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Highlights

Call for Award Nomination by April 30, 2025

The ICSA award committee is now officially accepting nominations for various categories. We strongly encourage submissions from diverse backgrounds and populations. **Nomination materials should be forwarded** to the Award Committee Chair, Dr. Yong Chen, <u>ychen123@pennmedicine.upenn.edu</u>, with a subject line specifying the relevant category followed by "Nomination". Each award category has specific requirements regarding eligibility and the nomination process, detailed under each award category via <u>this link</u>.

Nomination documents must be submitted as PDF, PS, or plain text attachments. Please note that the deadline for all nominations, including Catalyst for Impact Award, Distinguished Achievement Award, Outstanding Service Award, and Pao-Lu Hsu Award, is extended to April 30, 2025.

ICSA Applied Statistics Symposium (June 15 – 18, 2025)

We are delighted to announce that the ICSA Applied Statistics Symposium will be held at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, from June 15 to 18, 2025. This esteemed event is organized by Dr. Xiaojing Wang (<u>xiaojing.wang@uconn.edu</u>) and Dr. Dacheng Liu (<u>dacheng.liu@boehringer-ingelheim.com</u>).

The symposium will feature a diverse range of activities, including keynote speeches, scientific sessions, short courses, poster sessions, a members' meeting, a mixer, a traditional ICSA banquet, and other social gatherings. This event promises to be an excellent opportunity for networking, collaboration, and professional development.

Earlier registration is open until April 15, 2025. For detailed information, please refer to <u>2025</u> <u>ICSA Applied Statistics Symposium</u>.

ICSA China Conference (June 28 – 30, 2025)

The 2025 ICSA China Conference will be held from June 28 to 30, 2025, in the beautiful coastal city of Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China. The conference is co-sponsored by the ICSA and Beijing Normal University. This prestigious event will be co-chaired by Prof. Lixing Zhu (<u>lzhu@bnu.edu.cn</u>) and Prof. Yuanjia Wang (<u>yw2016@cumu.columbia.edu</u>). Under the theme "Future in Statistics: Partnership and Innovation in the Data-Rich Era," this conference will serve as a vibrant platform to connect researchers in academia, industry, government, practitioners, and



students globally, pushing the frontiers of statistics in today's data-rich world to solve real-world challenges. Early registration is open until April 7, 2025. Detailed information can be found 2025 ICSA China Conference or ICSA 2025 China.

The 13th ICSA International Conference (December 17 – 20, 2025)

This conference will take place in Taipei. With the theme "The New Frontier: Statistical Science in a Changing World," this prestigious event will be co-organized by ICSA, the Institute of Statistical Science, Academia Sinica (ISSAS), in collaboration with the Chinese Institute of Probability and Statistics (CIPS). For detailed information, you may refer to https://www3.stat.sinica.edu.tw/joint2025/. ICSA members may contact Dr. Xinping Cui (xpcui@ucr.edu), or Dr. Ying Zhang (ying.zhang@unmc.edu) for the conference programs.

The Duke-Industry Statistics Symposium (April 9 – 11, 2025)

The **DISS2025** will be held on **April 9–11, 2025**, in Durham, NC with the theme "Driving Clinical Research Forward with Advanced Statistics and Data Innovations: Biostatistics in the Age of AI/ML". The symposium will delve into cutting-edge realms of biostatistics and data innovations within pharmaceutical development, particularly in the context of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML). For more details including registration, please visit the <u>DISS2025 website</u>.

Invitation to Submit by April 30, 2025 from Statistics and Its Interface

We are pleased to invite submissions for a special issue of Statistics and Its Interface focusing on recent advances in statistical learning of multivariate data analysis.

Statistics and Its Interface explores the intersection between the field of statistics and other disciplines, publishing high-quality articles across broad areas of statistical science. The journal emphasizes substantive problems, sound statistical models and methods, clear and efficient computational algorithms, and insightful discussions of motivating problems. This special issue aims to review and compile recent advances in statistical learning of multivariate data.

