

The University of Hong Kong
Faculty of Education

Master of Education (MEd)
Comparative and Global Studies in Education and Development

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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 understandings of the forces of globalisation. These forces bring benefits for many people but can also have negative dimensions. The specialism will examine forces of continuity and change and the 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?

Applicants seeking understanding of the forces that shape education systems and processes around the world. Some are likely to be teachers; others are likely to have experience or seek work in governments, NGOs, and corporate and other organizations' offices for sustainability or internationalization. As with existing cohorts, we will seek diversity in nationalities, and experiential learning through international work and educational exchange.

Mode of study:

The specialism is available in 1-year full-time and 2-year part-time modes of study.

Outline of the four specialist courses:

Course 1: Addressing the Global-local Nexus in Education (6 credits)

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.

Course 2: Critical Issues in Educational Reform (6 credits)

This course examines different themes, contexts, and theories regarding educational reform from an international comparative and historical perspective. The course begins with an exploration of the concepts of policy and reform, aligned with their emergence vis à vis the development of schooling and education. This will be associated with what knowledge is, what knowledge is taught, and where and how it is taught. The main idea underlines that knowledge is not a taken-for-granted matter, but rather an interpreted and constructed phenomenon. A discussion on knowledge as a public and private good emerges to better

articulate the discussion on globalisation, privatisation, and choice, which have been at the forefront of educational policy and reform in the past two decades. This sets the foundations to discuss policy design and implementation and the role of agents in both processes. Issues of educational quality, equity, efficiency, accountability, and planning will be discussed, focusing on many realities across the world.

Course 3: Education for Sustainable Development (6 credits)

This course examines education and sustainable development (ESD) from a comparative perspective. The course raises the question what sustainable development means in practice within economic, environmental, political, and cultural domains, and traces the history of the concept. Additionally, the course considers education in relation to sustainable development in a variety of geographical contexts. In Hong Kong and many other high-income societies, education for sustainable development is often related to environmental education. However, in low-income contexts (especially in Africa and Asia) it commonly refers to education that helps to meet local social, political, and economic needs and empowers local people and communities. A gap can be identified in these latter contexts, between “education for sustainable development” as a global concept, versus “sustainable educational development” from a local perspective. Students will analyse a variety of approaches to education for sustainable development to understand the ways in which concepts can be developed and applied in practice in a range of contexts.

Course 4: Themes and Approaches in the Field of Comparative Education (6 credits)

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 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.

In addition to four specialist courses, students will also have to complete:

- The compulsory core course Educational Issues and Research (6 credits);
- Three elective courses (6 credits each); and
- An option of a professional portfolio (12 credits) or a research project (12 credits).