

REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY (MExpArtsTh)

(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)

These regulations apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Expressive Arts Therapy in the academic year 2026-27 and thereafter.

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to The University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

Admission requirements

MEXAT 1. To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Expressive Arts Therapy, candidates

- (a) shall comply with the General Regulations and the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
- (b) shall hold a Bachelor's degree of this University, preferably in a field related to social sciences, healthcare, education or the arts disciplines; or a qualification of equivalent standard from this University or another comparable institution accepted for this purpose;
- (c) for a candidate who is seeking admission on the basis of a qualification from a university or comparable institution outside Hong Kong of which the language of teaching and/or examination is not English, shall satisfy the University English language requirement applicable to higher degrees as prescribed under General Regulation G2(b);
- (d) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required;
- (e) shall submit an arts portfolio to demonstrate proficiency in using at least one arts form (visual art, music, dance, drama, poetry); and
- (f) shall preferably have had a minimum of three years of post-qualification experience in the relevant fields.

MEXAT 2. An application for exemption from the above requirements shall be considered on a case by case basis.

Qualifying examination

MEXAT 3.

- (a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidates' formal academic ability or their ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent and may include a project report.
 - (b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.
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Award of degree

MEXAT 4. To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Expressive Arts Therapy, candidates

- (a) shall comply with the General Regulations and the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and
- (b) shall complete the curriculum as prescribed in the syllabuses and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below.

Period of study

MEXAT 5. The curriculum shall normally extend over two academic years of full-time study; or three academic years of part-time study. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration of three academic years of full-time study or five academic years of part-time study, unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty.

Exemption

MEXAT 6. Candidates may be exempted, with or without special conditions attached, from the requirement prescribed in the regulations and syllabuses governing the curriculum with the approval of the Board of the Faculty, except in the case of a capstone experience. Approval for exemption of a capstone experience may be granted only by the Senate with good reasons. Candidates who are so exempted must replace the number of exempted credits with courses of the same credit value.

Completion of curriculum

MEXAT 7. To complete the curriculum, candidates shall satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula and follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed assignments and assessments of:

- (a) 10 compulsory courses;
- (b) 2 elective courses;
- (c) 500 to 750 hours of practicum; and
- (d) a dissertation in accordance with MEXAT 8 as prescribed in the syllabuses.

Dissertation

MEXAT 8. Subject to the provision of Regulation MEXAT 7(d), candidates shall complete a dissertation in the final academic year of study. Candidates shall submit the title of dissertation for approval by March 31 of the final academic year of study and the dissertation shall be presented by not later than August 1 of the final academic year of study. The length of dissertation should not exceed 20,000 words. Candidates shall submit a statement that the dissertation represents their own work undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree.

Assessment

MEXAT 9.

- (a) Candidates shall be assessed for each of the courses for which they have registered, and assessment may be conducted in any combination of continuous assessment of coursework, written examinations and/or any other assessable activities. Only passed courses will earn credits.
- (b) Students will be assessed by multiple assessment methods, including continuous and terminal assessments. Assessment methods will take the form of class presentations, examinations, projects, term papers, and coursework assignments. A final performance evaluation will be used to assess the practicum placement. To complete the curriculum, candidates shall satisfy the examiners in the examination of courses as prescribed in the curriculum.

MEXAT 10. Candidates shall not be permitted to repeat a course for which they have received a passing grade for the purpose of upgrading.

MEXAT 11. Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners at their first attempt, in not more than half of the number of courses to be examined, whether by means of written examination papers or coursework assessment, during any of the academic years of study, may be permitted to make up for the failed course(s) in the following manner:

- (a) undergoing re-assessment/re-examination in the failed course to be held no later than the end of the following semester (not including the summer semester); or
- (b) re-submitting failed coursework, without having to repeat the same course of instruction; or
- (c) repeating the failed course by undergoing instruction and satisfying the assessments; or
- (d) for elective courses, taking another course in lieu and satisfying the assessment requirements.

MEXAT 12. Candidates who have not satisfactorily completed any prescribed practicum placement may be permitted to undertake an additional period of practicum placement to be specified by the Head of the Department. Candidates who are not permitted to undertake the additional period of practicum placement or have failed to satisfy the examiners at their second attempt may be required to discontinue their studies.

MEXAT 13. Subject to the provision of Regulation MEXAT 8, candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory dissertation may be permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation within an approved specified period.