The main topics covered in this special issue include both traditional multivariate regression analysis such as multivariate distribution theory, multivariate regression models, discrimination



and classification analysis, factor analysis, clustering, and covariance models, as well as contemporary multivariate analysis. Topics in the latter category include high-dimensional data analysis, dimension reduction techniques, statistical inference, machine learning and statistical learning for multivariate data, network data analysis, image data analysis, and more.

As is customary with Statistics and Its Interface, the focus is on the development and evaluation of novel statistical methodologies for multivariate data. These methodologies may be motivated by practical or theoretical problems and driven by principles of statistical learning and machine learning. All methods should be validated through standard mathematical arguments, which may be complemented by asymptotic arguments or computer-based experiments. Illustrations with relevant and original data analysis are highly encouraged.

The deadline for manuscript submission is April 30, 2025. Submissions should clearly indicate that they are intended for the special issue on statistical learning of multivariate data analysis and must be submitted through SII's electronic journal management system. Further guidance about the structure, length, and format of manuscripts can be found on the journal webpage: *Statistics and Its Interface Submission Guidelines*. All submissions will go through the regular review process. As the guest editors for this special issue, we will handle the peer review process carefully and in a timely manner.

With your support and collaboration, we are confident that this special issue will be a success and will reflect the state-of-the-art research at the frontier of this vital and rapidly developing area. We look forward to receiving your papers.

Guest Editors:

Prof. Bingyi Jing (jingby@sustech.edu.cn), Southern University of Science and Technology, China

Prof. Jinyuan Chang (changjinyuan@swufe.edu.cn), Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, China

Prof. Xingdong Feng (<u>feng.xingdong@msg.sufe.edu.cn</u>), Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, China

Prof. Bobing Tian (bopingt361147@hit.edu.cn), Harbin Institute of Technology, China Prof. Xuejun Jiang (jiangxj@sustech.edu.cn), Southern University of Science and Technology, China

The Past, Present and Future of Statistics in the Era of AI (May 9 – 10, 2025)

The Department of Statistics at George Washington University is celebrating its 90th anniversary, marking nearly a century of significant contributions to statistical education and



research. The department will host this conference from **May 9-10**, 2025 in Washington, DC. The conference aims to foster deeper understanding and collaboration by bringing together established researchers, emerging scholars and industry professionals to discuss the evolving role of statistics in the context of modern AI advancements. The conference features two short courses (statistical foundations of deep learning; introduction to reinforcement learning), two plenary talks, multiple invited talk sessions, one contributed poster session, and one invited panel. For detailed information, refer to Web Page: <u>https://statistics.columbian.gwu.edu/gw-stat-90</u>

KISS Summer Conference (June 19 – 21, 2025)

The Korean Statistical Society (KSS) Summer conference will be held from June 19 to 21, 2025, at **Gyeongju, South Korea**. Gyeongju is the home to three UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We are excited to invite abstract submissions for Korean International Statistical Society (KISS)-sponsored invited sessions. The conference will feature engaging talks and dynamic discussions on statistical challenges and innovations.

Each invited session will feature four talks, with each talk approximately 20 minutes long. If you are interested in presenting at our invited sessions, please submit <u>this form</u> by March 7 11:59pm ET, or contact the KISS Program Chair, Youjin Lee (<u>youjin_lee@brown.edu</u>) if you have any questions or concerns.

The 10th Workshop on Biostatistics and Bioinformatics (May 9 – 11, 2025)

Biostatistics and Bioinformatics have been playing key and important roles in statistics and other scientific research fields in recent years. The workshop aims to stimulate research and to foster the interaction of researchers in Biostatistics & Bioinformatics research areas. The workshop will be held at Atlanta, GA from May 9 to 11, 2025. Please refer to this site: <u>The 10th Workshop on Biostatistics and Bioinformatics</u>, for detailed information of the workshop including keynote speakers, programs, etc.

Symposium on Foundations for Statistical Science, to be held in Kunming, China, July 25 – 26, 2025

The conference will honor Professor Jiahua Chen's significant contributions to statistical science and celebrate his 65th birthday. The program includes keynote and invited talks on various statistical topics, reflecting Professor Chen's impact on finite mixture models, Bayesian



information theory, experimental design, and survey sampling. The event also acknowledges his roles as Editor-in-Chief of The Canadian Journal of Statistics and the 2005 President of ICSA. For more information, contact Prof. Changbao Wu (<u>cbwu@uwaterloo.ca</u>), or refer to: <u>https://sfss.ms.ynu.edu.cn</u>

Corner to Celebrate ICSA Members

This section was created to highlight the achievements of our members. All ICSA members are encouraged to contact Dr. Jun Zhao, the ICSA Executive Director (<u>executive.director@icsa.org</u>) with a brief introduction about themselves and the award.

