

## Congratulations to Dr. Sylvia Kwok

### Recipient of the University Grants Committee Team Teaching Award 2021



*Dr. Sylvia Kwok, recipient of the University Grants Committee Team Teaching Award 2021*

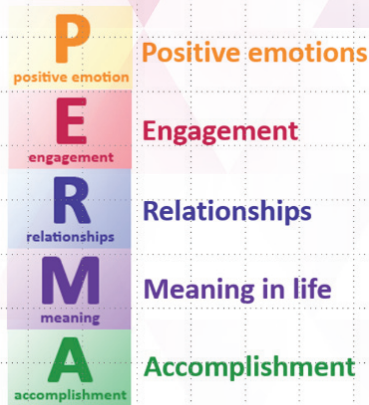
Dr. Sylvia Kwok, Associate Professor in SS, convenor of the positive education laboratory, received the University Grants Committee Team Teaching Award in 2021. The award is granted to those teachers who have outstanding teaching performance and achievements, as well as evidence of leadership in and scholarly contribution to teaching and learning within and across universities. The project awarded is titled "Joint University Mental-wellness Project". Dr. Kwok is the team leader, and the team members are Professor Daniel Wong from the University of Hong Kong, Dr. Siu Ming To from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Dr. Jiayan Pan from Hong Kong Baptist University, and Ms. Loretta Leung from the Education University of Hong Kong. Below is Dr. Kwok's description of her project:

First of all, I would like to tell you Sandy's story. Sandy is a student studying Chinese Medicine and Biology at Hong Kong Baptist University. Throughout her childhood, she has always been an elite. She sets high standards for herself and constantly feels stressed out. She raised the question, "What makes life meaningful?" To unwind her query, she walked into our workshops in Year 1. Not long after, she discovered her uniqueness and found ways to handle stress. She eventually joined a study tour to Taiwan in Year 3 for life exploration. After learning to make a traditional Chinese letterbox, she recognized that cultural preservation is very meaningful to her. She expressed, "Time flies, but memory remains. This is what culture means to us".

Sandy's positive changes have confirmed the purpose and meaning of our project: to promote university students' well-being, enhance their resilience to face adversities and challenges, and nurture them to be socially responsible citizens.



*Dr. Sylvia Kwok (second from right) and her co-investigators of the Joint University Mental-wellness Project: (from left) Professor Daniel Wong, Dr. Jiayan Pan, Ms. Loretta Leung, and Dr. Siu Ming To.*



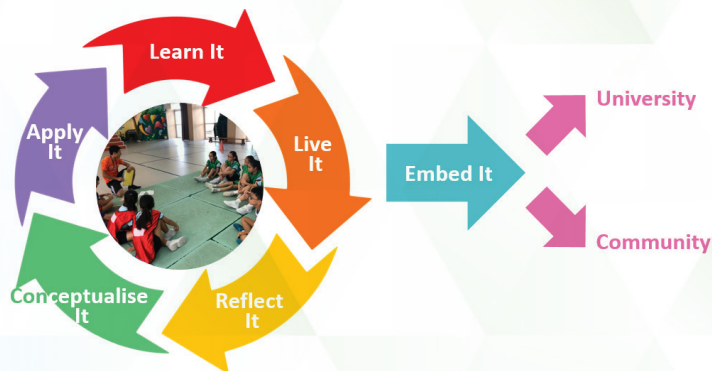
*PERMA represents the five ways to achieve well-being.*

In the project, we adopted a positive transformational learning pedagogy, integrating “positive education” as the core content and “transformational learning” as the essential pedagogy. We employed a strength-based and process-oriented approach to maximize students’ potentials and capacity. According to Professor Martin Seligman, “Positive education is the cultivation of positive attributes in students to increase their resilience, with 24 character strengths categorized into six virtues as the foundation, and PERMA as the five elements leading to Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishment.” The holistic nurturing of all these aspects contributes to a flourishing life.

As teachers, we adopt a six-step transformational learning pedagogy to enrich the students’ experiences. The six steps are learn, live, reflect, conceptualize, apply, and embed. Taking Sandy as an example, she first learned that labelling affects one’s self-image. In her daily life, she reflected that she was eager to live up to others’ expectation, but she lost her true self. By analysing and conceptualizing her experiences, she realized that she could have her own choices, and it was important for her to actualize her dreams and visions instead of focusing too much on others’ comments. In the application of her learning, she shared this understanding with other university students in the mental wellness festival, hoping to embed a positive culture in the university and the community. To attract more students, we have designed creative activities using this six-step pedagogy. There are interactive workshops on positive education, experiential learning camps, a study tour, student-led mental wellness festival, and

community projects. In addition, an online international conference and training workshops were launched for the staff and the professionals.