MEXAT 14. Candidates who are unable because of their illness to be present at the written examination of any course may apply for permission to present themselves at a supplementary examination of the same course to be held before the beginning of the following academic year. Any such application shall be made on a form prescribed within seven calendar days of the first day of the candidate's absence from any examination. Any supplementary examination shall be part of that academic year's examinations, and the provision made in the regulations for failure at the first attempt shall apply accordingly.

MEXAT 15. There shall be no appeal against the results of examinations and all other forms of assessment.

MEXAT 16. Candidates who

- (a) are not permitted to present themselves for re-assessment/re-examination in any failed course(s) or to repeat the failed course(s) or take another course in lieu under Regulation MEXAT 11; or
 - (b) have failed to satisfy the examiners at a second attempt in any course(s); or
 - (c) are not permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation under Regulation MEXAT 13; or
 - (d) have failed to submit a satisfactory new or revised dissertation under Regulation MEXAT 13; or
 - (e) have exceeded the maximum period of registration may be required to discontinue their studies.
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Grading System

MEXAT 17. Individual courses should be graded according to the following grading system:

<i>Grade</i>		<i>Standard</i>	<i>Grade Point</i>
A+	}	Excellent	4.3
A			4.0
A-			3.7
B+	}	Good	3.3
B			3.0
B-			2.7
C+	}	Satisfactory	2.3
C			2.0
C-			1.7
D+	}	Pass	1.3
D			1.0
F		Fail	0

Classification of awards

MEXAT 18. On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diploma.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY (MExpArtsTh)

These syllabuses apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Expressive Arts Therapy in the academic year 2026-27 and thereafter.

PURPOSE

The Department of Social Work and Social Administration offers a postgraduate curriculum leading to the degree of Master of Expressive Arts Therapy. The curriculum is designed to train students to be highly qualified practitioners of expressive arts therapy in the fields of healthcare, education, and community development. The curriculum shall extend over not less than two or more than three academic years of full-time study; or not less than three and not more than five academic years of part-time study, inclusive of intervening vacations.

EXEMPTION

Candidates may be granted exemption of up to 2 compulsory courses in recognition of studies completed in related areas. Exemption will only be considered in special circumstances and each application for exemption will be considered on its own merit. Candidates with exemption granted are required to take an additional elective course to replace the exempted compulsory course to meet the degree requirements.

CURRICULUM

Candidates are required to complete 10 compulsory courses (6 credits each) and 2 elective courses (6 credits each), a practicum (36 credits) and a dissertation (12 credits), with a total of 120 credits. Each course comprises the equivalent of at least thirty-six contact hours.

Candidates may be approved to enroll up to 2 courses offered by other postgraduate curriculum of the Faculty as substitute of elective courses in this curriculum. The substitute must be relevant to expressive arts therapy and comprise the equivalent of at least thirty-six contact hours.

In addition, candidates are required to complete a practicum and a dissertation. They are expected to devote 500 to 750 hours to the practicum and present a final progress report.

Compulsory courses

Candidates shall complete the following courses:

Expressive Arts Therapy

- EXAT7001. Theory and principles of expressive arts therapy (6 credits)
- EXAT7003. Community application of expressive arts (6 credits)
- EXAT7004. Working with individuals in expressive arts therapy (6 credits)
- EXAT7005. Working with groups in expressive arts therapy (6 credits)
- EXAT7006. Professional practice and ethics in expressive arts therapy (6 credits)

General Helping Professions

- EXAT7105. Assessment in clinical setting (6 credits)
- EXAT7106. Human development and expressive arts therapy (6 credits)
- EXAT7107. Micro-skills in counselling and psychotherapy (6 credits)
- MSBH6106. Abnormal psychology (6 credits)
- MSBH7005. Scientific inquiry and research methods in behavioral health (6 credits)

Elective courses

Candidates shall complete two of the following courses:

- EXAT7100. Special topics in expressive arts therapy (6 credits)
- EXAT7101. Fundamentals of music therapy (6 credits)
- EXAT7102. Fundamentals of drama therapy (6 credits)
- EXAT7103. Fundamentals of art therapy (6 credits)
- EXAT7104. Fundamentals of dance and movement therapy (6 credits)
- SOWK6206. Play therapy (6 credits)
- SOWK6259. Contemporary perspectives on death, dying and bereavement (6 credits)
- SOWK6274. Theories and practices in positive psychology and strength-based interventions (6 credits)

(Note: not all elective courses will necessarily be offered in a given year.)

