, if you cannot finish your assignment on

time, *you must contact your tutor before the deadline to discuss the possibility of an extension*. Your tutor may grant you an extension of up to seven days. If more time is needed, you must obtain approval from the Course Coordinator or the Dean of the School of Arts and Social Sciences. No marks will be awarded for any late assignments without prior approval being obtained (i.e. unless the Course Coordinator or the Dean so approves).

You must be careful when you are using other references in the research for your assignments. *Plagiarism* is copying someone else's work or ideas without indicating the original source of the material. HKMU takes a very serious view of plagiarism and any student who commits plagiarism will be penalised. This applies just as much to using work of other students as it does to authors of books. However, you may include parenthetical references to the works you cite e.g. '(Cheung 2001, 29)'. You should include a section at the end of your assignment called 'References' where the full name, title, date and place of the publication appear. A way to cite a reference is:

Cheung, A B L (2001) 'Understanding public sector reforms: global trends and diverse agendas' in Cheung, A B L and Lee, J C Y (eds) (2001) *Public Sector Reform in Hong Kong: Into the 21st Century*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 29–53.

This citation technique is a normal and necessary part of social sciences. It is good training to learn to acknowledge your sources of information as you do your assignments. This citation system is part of intellectual honesty and is most important in academic literature. And, if you look at it another way, the fact that *you* write something and *someone else supports what you wrote* (the work or person you have cited) adds power to what you have said.

Tutors and assignments

Your assignments will be marked and commented on by your tutor, who will keep an eye on your progress and assist you if you encounter problems during the course. It is a good practice to keep a copy of each assignment submitted for marking, so that you can always refer the queries to the tutor during telephone conversations. Please contact your tutor should the following situations arise:

- 1 You do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings.
- 2 You have any difficulty with unit activities.
- 3 You have a question or problem with the assignments, or with your tutor's comments on or grading of an assignment.

Apart from self-study, tutorials will also be organised to assist you in your learning. Details of the dates, times and locations of the tutorials as well as the name and phone number of your tutor will be sent to you in due course.

It is strongly recommended that you attend all the tutorials, which will provide considerable assistance in your study of this course. Moreover, you will have the chance to meet fellow students and other distance learners who are studying at HKMU.

Final examination and grading

The final examination for this course will be of two hours' duration and counts for 50% of the total course grade. You should use the time between finishing the last unit and the examination to review the entire course. But, at the university level, it is wise to study in a planned, periodic way well before the final exam. Mature and hardworking students in the distance mode of education may need to be flexible in both study habits and time. You might find it useful to review your self-tests, assignments and your tutor's comments on them before sitting for the examination. You will be advised of examination arrangements after you send in your examination registration card.

The final examination covers information from all parts of the course and will be in a form you have already experienced in assignments. The examination will not contain tricky questions. That would not be consistent with the clear, open approach HKMU takes in helping its learners succeed in their studies. To help you with your preparation for the final exam, we will send you a Specimen Examination Paper towards the end of the presentation. The Specimen Examination Paper shows you the format and the style of the real examination paper.

The following table shows you once again how marks are allocated to the assessment items (assignments) and to your final examination. In order to pass this course, you must pass both the assignments component *and* the examination (for details, please refer to the *Student Handbook*).

Assessment type	Marks
Three assignments The three assignments will include essay writing questions.	Assignments 1–3: 50% <i>(Assignment 1: 10%; Assignments 2 and 3: each worth 20%)</i>
Examination The two-hour examination will comprise short and essay-type questions.	50%
Total	100%
You must obtain a score of 40% in the continuous assessment component and a score of 40% on the final examination to pass the course; that is, you must pass <i>both</i> assessment components. The overall passing mark is 40% or greater.	

Student support

Tutors and tutorials

Hong Kong Metropolitan University prides itself on the support given to its distance learners — that means to you! While you may think you are studying on your own, it doesn't need to be that way. You can be in regular contact with your tutor and, once you've met them in the first tutorial, you can be in contact with your fellow students. Make a point, when you meet a fellow student, to exchange phone numbers and even e-mail addresses. Then you are well on the way to developing a learning network of your own.

Tutorials and supplementary lectures

Seven two-hour tutorials and two two-hour supplementary lectures will be provided in support of *PUAD 3001AED Public Sector Management in Hong Kong*. You will be notified of the dates, times and locations, together with the name, phone number and telephone tutoring hours of your tutor, as soon as you are assigned a tutorial group.

Tutorials are not lectures. They are designed to encourage *group discussion* and *interaction*. They provide you with opportunities to discuss any problem you encounter in the study units with your tutor and colleagues.

Online support

The HKMU School of Arts and Social Sciences will maintain a simple webpage for the course, which should provide links to the main government sites and other data sources relevant to this course. Email tutoring support should also be provided where appropriate.

Conclusion

The delivery of public sector services and the way in which the public sector is undergoing reform have a profound impact on the lives of all citizens. Understanding what the public sector in Hong Kong does, how it is managed, and how reforms to the public sector are implemented should therefore be of concern to all of us in Hong Kong. The changing role of government and the radical changes which this has led to in the nature and tasks of the public service make this subject even more topical.

In order to understand the content of this course, you must analyse the course materials and apply the concepts learned.

Good luck with the course. We think you will find it an interesting one, and one that gives you a greater understanding of an important aspect of the society in which you live.

A note about the developers of this course

The first unit was developed by Dr Dennis Woodward, who obtained his BA (Hons) and PhD from the Flinders University of South Australia. He is currently senior lecturer and head of politics in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. The second unit was developed by Dr Percy L T Lui. He is currently a member of staff in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Hong Kong Metropolitan University (HKMU). Dr Lui has been involved in designing and teaching university courses in politics and public administration. He is currently the Programme Leader of the Public Administration programme (distance learning mode).

Units 3 to 6 were developed by a team of three course developers led by Mr Leung Man Kit in Hong Kong. All of them are civil servants in the Hong Kong SAR Government and hold the advanced degree of Master of Public Administration from The University of Hong Kong.