Young people today are facing many challenges. They go through the turbulent years of adolescence and emerge into adulthood under much pressure. Many feel stranded, confused and alienated and do not feel they have the resources to progress, resulting in frustration and failure. This specialism examines important issues, namely the power of media in their lives, the society and culture influencing their development, life education policy and curriculum, and issues of education from an interdisciplinary and global perspective in theory and in application. The first course looks at how the implementation of media literacy education can help students adapt to this developing digital world global village. The second examines different theories, approaches and issues concerning life education for adolescents and youths. The third looks at other factors in society, culture, and youth development which can develop students’ talents, values and leadership skills to more effectively promote and sustain a democratic, equitable, and innovative society. The final specialist course examines theories, models, practices, and issues of sex education policy and curriculum in Hong Kong and elsewhere. The four courses do not merely discuss issues affecting youths; more importantly, this specialism examines what could be done to empower them to live life in an age of turbulence.

**Who would benefit from this specialism?**
Our intended participants are from different fields such as school teachers, private tutors, social workers, education and training officers from NGOs, youth centres, and big organizations, and parents in general and those who serve in the Parent-Teacher Association in particular, who are interested to develop competence in the understanding of youth and education. An in-depth knowledge of youth studies will enhance the graduates' professional competence and competitive power in their field to teach, conduct research, and take a leadership role in planning and administering issues related to youth studies and education.

**Mode of study:**
The specialism is available in part-time and full-time modes (for 2-year (up to 4-year) part-time study or 1-year full-time study).

**Outline of the four Specialist Courses:**

**Course 1: Youth and Media Literacy (6 credits)**

Media is significant in the context of globalization and education reform where the emphasis is on adapting students to the developing digital world global village and enhancing students creativity in a knowledge-based society. Research shows that young people under the age of 25 are the most active group in media usage. To empower youth with the understanding of media and its influences, the promotion of media literacy education in schools has become a worldwide movement in the past few decades. This course introduces students to the understanding of the development and implementation of media literacy education in various countries in
general, and Hong Kong in particular, with respect to curriculum, policy, literacy, and learning. The role of media literacy education will be studied in depth, in relation to moral and ethics education, civic education, and in nurturing students’ creativity and critical thinking skills.

Course 2: Life Education for Adolescents and Young People (6 credits)

In a changing society, adolescents and young people are increasingly puzzled by the meaning of life. The early 21st century has witnessed four major rising trends among adolescents and young people: bullying and violence, substance misuse, self-harm, and suicide. Society and schools are urged to help adolescents and young people to cope with these life problems. The course examines different theories, approaches and issues of life education for them. With particular reference to Hong Kong, it aims to help participants (a) review life education policy and curriculum; (b) examine phenomena and theories of physical and cyber bullying, self-harm, substance use, and teen and youth suicide; (c) equip their students with knowledge, skills and attitudes to confront these four problems; (d) develop measures to create a safe and caring learning place for adolescents and young people; and (e) promote life education programs to help them foster positive and healthy perspectives and good habits to cope with life. Real school cases in Hong Kong will be discussed in class.

Course 3: Society, Culture, and Youth Development (6 credits)

The focus of this course is the interaction between people, societies, cultures and environments over time. This course prepares students to develop an understanding of the important factors influencing adolescents’ development and their perceptions of the world. We shall draw on cross-disciplinary concepts from areas such as anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, history, and sociology. The course provides the knowledge related to the study of culture and society and youth development so that students may develop their talents, expertise, values and leadership skills to more effectively promote and sustain a democratic, equitable, and innovative society.

Course 4: School Policy and Curriculum for Sex Education (6 credits)

The course aims to help participants critically examine theories, models, practices, and issues of sex education policy and curriculum in Hong Kong and elsewhere. It also discusses important issues confronting teens and young people, including sexual identity and attitudes toward sexuality and sex, dating and breakup, concerns about sexual behaviors, and sexual harassment and abuse. The course finally examines controversial issues such as pre-marital sex, homosexuality, the psychology of displaying naked images, teacher-student attraction and professional integrity, and compensated dating and materialism. Real school cases from Hong Kong would be discussed in class.

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 (6 credits each).