When talking with my students, I often hear a misconception: “Positive education only looks into the positive side.” This faulty saying has been discussed in our signature workshop, the “Negativity Club.” The activity encouraged students to share their emotions and learn the positive function of negative emotions, e.g., worry can increase our alertness. The students developed a new perspective that having negative emotion is normal, and we should accept both positive and negative emotions.



*Six-step transformational learning pedagogy to enrich students’ experiences.*

Another activity that I would like to highlight is a student-led community project called the Cookie Baking Programme. Knowing that secondary students were very stressed about public examination, our students arranged a cookie baking time for them to experience flow and mindful eating to release their stress, and to acquire more coping skills.



*Secondary students released their stress in the Cookie Baking Programme.*

There are five unique features of our project:

1. Paradigm shift from a deficit model to a strength-based model promoting well-being literacy.
2. Positive transformational learning pedagogy, as opposed to the traditional transmission pedagogy.
3. Variety of creative activities to build up the capacity of both staff and students.
4. Shift from teacher-led to student-led activities with inter-institutional collaboration. Students turn from passive to active learners and contributors.
5. Impact not only on university students but also on the community as a whole.

In addition, five impacts of the project are evidenced:

1. Increase in well-being literacy, including character strengths and PERMA elements.
2. Enhanced mental wellness and resilience.
3. Promotion of peer learning and building of a learning community.
4. Development of leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration.
5. Promotion of well-being awareness of students in the primary and secondary schools and the wider community.

We are happy that a total of 7,000 people, including university students, staff, and people in the community, benefited from the project. The longitudinal survey provided evidence that there

was an increase in meaning in life and coping flexibilities and decreased anxiety and stress after participants joined the project.

You may ask, "How can the project be sustained?" In fact, positive education has been incorporated into different courses and student development activities of the five universities. For example, positive education is incorporated into the college foundation course "Discovering the Mystery of Applied Social Sciences" at CityU. Positive education is also integrated into service learning programs at CUHK, general education courses at HKBU, and student activities of the Student Affairs Office at EdUHK.

To conclude, I would like to share another story. Peter is a student studying engineering at CityU. Like most students, he is of average academic performance and is always neglected by others. He was perceived as passive and lacking confidence. After joining our project, he was able to recognize his strengths and accept his limitations. He has expanded his social circle and learned to view things from different perspectives. After joining various activities, he explored different possibilities in life and redefined the meaning of "accomplishment". He commented, "without joining the project, my life would be miserable. The project has made a difference to my life".

Positive education is about reconstructing one's meaning in life, learning from the past, living in the present, and flourishing in the future. Please join us in nurturing our next generation with positive education so as to build a positive culture in our society. Together we can make a difference.



*Students experienced the Danish Hygge lifestyle in the activity "a cozy Hygge night" during the Mental Wellness Festival.*



*A CityU engineering student, Peter, said the project made a difference to his life.*

# Mobile Game Application to Raise Treatment Rate in Local Depressive And Anxious Youth

By **Zhang Qiaochau** (a recipient of HK Tech 300 Seed Fund)

Despite an expanded investment in mental health industry in Hong Kong, current mental health services struggle to fulfil incremental demands, resulting in low treatment rates in young people. First, the current mental health service has low accessibility. In Hong Kong and mainland China, the expense of private mental health services can be enormous (e.g., 2,000 RMB/hour with an experienced psychotherapist in Shenzhen and HK), and public health insurance seldom covers mental health care. Then, for mental health institutions which provide low-cost mental health services, many clients have to be put on a waiting list. For example, in Hong Kong, inadequate capacity in secondary care to support the rising demand of mental health services is reported, and the wait time for mental health care is long (up to 3 years for a mental health client to see a doctor/psychologist in public hospitals. Moreover, young people who are not in public schools (e.g., teenagers in vocational training programmes or employment) are neglected by the current public mental health service systems.

The other limitation is the low attraction of mental health services for many youths. It has been reported that approximately 60% of people with emotional symptoms do not seek a professional for their mental health issues. This is a result of multiple factors, including negative emotions (e.g., guilt and shame) experienced when seeking help from other people, and stigma associated with seeking psychotherapy. Even for youth who are in a mental health program, the drop-out rate is reported to be as high as 14.6%. Thus, the attraction of current mental health services for young people is not high.

