The University of Hong Kong  
Faculty of Education  

Master of Education programme (MEd)  

Teaching of Science in an International Context  
(NEW specialism)  

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This specialism is designed for researchers, educators and pre-service or in-service Science teachers in primary or secondary schools, especially those from direct subsidy scheme schools, mainstream schools and international schools, who want to excel in research and teaching of Science in local as well as various global contexts. The programme caters for practitioners in the teaching of the science curriculum in Hong Kong, making reference to the teaching of other curricula, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB), GCSE etc.

Who would benefit from this specialism?  
i) Science Educators: Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, and mainstream schools and from international schools in Hong Kong; ii) Local and mainland university graduates who intend to work in international schools; iii) Serving and pre-serving science teachers from Asian-Pacific area and all over the world; iv) Science teachers in either primary, secondary or tertiary sectors, and other educators who are directly involved with science education; (v) The specialism also provides an important foundation for students who would like to carry out a PhD or EdD study in the field of science education.

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

Outline of four Specialist Courses:

Course 1: The Philosophical, Social and Cultural Aspects of Science Education  
This course addresses various epistemological perspectives of science, the intricate relationships between science, technology and society, and the roles of representations in conceptual development. It explores the relationship between these features that characterize science as a distinctive discipline, the aims of science education, and the nature of science teaching and learning. This course also investigates students’ learning of scientific contents in out-of-school settings, and their different approaches of dealing with socio-scientific issues.

Course 2: Teaching and Learning in Science  
This course gives an overview of theories and research on the teaching and learning of science. It begins with an overview of student common difficulties in learning science. Finding in children’s understanding of science over the school years will be considered in light of a range of learning theories. Issues relating to approaches to teaching science including use of analogies, diagrams, modelling and mental visualization will be discussed. In addition,
examples of investigation of teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge, beliefs, professional noticing, assessment related to the teaching and learning of science will be discussed.

Course 3: Integrating IB Philosophy into the teaching of Chinese Language, Mathematics and Science
This course includes an in-depth exploration into how to integrate IB DP philosophy in curriculum design, teaching and learning, assessment and research. Students will be guided on designing and refining Chinese language/Mathematics/Science curriculum that reflects the overall IB DP philosophy and learner profile and at the same time aligns with the Chinese language/Mathematics/Science curriculum guides. Students will also be engaged in exploring various pedagogies and technological tools to integrate IB philosophy and learner profiles in language and culture instruction. Students will explore TOK, CAS and Extended Essay and Chinese language/Mathematics/Science education. Furthermore, the course will also enhance students’ understanding on how to reflect IB philosophy, cross-disciplinary application and learner profile in assessment design and how to design assessments that reflect IB subject matter specific assessment criteria. In this course, students will not only understand the integration of IB philosophy in various aspects of instruction, but also generate a series of research questions around the integration of IB philosophy in instruction.

Course 4: Research and Science Teaching Practice in Classrooms
In order to integrate knowledge with real school experience, this course provides opportunity for students with experience in application of IB Philosophy and science teaching in classrooms aside from getting to understand the theories on science teaching and learning. The aim is to familiarize students with day-to-day teaching practice at international minded schools in Hong Kong, by engaging students in actual teaching at international schools in Hong Kong, to identify and tackle students’ learning difficulties. This course will be a strong theoretical and practical emphasis on the development of students' research and teaching ability on science teaching and learning in classrooms. During their school experience, student-teachers are required to identify their students’ learning difficulty; using appropriate theories to analyze it; design and conduct a small-scale action research with the application of suitable teaching strategies to deal with the identified learning difficulties. The student-teachers will conduct classroom observation, and compile a self-directed portfolio based on data collected and experience encountered in their action research. This portfolio contains a journal, lesson plans and teaching materials developed by the student-teachers during the practicum, self-reflections on lessons taught and feedback from the students.

Outline of Science Education Elective Courses:

Course: Science Curriculum and Assessment
This course discusses the history of the science curriculum and the long-running debate between science education as preparation for professional practice and science education for all. Current science curriculum initiatives overseas and forces shaping the science curriculum in Hong Kong will be examined. Consideration relating to a smooth transition within science education through different learning stages and the move towards greater integration between various science disciplines will be discussed. Philosophies underpinning movements such as STSE, and Scientific Literacy will be examined. Assessment in science education will also be examined in the contexts of assessing learning in public examinations and international comparative studies such as the TIMSS and PISA.
Course: Trends and Issues of Science Education

This course examines major trends and issues in science education with particular reference to the following issues: gender, sociocultural perspective, language issues (teaching science to second language learners, language across the curriculum), nature of talk through different theoretical perspectives (between teacher and students, between students and students), learning progression of key scientific ideas at different levels of study, attitude towards science and school science, transition between primary and secondary school science (in terms of, e.g., language and conceptual demands). It also examines the role of mobile digital technology in shaping the goals and means of developing science instructions and building learning environments.

In addition to four specialist courses, students will also have to 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).