Introduction of ICSA Awards

Every year, the ICSA awards its members in multiple categories for their leadership and contributions to the statistics and statistical society. The ICSA Award Committee, currently chaired by Dr. Yong Chen, <u>ychen123@pennmedicine.upenn.edu</u>, accepts nominations for various award categories. In general, the committee strongly encourages submissions from diverse backgrounds and populations. Each award category has specific requirements regarding eligibility and the general nomination process. The awards may include cash prizes.

Catalyst for Impact Award

The ICSA Catalyst for Impact Award is presented to individual(s) "In recognition of the distinguished statistical contribution and achievement in the industry and regulatory agencies and unselfish support of the association".

Eligibility: Nominees must be ICSA members for at least the past year. Members of the Award Committee and the Executive Committee are not eligible to receive the award during their term of service.

Nomination Process: The nomination package shall be sent to the Award Committee Chair of the year with the subject entitled "Catalyst for Impact Award Nomination". Nominator is responsible for preparing a complete package for the nominee that should contain the following: 1) nominee's most recent curriculum vitae; and

2) cover letter from the nominator summarizing the nominee's achievement on impact on innovation, community engagement, and mentoring and developing the next generation of statisticians.



Distinguished Achievement Award

The ICSA Distinguished Achievement Award is presented to individual(s) "In recognition of the distinguished achievement in statistical research and unselfish support of the association", as noted at the ICSA website: <u>https://www.icsa.org/distinguished-achievement-award/</u>.

Eligibility: Nominees must be ICSA members with good standing, being a member of ICSA for at least the past three consecutive years. Members of the Award Committee and the Executive Committee are not eligible to receive the award during their term of service.

Nomination Process: Nominator is responsible for preparing a complete package for the nominee that should at minimum contain the following

1) nominee's most recent curriculum vitae;

2) cover letter from the nominator summarizing the nominee's achievement in statistical research and unselfish support of the association.

Besides items 1) and 2), additional nomination material such as recommendation letters is encouraged but not required.

Outstanding Young Researcher Award

The ICSA Young Researcher Award is presented to young scholar(s) "In recognition of the outstanding research in statistical theory, methodology, and/or applications", as noted at the ICSA website: <u>https://www.icsa.org/awards/outstanding-young-research-award/</u>.

Eligibility: Nominees must be ICSA members for at least the past year. Eligible nominees should have obtained their PhD degree or an equivalent degree in the past six years. For example, an individual eligible for 2025 must have received a doctoral degree dated 2019 or later.

Nomination Process: Nominator is responsible for preparing a complete package for the nominee that should contain the following

1) nominee's most recent curriculum vitae; and

2) cover letter from the nominator summarizing the nominee's achievement in statistical research and/or applications.

Additional nomination materials such as recommendation letters are encouraged but not required.

Outstanding Service Award

The ICSA Outstanding Service Award is presented to individual(s) "In recognition of the individual's dedicated effort, unselfish support, and outstanding service to the association", as noted at the ICSA website: <u>https://www.icsa.org/awards/outstanding-service-awards/</u>.



Eligibility: Nominees must be ICSA members with good standing, being a member of ICSA for at least the past three consecutive years. Members of the Award Committee and the Executive Committee are not eligible to receive the award during the term of service

Nomination Process: Nominator is responsible for preparing a complete package for the nominee that should contain the following

1) nominee's most recent curriculum vitae; and

2) cover letter from the nominator summarizing the nominee's service to the association. Additional nomination materials such as recommendation letters are encouraged but not required.

