

Master of Public Policy Program: Policy Analysis Exercise 2023/24

The Policy Analysis Exercise (PAE) is the capstone of the two-year Master of Public Policy (MPP) program at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. The PAE for the academic year 2023/24 will be conducted under the theme of “**Embracing Technological Changes for a Sustainable Future**”. Specifically, our PAE teams will look at how government, industry, and society would be affected by emerging and increasingly disruptive technologies, what opportunities and challenges we would face in a wide range of sustainability challenges, and how various sectors would be able to design and implement appropriate policies and strategies for the future.

The PAE is an eight-month-long consultancy project that students undertake in teams of six members with **reputable clients** from the public, private, or non-profit sectors. Regardless of which sector he/she is from, the client is someone involved in serving or advancing the public interest. Appropriate reputable clients include:

1. Elected officials or political appointees;
2. Public managers or external consultants who advise these officials;
3. Policy advocates outside and inside the government;
4. Non-government organizations (NGOs) and businesses that work to advance the public interest; and
5. Interest groups and professional/trade associations

The ideal reputable PAE client is one whose actions and decisions have a real impact on public policy, who understands the purpose of the PAE, and who is willing to provide mentorship, advice, and other forms of assistance (e.g. time, access to people, information) for the project. It is also crucial that the client have a reasonably clear understanding of what he or she wants. At the same time, what the PAE teams bring to the clients is independence. PAE teams are thus encouraged to look at the problem from points of view other than that of the client and to bring those differing perspectives to the client’s attention.

In addition to the client, each PAE team would be guided by a **faculty advisor**. PAE projects will be assessed and graded by their respective faculty advisors and second readers, although clients are welcome to provide inputs on their teams’ performance.

The output of the PAE is a report that analyses a policy problem or challenge that the PAE client has identified. The PAE report is an analytical and consultative product that uses

research methods, but it is not a research paper in the traditional sense. It requires students to synthesize four skills:

1. Substantive knowledge of the domain in which the PAE project is on (e.g. infrastructure, health, transport, the environmental, science and technology policy);
2. Knowledge of applied research methods and the skills to apply those methods (e.g. study design, interviewing, cost-benefit analysis);
3. Skills in negotiating a consultant relationship with a client and locating oneself and one's project within the client's organizational, regulatory and political settings; and
4. Skills in writing and presentation.

The PAE will culminate with a PAE conference in April/May 2024 that all clients will be invited to, and in which all the PAE teams will present their key findings.

If you wish to discuss anything further or need further information, please feel free to contact our PAE coordinators, Prof. Masaru YARIME at yarime@ust.hk, and Prof. Pengyu ZHU at pengyuzhu@ust.hk.