Capstone Experience Courses (Compulsory)

Candidates shall complete the following courses:

- EXAT7020. Expressive arts therapy practicum and supervision (36 credits)
 - EXAT7022. Dissertation (12 credits)
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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Compulsory Courses

EXAT7001. Theory and principles of expressive arts therapy (6 credits)

As the introductory course in expressive arts therapy, students will be immersed in the development, history and overview of expressive arts therapy. Students will be grounded in the foundational theories of the field by learning to appreciate and integrate a diverse array of psychotherapy, philosophical, spiritual and educational concepts. This initial course will engage students in a critical reflection of the ancient roots and more contemporary influences on the place of the arts in health and medicine to understand the philosophical underpinnings that guide expressive arts therapist. They will come to see the place of expressive arts therapy in the overall context of health promotion, educational achievement and community development, and response to current social and environmental challenges.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7003. Community application of expressive arts (6 credits)

Expressive arts therapists frequently find themselves working in diverse settings across healthcare, educational and community sectors. Astute practitioners often need to adapt to various work cultures while maintaining the core principles of the profession. This course primarily focuses on essential questions practitioners need to address when applying expressive arts therapy to various workplaces—such as clinics, hospitals, schools, and community centers. In addition to setting considerations, expressive arts therapists need to become culturally aware and competent to effectively work with clients from socially and culturally diverse populations. Students will learn how to conceptualize and formulate objectives, interventions, and evaluation methods to match the needs of various populations within different settings.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7004. Working with individuals in expressive arts therapy (6 credits)

The main task of the expressive arts therapist is to apply the transformative process of creativity to the benefit of a client. At the root of successful expressive arts therapy is to foster empathic relationships, empower client strengths, nurture creativity and identify possible obstacles to engaging with clients. The focus of this course is learning the soft skills on how to form and sustain a therapeutic relationship with an individual in expressive arts therapy. Students will learn the stages of the expressive arts therapy process that include beginning/introductory, middle/working, and ending/termination stages, as well as, how those stages affect intervention design. Major emphases will be on facilitating active imagination and denote the importance of embodied empathy whilst engaging with a client in what constitutes the triangular relationship among the expressive arts therapist, client and art product to further treatment. Client-centered processes will form the foundation for engaging clients and inform culturally-competent, phenomenological based methods of interpretation and responsive art making. Cultivating self-awareness and retaining an accepting stance for clients, students will examine the intricacies and benefits of expressive arts therapy, and how the intimate therapeutic relationship coupled with the creative process can help to bring about change with individual clients. Students will examine how an expressive arts therapist engages with individuals in order to prepare them for practicum with emphasis on in-class skills lab tutorials to ground key concepts, theories, and techniques.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7005. Working with groups in expressive arts therapy (6 credits)

Group dynamics bring their own challenges and opportunities to expressive arts therapy. Members of a group can influence creative expression in subtle or overt ways. The carefully attuned group expressive arts therapist has strong core knowledge in theories of group dynamics and how artistic process affects them. Particular attention will be paid to how to help group members provide verbal and arts-based feedback to each other within a safe and secure environment. Considerations for how to effectively facilitate group expressive arts therapy in terms of goals, structure, and outcomes will be further discussed. Learning to discern and identify systems and patterns, students will gain competency for how to further group process through the intentional application of expressive arts therapy. Specific strategies for engaging unwilling or disruptive clients will also be included.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7006. Professional practice and ethics in expressive arts therapy (6 credits)

Expressive arts therapists constantly have to act in ways that take into account what is best for their clients, agencies, and society. When sessions do not go according to prescribed plans, there is a need to make decisions in ambiguous situations when multiple courses of action may be considered beneficial or detrimental depending on the context. By analyzing the codes of ethics of leading expressive arts therapy associations alongside the codes of practices of other disciplines that guide practice in Hong Kong, students will understand how to use them to inform their practice. There will be specific emphasis on core matters related to expressive arts therapy, such as confidentiality, duty to warn and protect, progress notes, storing artwork, and maintaining records. The course will encourage students to think critically, while acting intentionally, especially in the face of needing to adhere to multiple sets of ethical codes and in various work settings.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7105. Assessment in clinical setting (6 credits)