Pao-Lu Hsu Award

The <u>Pao-Lu Hsu Award</u> is presented every three years by the International Chinese Statistical Association (ICSA), usually at an ICSA conference, to an individual under age 50, who makes influential and fundamental contributions to any field of statistics and probability, and exemplifies Hsu's deep involvement in developing statistics and probability research with significant impact on education, as noted at the ICSA website: https://www.icsa.org/awards/pao-lu-hsu-award/. Professor Hsu, born in 1910, was a pioneer and founder of the newly formed discipline of statistics and probability in China. He was best known for his rigorous research with depth and breadth, and for his profound impact on younger generations. He became the first professor of statistics and probability, Peking University, in 1940. In 1948, he was elected to the very first class of Academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He published about 40 articles; see "Pao-Lu Hsu Memorial Collection" published by Peking University Press for more details.

Eligibility: The prize is open to all nationalities, members or non-members of ICSA. Priorities are given to the candidates whose work contributes greatly to the research and education of Chinese statisticians. The award recipient will speak at an ICSA International Conference. The award includes \$3000 (US dollars) in cash prize.

Nomination Process:

(A) Nomination letter which include the following information: nominator's name, mail/email address and phone number; nominee's name, date of birth, title, institutional affiliation, and contact information; a summary of the supportive evidence that are the basis for the nomination. The length of the nomination letter should not exceed 3 pages.

- (B) Nominee's current CV.
- (C) Three letters of recommendation



ICSA Springer Book Series in Statistics

The editor of ICSA Springer book series in statistics, Dr. Din Chen, has reported that there are <u>29</u> <u>books</u> in the series now. **One new book** was published in 2025 along with 3 books published in 2024 with detailed message below. If you plan to write books in the series, please contact the co-editors Dr. Din Chen (<u>Ding-Geng.Chen@asu.edu</u>) and Dr. Yichuan Zhao (<u>yichuan@gsu.edu</u>).

Dose Finding and Beyond in Biopharmaceutical Development

Authors: Jingjing Ye, Ding-Geng Chen, Wen Zhou, Qiqi Deng, Joseph C. Cappelleri Copyright: 2025 Published: 2025

Modeling Binary Correlated Responses using SAS, SPSS, R and STAT

Authors: Jeffrey R. Wilson, Kent A. Lorenz & Lori P. Selby Copyright: 2024 Published: September 2024

Innovative Designs and Analyses for Small Population Clinical Trials

Authors: Lei Nie & Jingjing Ye Copyright: 2024 Published: July 2024

Statistics in Precision Health: Theory, Methods and Applications

Editors: Yichuan Zhao & Ding-Geng Chen Copyright: 2024 Published: April 2024

Refer to this site for all other books' information.



Sponsored and Co-Sponsored Journals

ICSA Sponsored Journals Statistics in Biosciences

The published new issue is Volume 17 Issue 1 in April 2025 <u>Statistics in Biosciences | Volume 17, issue 1 (springer.com)</u> Recently accepted articles can be found at the journal website <u>https://link.springer.com/journal/12561/onlineFirst/page/1</u> A link for submitting your article to SIBS online is below <u>https://www.editorialmanager.com/sibs/default.aspx</u>

ICSA Co-sponsored Journal Statistica Sinica

Statistica Sinica is co-sponsored by the Institute of Statistical Science Academia Sinica (ISSAS) <u>https://www.stat.sinica.edu.tw/eng/index.php</u>. Forthcoming papers' information is available at <u>http://www3.stat.sinica.edu.tw/statistica/</u>. The new issue (<u>Volume 35 Number 2, April 2025</u> (<u>sinica.edu.tw</u>)) is published.

There is one online special issue for your references:

Vol. 35 Online Special Issue I, January 2025: Data Privacy: Overview

ICSA members have access to these articles via the "membership only area" at <u>http://www.icsa.org</u>. If you have any problems with subscription, please contact the editorial office through <u>ss@stat.sinica.edu.tw</u>.

Upcoming ICSA Meetings

Please find below a list of upcoming ICSA meetings. This list also appears on the ICSA website. Meetings not included in this list are not official ICSA meetings. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Jun Zhao, the ICSA Executive Director

(executive.director@icsa.org).



All upcoming ICSA conferences are listed under highlights section.