Video games have found their way to youth in mental health care, and academic interest in clinical use of video games is increasing steadily. A review of a database of academic manuscripts revealed that 1,121 of 1,474 total reports on video games (76%) were published in the past decade. Also, there is empirical evidence that therapeutic games are effective in reducing anxiety and depression. However, no therapeutic games played on a mobile phone are currently available for young people to reduce anxiety and depression in the mental health market of Hong Kong and mainland China. The innovative idea of combining psychological interventions and mobile games will create a great solution to increase the accessibility and attraction of interventions for young people with anxiety and depression.



Recently, novel psychological techniques that aim at reducing emotional problems have been developed, and there is evidence for their efficacy. However, no therapeutic mobile game has been developed to combine these novel psychological techniques with gamified design. Thus, our project plans to create a unique therapeutic mobile game that aims to raise the treatment rate of anxious and depressive young people in Hong Kong and mainland China through advanced psychological techniques.

As the recipient of the HK Tech 300 Seed Fund, we are excited to be able to transform our ideas into a concrete product that can help resolve a real-life problem in mental health. Our next step is to further consolidate our game designs for the development of a mobile game application. We look forward to developing the application by collaborating with a gaming company.



*Sample prototype of a cartoon character in the therapeutic mobile game to be developed.*



*Zhang Qiao Chu (middle) and her teammates, Chan Yun Fu (first from left), Li Xing Qian (second from left), Poon Long Ching (second from right), and Poon Petra Cui San (first from right), have been awarded the HK Tech 300 Seed Fund.*

# The BOLD Buddy Scheme

## A New Mentoring Scheme for Secondary School Students

CityU has introduced a new mentoring scheme, BOLD Buddy Scheme, to help secondary school students gain knowledge and insights in university education. SS has nominated two students, Mr. Jimmy Sit and Ms. Shirley Au Yeung, as mentors for five secondary school students. The mentors are expected to organize different experiential activities as well as to share their university life and experience to their mentees. It is hoped that the mentees will get to know more about our department and CityU through the scheme, fostering closer connections between the department and secondary schools.

One of the mentors, Jimmy, represented our department to greet the mentees during the opening ceremony held on 30 October 2021. The group spent a fruitful morning together, sharing their expectation of the scheme, and the mentor briefly introduced SS to the mentees.

The BOLD Lectures are highlighted events throughout the year in which scholars will deliver inspiring seminars or workshops to the mentors and mentees. Dr. Anna Hui, Associate Professor of SS, was invited to be the speaker for the first BOLD Lecture, held immediately after the opening ceremony.



*Jimmy Sit (left) and Jodie Ng (right) greeted the mentees.*



*Dr. Anna Hui delivered the first BOLD Lecture, "Lifespan Creativity: The 5 Wh's", to the BOLD buddies.*

# Mentor-and-Mentee Scheme by Project X

## The Training Series

With the collaborative effort of 33 mentors and 7 alumni, a series of training days for about 100 BDSS, CRSO, PSY, and SW new students were held in August 2021. Student mentors had prepared these events for months to facilitate successful transition to university learning and fostering connection to one another. The orientation activities aimed to give a warm welcome to freshmen and encourage them to become more familiar with learning in SS in a rather fun and exciting way. Participants began to understand more about themselves and the department. The Mentor-and-Mentee Scheme benefits not only the mentee but also the mentors. It also represents a spirit of passing on, being united, and offering help and shared wisdom.

### Criminology and Sociology Orientation Day



*"Human Knot" is a team challenge that invites participants to communicate and work mutually to achieve a goal.*

### Psychology Orientation Day



*Team ice-breaking game, "Guess Who Is the Most...?"*

### Social Work Orientation Day



*Mentors and mentees disclosed to each other who shared the same birthday month, hobbies, living district, and more.*



*In "Blind Walk", participants work in pairs such that the student who is blindfolded experiences trust and learns to receive the care of his or her partners.*



*In "Detective Game", the premise is that an incident has happened, and participants take on the role of detectives to search for evidence and interview witnesses.*



*In "Be a Protector", mentees worked together to keep the little ones (ping pongs) safe during a move to their new home by means of "miracle ropes".*

# Mentors' Words



**YAU Fung Yee, Lily**  
(Major in Social Work, Year 3)

This is my first year being a student mentor. In my university life, there are plenty of things to explore. Meanwhile, I believe it is meaningful to build some authentic relationship and learn from others. The mentor-and-mentee programme is inspiring. It is fun to cooperate with my teammates and get along with my mentees. Despite the pandemic, I am glad that we have successfully held a face-to-face orientation night for the social work freshmen. Please stay tuned by joining future activities to be organized by our team!