The course equips students with a range of knowledge and essential skills in conducting clinical assessments. The course introduces students to the principles and techniques they require for history-taking, conducting mental state examinations, deriving evidence-based, multidimensional case formulations, and deploying strategic, holistic treatment plans for common mental health issues. To enhance students' awareness and critical appraisal of current assessment issues in clinical settings, professional issues related to assessment in clinical settings will be discussed with reference to up-to-date evidence in the field. Going beyond the medical model of assessment, this course adopts a systemic, bio-psycho-social perspective on mental health issues by considering factors predisposing, precipitating, and perpetuating the presenting problems. In addition, to broaden the students' understanding of clinical assessment, state-of-the-art and evidence-based assessment practices using different art modalities will also be introduced.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7106. Human development and expressive arts therapy (6 credits)

This course examines psychological and artistic development across the life span from infancy to old age. Individual, social, cultural, and familial conditions affecting growth at different stages in the life cycle are integrated with how expressive arts therapy supports developmental tasks. The particular foci will be on current thinking in the field of developmental psychology.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7107. Micro-skills in counselling and psychotherapy (6 credits)

One of the important tenets of expressive arts therapy involves a skills set that enables meaningful and purposeful dialogue between a therapist and a client. Polishing a solid set of essential skills is one of the ingredients of an effective clinical practice. This course examines verbal and non-verbal communication and the basic micro-skills in counselling and psychotherapy to understand how the role of these skills can enable a process of change for clients. Students will be equipped to apply the knowledge of such micro-skills into future clinical practice in expressive arts therapy. Students are encouraged to participate actively in group discussion and role-play. Emphasis is placed on the cultivation of critical, and reflective thoughts through reading, discussion and experiential learning.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MSBH6106. Abnormal psychology (6 credits)

This graduate level course will discuss past and current research regarding theoretical, clinical and experimental perspectives of the study of psychological abnormality. Emphasis is on classification, etiology, assessment and accepted treatment of major categories of mental disorders described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association, Version 5. In addition, the course also aims to provide an appreciation for the incomplete nature of our understanding of mental illness. A variety of in-class exercises – including small group discussions and video tapes are used to understand mental disorders. Controversial and culturally-relevant issues, especially with reference to the Chinese context, in abnormal psychology will also be explored and discussed. Case examples will be shared to enhance students' learning.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MSBH7005. Scientific inquiry and research methods in behavioral health (6 credits)

This course covers the basic principles of research methods in behavioral science and equips students with the basic knowledge to become critical consumers of scientific literature. It covers basic quantitative and qualitative research methods and research ethics using examples of real-life research projects. The latest development and trends in social science research methods and specific approaches in behavioral health will also be introduced. Students are expected to acquire the basic skills in offering critical appraisals on others' research work and drafting a research proposal in which classroom learning can be applied to practical examples in behavioral health.

Assessment: 100% coursework

Elective Courses

EXAT7100. Special topics in expressive arts therapy (6 credits)

The special topics course is for advanced applications and specific approaches to expressive arts therapy that may arise in order to provide students with timely practices, innovative interventions, and specialty areas.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7101. Fundamentals of music therapy (6 credits)

Through both listening to and actively making music, the intentional application of sound and music in therapy has been used for a variety of purposes. Expressive arts therapists who wish to use music in treatment have to become aware of how the properties of rhythm, tempo, pitch, harmony, contour of a melody, range, texture, timbre and so forth affect all levels of healing from expression to relaxation. By increasing comfort in playing a variety of musical instruments, genres and styles, students can identify when to offer specific interventions to advance therapy and healing. In becoming aware of the foundational theories of the field of music therapy, students can learn to locate their potential work in a larger theoretical context. Although this course does not qualify students to practice music therapy, students will gain awareness of the use of sound and music in therapeutic settings, as well as how to ethically apply sound and music in their work settings.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7102. Fundamentals of drama therapy (6 credits)

Theatre and dramatic activity have often been used to communicate essential truths and express particular values. Within the context of therapy, drama allows clients to recreate life experiences, imagine new ones, and experiment with alternate endings and choices. Through re-enactment or witnessing others tell one's story, acting is an essential healing modality. Understanding the history and theory of drama therapy, and considering activities such as improvisation or pantomime, can help individuals learn to offer drama in therapeutic and educational settings. Developing cultural sensitivity, self-awareness, and critical appreciation will allow students to be competent in offering drama activities to clients. Although this course does not qualify students to practice drama therapy, students will gain awareness of drama in therapeutic settings and how to ethically apply drama activities in their work settings.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7103. Fundamentals of art therapy (6 credits)