Upcoming Co-Sponsored Meetings

Please find below a list of upcoming ICSA co-sponsored meetings. This list also appears on the ICSA website. Meetings not included in this list are not officially co-sponsored meetings. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Jun Zhao, the ICSA Executive Director (executive.director@icsa.org).

Online Training and Seminars

Stay tuned on ICSA Webinar Series in 2025

The ICSA (Webinar subcommittee, Outreach and Engagement Committee) is planning a series of webinars, with topics ranging from career development, statistical knowledge, to cutting edge statistical methodologies. ICSA members and friends will be notified of future Webinar information through emails, ICSA websites, social media (e.g., X, WeChat, Linked-in), and other social media platforms. The ICSA Webinar Subcommittee is planning the Career Development Webinar Series.

Causal Inference in Pharmaceutical Statistics (April 19, 2025, 3-4 PM EST)

Speaker: Dr. Yixin Fang

Registration link: <u>https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GpIpgzU5R3ylY7hIU4NFiA#/registration</u>

Panel Discussion with Journal Editors (planned at 5pm EST on Saturday, March 29, 2025)

Host and moderator: Xiaowu Dai and Yuhua Zhu Panelists: Judy Huixia Wang, Hans-Georg Müller, Lexin Li, Michele Guindani Registration link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WYoShEXFT0GK0tLI2DaOHA#/registration





About the Webinar:

As the landscape of statistical research continues to evolve, it is reshaping methodologies, research priorities, and publication standards. We invite renowned journal editors to share their insights to understand these changes and their impact on the future of statistics, publishing, and career development.

All the past webinars are recorded:

- Soft Skills and Leadership Development in the Pharmaceutical Industry The Lotus Group series
 - No Experience, No Problem Launching a Prosperous Career in the Pharmaceutical Industry (February 2024)
 - Elevating Careers Through Recognition and Visibility (April 2024)
 - Effective Communication at Work (October 2024)
 - From Campus to Pharma: Interview prep for Aspiring Statistician (February 2025)
- Basic Knowledge Training in the Pharmaceutical Industry
 - Daily Work Life as a Statistician in Pharmaceutical Industry (March 2024)
 - Clinical Development Plan Understanding the Big Picture as a Statistician in the Pharmaceutical Industry (May 2024)
 - Main Emphasis of a Statistician's Work in the Pharmaceutical Industry Section 1: Late-stage Clinical Trial Design (November 2024)
 - Main Emphasis of a Statistician's Work in the Pharmaceutical Industry -- Section 2: Clinical Trial Data Analysis (21 March 2025)

Records and slides are available in this link: <u>Past Webinars – International Chinese Statistical</u> <u>Association (icsa.org).</u>

Healthcare Innovation Technology: The Pod of Asclepius

Looking to stay up to date on developments in health care technology around the world? The American Statistical Association is sponsoring "The Pod of Asclepius", a new podcast where data scientists, statisticians, engineers, and regulatory experts discuss the technical challenges in their healthcare domain.

We have over 20 episodes published and available on YouTube, Podbean, iTunes, Stitcher, Podchaser, Tune In Radio, and Google Play.

Looking for a good place to start? Check out the following newly released episode links:



- <u>The Logic of Statistics</u> with Keith O'Rourke
- <u>Causal Inference (The Mixtape)</u> with Scott Cunningham

The easiest way to catch new episodes is to subscribe via our channels....

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkEz2tDR5K6AjlKw-JrV57w

Podbean: https://podofasclepius.podbean.com

You can see our full schedule on the website: www.podofasclepius.com

Fall Series: The Philosophy of Data Science

The series is aimed at incoming statistics and data science students (but will be of significant interest to the general statistics / data science community). The topics will focus on how scientific reasoning is essential to the practice of data science.

For detailed information, please visit: <u>https://www.podofasclepius.com/philosophy-of-data-science</u>.

