Comparison is a fundamental tool for all forms of enquiry. When applied to education in an international setting, it assists in identification of factors which shape education systems, processes and outcomes, and instruments for improvement. The comparisons in this specialism will be framed by theories and understanding of the forces of globalisation. These forces bring benefits for many people, but can also have negative dimensions. This specialism will examine forces of continuity and change and their implications for educators. It will also focus on the nature of development in an international context and on the role of education in the processes of development. This will include analysis of all levels of formal education (early childhood to higher education), and various types of non-formal education. It will include particular reference to UNESCO’s work in the context of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Who would benefit from this specialism?
- Teachers and educators with an interest in comparative education and in international educational development in the context of an increasingly globalized world.
- Persons who have completed their undergraduate studies in related themes and who are keen to proceed with deeper study of links between education and development
- Future or current development workers (NGOs, international organisations, bilateral organisations etc.) with an interest in education and capacity building.

Mode of study:
To be available on part-time and full-time mode (for 2-year part-time study or 1-year full-time study)

Outline of four Specialist Courses:

Course 1: Themes and approaches in the field of comparative education
This course will introduce students to the history and nature of comparative education as a field of enquiry. It will note the principal dimensions of the field as conventionally defined in the literature on the topic, and will consider some variations in emphasis in scholarly communities and other actors in different parts of the world. The course will also consider the nature and contents of some key vehicles for publishing comparative education research, including journals, books and reports by international agencies. The course will conclude with an overview of the nature and directions of the field.
Assessment: 80% coursework; 20% presentation

**Course 2: Addressing the global-local nexus in education**
This course will develop students’ understandings of both local and global education policies and practices. Adopting a ‘glocalisation’ perspective, it will stress a new localism that stands as an act of resistance against globalisation and rootlessness to reclaim the significance of the local in the global age. Drawing on local experiences and phenomena as a source of learning, this course will introduce students to an understanding of education that is conscious of local places to enable them to be inducted into the knowledge and patterns of behaviour associated with responsible community engagement.
Assessment: 80% coursework; 20% presentation

**Course 3: Education for Sustainable Development**
This course examines education for sustainable development (ESD) from a comparative perspective. First, the course raises the question what sustainable development means in practice within economic, environmental, and social and cultural domains, and traces the history of the concept. Next, the course considers education for sustainable development within developed and developing contexts. In Hong Kong and many other high-income societies, education for sustainable development is often related to environmental education, but in low-income contexts (especially in Africa and Asia) it also commonly refers to education that meets local social needs and is supported at the local level. A gap can sometimes be identified in these latter contexts, between “education for sustainable development” as a global reform concept, versus “sustainable educational development,” from a local perspective. In this course, students will have the opportunity to analyse a variety of case studies of education for sustainable development, and to understand the ways in which concepts may be developed and applied in a range of contexts.
Assessment: 65% coursework; 15% presentation; 25% case-study analysis

**Course 4: Critical issues in educational reform**
This course will enable students to employ theoretical perspectives and empirical research findings to better understand critical issues in contemporary educational reform in East Asia and elsewhere. The course will address the nature and evolution of globalization as a key context in which contemporary educational reform takes place. Identifying links between globalization and educational reform, the course will provide a set of cases for developing students’ understanding and knowledge of educational reform from a comparative perspective. Assessment: 20% essay; 80% project and debate.

In addition to four specialist courses, students will complete:
- a research methods course “Methods of Research and Enquiry” (12 credits); plus
- *either* an option of one elective course and a DISSERTATION (18 credits), *or* an option of three elective courses and a PROJECT by Independent Study (6 credits each).