**TANG Chak Ming, Cody**  
(Major in Social Work, Year 2)

The social work orientation night was a unique experience for both mentors and mentees. Organizing an activity requires communication and cooperation among mentors. I'm glad to have a group of helpful and devoted groupmates to work with even when we were facing difficulties during the process. I'm also very grateful that we can successfully share the values of social work through the activities. The mentees seemed to enjoy the experience a lot. Being a mentor is a new challenge for me, but it is a memorable one during this period. Therefore, I hope we can keep passing on our support to them as supportive and considerate mentors.



**CHAN Him Yau Kristy**  
(Major in Social Work, Year 2)

Organizing the orientation day wasn't an easy task. Challenges and difficulties were faced but overcome. With the help of my supportive teammates, we were able to conduct this unique orientation night where the freshmen could meet their peers with the same major for the first time and build a strong bond between them. As a mentor, I am grateful to be able to walk with them in the initial part of their journey. I am excited to see them grow in the future and become a social worker who could positively influence others.



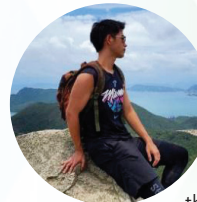
**LEUNG Ka Ying, Sophia**  
(Major in Social Work, Year 3)

From the beginning of the training, there is one question I have asked myself: "What is the meaning of being a mentor?" I have understood more after the orientation day. As a mentor, I always want to befriend with mentees and shorten our distance so that we could rely on one another by sharing the experiences and growing together. Besides helping them equip themselves as social workers, it is also important to show our support and warmth. I hope they can heartily enjoy the university journey!



**LEE Wing Man Priscilla**  
(Major in Psychology, Year 3)

At first, I was kind of lost during the training period. But when I finally had a chance to organize an activity for other students, like the orientation day, I saw the meaning of being a mentor, and the experience was rewarding and full of fun. I am gratified that I stepped forward back then to be a mentor and had the chance to know you all face to face—program supervisors, other mentors, and my mentees. University life is more than enjoyment of oneself, but also about making contributions and caring for others. Hope to see more students joining this family and together enriching the university life of not just yourself but also others.



**WONG Chin Pang, David**  
(Major in CRSO, Criminology stream, Year 4)

The Criminology and Sociology orientation day was the first major event organized by the enthusiastic CRSO mentors, and I am one of them. It is a memorable and fruitful learning experience as a mentor. The most gratifying thing is that freshmen found the orientation day useful in gaining knowledge on different aspects of university life. I was a bit nervous during the sharing section. CRSO mentors are going to hold more meaningful events in the future, and I hope the mentees can enjoy and benefit from those events.



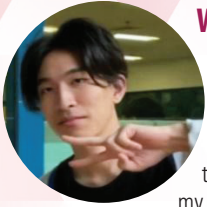
**SIT Sung Chi, Jimmy**  
(Major in CRSO, Applied Sociology stream, Year 3)

My university life is enriched significantly by being a mentor. The transformation of role brings opportunities and challenges to me. I can have more opportunities to contribute and engage in more projects provided by the university. On the other hand, being a mentor means that my responsibilities are increased. Although extra time will be needed to prepare activities for the mentees, I am still enjoying it very much and wish to contribute more to the project, especially when I see the big smiles on their faces, and I feel joyful as well. The experiences acquired in the Mentor-and-Mentee Scheme will benefit me for a lifetime.



**AU YEUNG Wan, Shirley**  
(Major in CRSO, Criminology stream, Year 4)

CRSO orientation day is a mass kick-off event for our mentors, which symbolizes the start of our journey being mentors. It was strenuous for us to organize the orientation day under the pandemic. There were tons of concerns to be taken into consideration. Fortunately, all things went smoothly, and an insightful orientation day was conducted for the newcomers. We cannot deny that the key component for the great success is teamwork. Working with dedicated mentors and energetic mentees is going to be one of the momentous experiences throughout my university life.