Job Listings

Assistant Professor in Applied Optimization and Operations Research / Data Science and Analytics / Applied Statistics and Financial Mathematics / Engineering and Computational Mathematics / Mathematical Science (Ref. 241220013), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

The Department of Applied Mathematics (AMA) will be a part of the newly formed Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences, which will be established on 1 January 2025. The Department offers Bachelor of Science (Honours) Scheme in Data Science, and makes a significant contribution to most of other academic programmes of the University by providing service teaching. It also offers master programmes in Applied Mathematics for Science and Technology with specialisms in Actuarial and Investment Science, Operational Research and Risk Analysis, Data Science and Analytics, and Quantitative Finance and FinTech. Members of



the Department have expertise in applied optimization and optimal control, engineering computation, operational research, management science and applied statistics, FinTech, data science and machine learning. There are currently 49 academic staff and about 159 research personnel in the Department. Please visit the website at <u>http://www.polyu.edu.hk/ama</u> for more information about the Department.

The Department has established a Joint Laboratory of Applied Mathematics with the Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The appointee is expected to be actively involved in the activities of the Laboratory.

Duties

The appointee will be required to:

(a) teach and contribute to curriculum development at undergraduate and postgraduate levels;

(b) supervise MPhil and PhD students;

(c) engage in scholarly research, consultancy and other scholarly activities leading to publications in top-tier refereed journals and award of research grants;

(d) undertake academic and departmental administrative duties; and

(e) perform any other duties as assigned by the Head of the Department or his delegates.

Qualifications

Applicants should:

(a) have a PhD in Mathematics / Statistics / Financial Mathematics / Operations Research / Computational Mathematics / Applied Mathematics or a closely related field;

(b) have expertise in applied statistics, operation research or mathematics;

(c) have an established track record in research and scholarship, including refereed publications and external grant applications;

(d) have a demonstrated commitment to excellence in teaching; and

(e) be highly proficient in written and spoken English.

Conditions of Service

A highly competitive remuneration package will be offered. Appointment will only be on a fixed-term gratuity-bearing contract.

Application



Please submit an application through PolyU's career website (https://jobs.polyu.edu.hk/academic). Consideration of applications will commence on 10 January 2025 until the position is filled. The University's Personal Information Collection Statement for recruitment can be found at https://www.polyu.edu.hk/hro/careers/pics_for_recruitment/.

Assistant Professor in Applied Optimization and Operations Research / Data Science and Analytics, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Ref. 241106015), Hong Kong

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED MATHEMATICS

The Department of Applied Mathematics (AMA) offers Bachelor of Science (Honours) Scheme in Data Science, and makes a significant contribution to most of other academic programmes of the University by providing service teaching. It also offers master programmes in Applied Mathematics for Science and Technology with specialisms in Actuarial and Investment Science, Operational Research and Risk Analysis, Data Science and Analytics, and Quantitative Finance and FinTech. Members of the Department have expertise in applied optimization and optimal control, engineering computation, operational research, management science and applied statistics, FinTech, data science and machine learning. There are currently 49 academic staff and about 151 research personnel in the Department. Please visit the website at http://www.polyu.edu.hk/ama for more information about the Department.

The Department has established a Joint Laboratory of Applied Mathematics with the Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The appointee is expected to be actively involved in the activities of the Laboratory.

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(e) perform any other duties as assigned by the Head of the Department or his delegates.

Qualifications

Applicants should:

(a) have a PhD in Mathematics / Statistics / Financial Mathematics / Operations Research / Computational Mathematics / Applied Mathematics or a closely related field;

(b) have expertise in applied statistics, operation research or mathematics;

(c) have an established track record in research and scholarship, including refereed publications and external grant applications;

(d) have a demonstrated commitment to excellence in teaching; and

(e) be highly proficient in written and spoken English.

Conditions of Service

A highly competitive remuneration package will be offered. Initial appointment will be on a fixed-term gratuity-bearing contract. Re-engagement thereafter is subject to mutual agreement. For general information on terms and conditions for appointment of academic staff in the University, please visit the website at

https://www.polyu.edu.hk/hro/docdrive/careers/doc/Prof.pdf.

Application

Please submit an application through PolyU's career website

(<u>https://jobs.polyu.edu.hk/academic</u>). Consideration of applications will commence on 27 November 2024 until the position is filled. The University's Personal Information Collection Statement for recruitment can be found at

https://www.polyu.edu.hk/hro/careers/pics for recruitment/.

PolyU is an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity and inclusivity. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to gender, ethnicity, nationality, family status or physical or mental disabilities.