This course is multifaceted that emphasizes theories, building of hands-on techniques, and application of art therapy knowledge and skills. The course is designed for helping service professionals, educators, and artists to learn about the practice and profession of art therapy. Content area covered will focus on history, theories, and application of art therapy with various populations. Novel art therapy approaches, art materials not ordinarily used and could be applied in various professional work settings, and cutting-edge theories will be highlighted in different lectures to train up students in a key role of using visual art modality as a helping tool in their fields. In addition to lectures and discussions, students will have ample time that allows them to participate in experiential art workshops to immerse themselves in the creative and therapeutic process of artmaking. Although this course does not qualify students to practice art therapy, students will gain awareness of art in therapeutic settings and how to ethically apply art making in their work settings.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7104. Fundamentals of dance and movement therapy (6 credits)

Dance and movement allow individuals to express, communicate, and engage in healing through their bodies. Engaged in a variety of clinical and educational settings, dance and movement can be engaged as effective nonverbal interventions. In order to be able to use this art form effectively, practitioners must be grounded in the comfortability with their own body awareness, and attuned to the artistic, social, and cultural influences that affect movement. By exploring the history of the field of dance and movement therapy and the various ways to involve the body in therapy, students will be able to use dance and/or movement as a way to help facilitate the process during interventions with clinical and non-clinical populations. Although this course does not qualify students to practice dance/movement therapy, students will gain awareness of dance/movement in therapeutic settings and how to ethically apply the use of dance/movement in their work settings.

Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6206. Play therapy (6 credits)

The objective of the module is to introduce the student to the principles and practice of play therapy and its application to the counseling and psychotherapy for children, adolescents and families. At the end of the course, the students will have an introduction of the history and development of play therapy, an understanding of various theoretical models of play therapy, rationale for the use of play in therapy, and phrase of the client's progress in play therapy. Practice material will be provided including how to development therapeutic rapport, conduct a play based assessment, setting up of a playroom and the selection of therapeutic play materials. Best practice tips on engaging the client, recording keeping and other ethical issues will be discussed.

Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6259. Contemporary perspectives on death, dying and bereavement (6 credits)

Death is an inevitable life experience for everyone. Death-related problem is one of the commonest issues that clients brought to counseling, but is also rated as the most uncomfortable scenario by beginning counselors. This course offers a basic orientation to the knowledge and intervention approaches in working with death-related situations, including end of life care and bereavement counseling. Major theories and models related to death, dying and bereavement would be introduced. Corresponding clinical implications and practical work approaches would also be highlighted. Apart from the knowledge and skills, the course also emphasizes on personal exploration and review on one's attitudes toward life and death issues. It is hoped that students are better equipped with knowledge competence, practice competence as well as self competence in working with death, dying and bereavement.

Assessment: 100% coursework

SOWK6274. Theories and practices in positive psychology and strength-based interventions (6 credits)

Positive Psychology emphasizes the discovery and cultivation of human strengths and potential for a flourished life, and strength-based interventions include counseling and therapy models that foster psychological well-being and reduce distress and symptoms in clients. This course critically reviews the theory and practice of positive psychology, including the study of happiness, character strengths, optimism, resilience, compassion, meaning, goals, flow, creativity and hope and their relevance to psychological health and psychotherapy, as well as strength-oriented interventions which include mindfulness-based, compassion-based and valued-based models. The cultural relevance of Positive Psychology and strength-based interventions will also be examined.

Assessment: 100% coursework

Capstone Experience Courses

EXAT7020. Expressive arts therapy practicum and supervision (36 credits)

The clinical practicum focuses on the integration of theory into practice with expressive arts therapy. Students engage in approximately 500 to 750 practicum hours of prescribed work in a clinical internship with regular supervision. A practice supervisor will be assigned to supervise the student's clinical work, provide both informal and formal feedback and to facilitate completion of the practicum report. The report should essentially be an evaluation of the clinical application of behavioral intervention provided by the student. Individual and group supervision will be provided.

Assessment: 100% coursework

EXAT7022. Dissertation (12 credits)

Students are expected to complete a scholarly dissertation in the form of a research study or an in-depth case study that demonstrates insights for professional practice. The length of dissertation should not exceed 20,000 words. The title of the dissertation shall be submitted for approval by not later than March 31 of the final academic year of study, and the dissertation shall be presented by not later than August 1 of the final academic year of study.

Assessment: 100% coursework