**WONG Ho Chun John**  
(Major in CRSO, Criminology stream, Year 4)

Due to the pandemic outbreak last year, my orientation day and training sessions of MnM were all conducted through Zoom. Fortunately, we were able to have a face-to-face meeting in mid-March, where I could finally greet my fellow mentors.

With the situation getting better, we were eventually able to hold our orientation day on campus, as I believe the key element in communication is to have a human touch, providing a chance for our mentees to know their coursemates in person, and to be familiar with CityU facilities. I am glad to hear that all of them have gained something after attending our O-Day: getting tips for U-Life, fostering a sense of belonging, and most importantly, building friendship.



**CHAN Pak Ying, Melody**  
(Major in CRSO, Criminology stream, Year 2)

It was indeed satisfying to see all my mentees adapting well to their first-year university life and making tons of new friends—especially when I know exactly how the pandemic was depriving university freshmen last year!

We (mentors), Jodie, and Joey worked as a great team to brainstorm every possible activity, game, and message to be brought to fellow CRSO coursemates. The outcomes were fantastic! I am really grateful to work with a team of amazing people and see all my wonderful mentees! Joining the MnM program is definitely super rewarding!

## SS Student Exchange Programme Information Seminar 2021/22

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on students' overseas exposure over the past two years. Because international travel is anticipated to resume shortly, the department is striving to prepare students for participation in academic exchange programmes in the coming academic year.

The SS Student Exchange Programme Information Seminar 2021/22 was held on Zoom on 21 October 2021 with the participation of more than 60 students. During the seminar, Student Exchange Coordinator Dr. Chen Hui Fang gave a brief introduction on the application process, requirements, key considerations, and important dates. The seminar also highlighted the special arrangements students need to be aware of under the influence of COVID-19.

A social work alumnus, Mr. C. Y. Ling, who went on exchange to the National University of Singapore, shared his experiences with fellow students. He first shared things he considered when making the decision to go on exchange, and also the difficulties he faced during the exchange. Students were able to get a glimpse of what it is like to go on exchange, and hopefully to be able to better prepare themselves for the journey.



*Social work alumnus C. Y. Ling shared his experience of being an exchange student at the National University of Singapore.*



# Message from the Head

## A Salute to Our Talented Students



*"Fantastic Ricochet Shot by Hiu Lam Yeung Kian" featured in Cheol Hyeon Kwon's Facebook post on 29 August 2021 Bouncing forward ...*

Bouncing forward...

Like so many others, I held my breath in front of the screen at the words of the commentator: "Not at a complete sight. Slightly obscure by one of the red balls. But it's not a clear angle at the Jack [the target white ball]. ... It's critical. She can use her first ball to create a ricochet. And which she does. [loud applause from the audience] And that's a lovely shot from Yeung Hiu Lam". We were watching Hiu Lam in the Boccia game, Tokyo Paralympic Games on 29 August 2021.

In this issue of the newsletter, two heroines will continue the theme of "A Salute to Our Heroes" (#31, 2021). Ms. Yeung Hiu Yam Kian is a social work graduate from our class of 2018. During her undergraduate studies, she also received an individual award for the Discovery-Enriched Curriculum of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Hiu Lam coauthored with Dr. Estella Chan and another graduate a chapter in a book titled "Strength-Based Perspectives in Social Work Practice—The Road to Recovery" that was published in 2018. It documented her unique internship experience in an elderly day care centre and outstanding performance in designing programmes using a strength-based approach to empower the elderly in the community. On 18 October 2021, Hiu Lam

returned to her alma mater and shared her dream and Olympic experience with faculty members and students. The audience was inspired by how she pursued her dream with courage, persistence, and resilience. "Facing a giant, don't belittle yourself. Indeed we should imagine a bigger self to take the challenge," Hiu Lam stated firmly.

Our second heroine, Ms. Zhang Qiaochau, has led a team of five and recently been awarded the HK Tech 300 Seed Fund award with an amount of HK\$100,000. She is a doctoral student under my supervision. In view of the increasing need in promoting mental health and limited accessibility of quality mental health services, Qiaochu and her team proposed an innovative intervention via digital



*Yeung Hiu Yam Kian received a thank-you gift from the SS department head, Prof. Samuel Ho (right), and Dr. Elaine Au (left) after her sharing on 18 October 2021 at CityU.*



*Miss Zhang Qiaochau and her team was awarded the HK Tech 300 Seed Fund.*



**Prof. HO Samuel M.Y.**

Head

Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences

technology for young people in Hong Kong and China. Zhang says, "Psychological interventions that tap into the advances in digital technology are the future trend towards increasing the accessibility and attraction of mental health services. The new psychological mobile game developed by us will help relieve children's anxiety and depression and increase the treatment rate of young people with anxiety and depression". Her novel work will definitely enhance resilience in our young generation. For details, please refer to "Mobile Game Application to Raise Treatment Rate in Local Depressive Youth" in this issue.

I also take this opportunity to welcome new undergraduate, postgraduate, and research students joining the department in 2021/22. We strive to nurture and develop students to become good citizens and leaders, and to create knowledge for social advancement.

Video to be featured here for reader to watch: [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=2125970770883612&id=10000226819001&\\_rdr](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2125970770883612&id=10000226819001&_rdr)

# Message from the Associate Head Enhancing the Research Environment

A strategic research plan for 2020 to 2023 to enhance the research environment of the Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences, named "ROAD to Success", was developed in early 2021. The plan included the following four components.

## 1. Research Methodology Workshop

Research methodology workshops are organized to provide advanced training in research methods for staff members to enhance the quality of research output. A summer workshop on systematic review and meta-analysis was given by Dr. Wilson Tam at National Singapore University via Zoom in 2021. The participants included 21 faculty members from SS and 10 from other departments in the college.

## 2. Open-Access Publication Support

Open-access publications can potentially reach a larger professional community. This publishing medium facilitates more effective dissemination of scholarly findings and further communication and collaborations. The department provides financial support, when available, to make high-quality publications openly accessible in journals with optional open access. In mid-2021, a few publications with top-ranking impact factors in their respective categories were supported.

## 3. Award Scheme for RGC Grant Proposals

An award scheme was developed to reward colleagues who can successfully obtain competitive RGC grants in the form of financial support to take on research degree students and provide teaching relief. The first batch of awards will be given in 2022/23 upon the release of the results of RGC grants.

## 4. Development Scheme for RGC Grant Proposals

This scheme was developed to enhance the research culture and quality of research proposals by early preparation, research dialogue, roundtable discussion, and external review. Around half of the submitted proposals for the General Research Fund were products of this development scheme.



**Dr. Ben Li**

Associate Head  
Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences

# Message from the Associate Head Teaching Excellence of the SS Department

Quality and professional education is one of the key strategic areas of the SS Department. We strive for solid, up-to-date, innovative, and interactive pedagogy to provide teaching with high quality. In recent years, eight academic staff members have received the CityU Teaching Excellence Award and three have received the prestigious UGC Teaching Award. Following the bestowal of that award to Professor Alice Chong and Dr. Elaine Au in 2013 and 2014, the UGC Teaching Award in 2021 was given to Dr. Sylvia Kwok, who leads the Joint University Mental-wellness Project (JUMP). The project integrates positive education and transformational learning to enhance university students' mental wellness and resilience to overcome everyday life adversity and challenges.

To strive for further teaching excellence and nurture students with global vision and wide academic horizons, SS continues to explore every opportunity for joint degree and double degree programmes. Currently, we have joint degree programmes with Columbia University for Psychology and Applied Sociology. With collaboration between the School of Law and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS), a newly developed double degree programme, Bachelor of Social Sciences in Criminology and Bachelor of Laws, will accept its first students in 2022/23. This programme aims to equip students with broad knowledge of criminology and laws as well as professional competence to conduct criminological and legal research. Graduates are qualified for admission to the Postgraduate Certificate in Laws (PCLL), a prerequisite for entering the legal profession in Hong Kong.

At the taught postgraduate degree level, SS is offering four master programmes: Master of Social Sciences in Psychology, Master of Social Work, Master of Social Sciences in Counselling, and Master of Arts in Applied Social Sciences (with the Sociology and Criminology streams). Our Master of Social Sciences in Psychology Programme has just been awarded the UGC's Targeted Taught Postgraduate Programmes Fellowship Scheme with five places per intake for three years starting in 2022/23. The maximum subsidy for each place is HK\$120,000. Currently, this is the only psychology programme awarded by the UGC. To keep all taught postgraduate programmes competitive and up to date with the social development and academic demands from students, all programmes are undergoing a rigorous curriculum review and revamping. We aim to produce graduates with specific areas of learning, such as mental wellness, gerontechnology, and ageing care, who can better serve the needs and demands of Hong Kong and the international community.



**Dr. Cherry Tam**

Associate Head  
Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences