

### My study programme

I went to CityU in Hong Kong from September 2016 to December 2016 for my law exchange. It was truly a wonderful experience, and Hong Kong has become one of my favourite places, and I would love to live there someday if the opportunity ever arises.

The lectures were based on the common law system, which meant memorizing and becoming acquainted with a lot of Hong Kong cases. The lectures were based more heavily on case law than in Groningen, where cases are definitely necessary but seem to serve as supplementary, rather than in the classes I took at CityU, where it seemed to be the essence of the lectures.

### Language

In Hong Kong, Cantonese and English are the main spoken languages, although Mandarin was also commonly used. All younger people could speak English, and so a language barrier shouldn't be a worry to anyone wanting to go to Hong Kong. Street signs will also generally be written in traditional Chinese and its English translation. Therefore, you will have no trouble getting around and even asking for directions in Hong Kong with just English.

### Finance and other conditions

With some attention on your part, your experience in Hong Kong doesn't have to break your wallet. Food is very cheap, with the McDonald's being one of the cheapest in the world (or so I was told at least. They also deliver, which is amazing, and is definitely something Holland should get on board with). CityU's canteen prices generally range from 12 HKD to 28 HKD, and the portion sizes are no joke.

### Preparation and contacts with the faculty before, during, and after my stay

Emailing the exchange faculty at CityU is a very efficient and breezy process. The coordinator replies within a day in my experience, and is very helpful and patient. I had an issue with my VISA, and there arrived late in Hong Kong after the school semester had already begun, but the coordinator helped me through the process and supplied me with information regarding my issues, and I was able to arrive only four days late.

Once you arrive at CityU, you will have to visit various faculties to settle in (such as to sign in, apply for Internet connection in your room - which takes only five minutes, don't worry! - print a student card, etc.). I was told that during the campus tour you are taken around to the faculties, but since I arrived late I had to explore the campus and locate the faculties myself, which can be a bit tedious since they are hidden away and can seem almost impossible to locate when you are new on campus. However, everyone is perfectly happy to answer any questions you may have, and the campus is filled with signs telling you how to locate everything.

After your exchange you will have to have your transcripts sent back to Groningen, and this can be arranged by contacting CityU's exchange faculty using the same email as the one you contacted before arriving at CityU. Again, replies are prompt and well informed, and there should be no issues!

### Housing

Accommodation was, in my opinion, excellent at CityU. You share a room between two people (generally people from the same university/course are put together in a room, at least during my stay at CityU), which means you are likely to already know your roommate. Your room will connect to a toilet, shower, and double sinks, which you will share with another room of two people of the same gender as you.

There are multiple apartment buildings in a U-shape, with the older buildings closer to the bridge that leads you to lecture halls, and the newer buildings stand farther away. My roommate and I were in one of the oldest buildings, which was right next to the bridge, meaning I had five extra minutes to get ready in the morning.

The room itself is not extremely large, but fits two desks, two wardrobes, and two single-person beds with room to spare.

### Culture

Personally, I did not experience much of a culture shock during my stay in Hong Kong. My family is originally from Mainland China (although I moved to The Netherlands when I was one), so I was already somewhat acquainted with Asian culture. Hong Kong, however, felt much more international to me than Mainland China. Everyone spoke very good English, except the older generations, and the local students were very used to having exchange students, and most were very welcoming if you decided to talk to them from my experience. My roommate, however, had a different experience where she said the local students seemed a lot more intimidated by her, so my experience may be because I am Asian.

### Free time

When signing up for classes, you are essentially able to determine how much free time you have. Some of my friends chose classes that only took place Monday to Wednesday, leaving them with a four-day weekend. On average, there were more classes than at RUG, since whilst RUG separates a single semester into two blocs, CityU did not do so. My Tuesday's were especially packed, with classes from 9 am to 5 pm, with a two-hour break in between. However, this meant that on the other days I only had two to four hours of lectures/working groups.

Despite the slightly longer hours, Hong Kong's nightlife is amazing, and so even if there are days when you end at 5 pm, there is always something to do. The shops are open until around 10 pm, and the tiny restaurants and food tents are open until well into the early morning. There are a lot of blogs detailing all the tourist attractions in Hong Kong, such as hiking routes, top restaurants (amongst them the cheapest Michelin star restaurant which serves a delicious pork bun), an infinity pool, and islands that, if given the time, should definitely be visited. All in all, you will have more than enough free time, and even more to do in Hong Kong.

### Traveling

Traveling around Hong Kong was extremely simple, due to their MTR system. There was a metro under pretty much every large shopping mall, and the routes were easy to memorize, and colour coordinated as well! During rush hour, however, the MTR can get very crowded, but there are workers telling you where to stand and who keep everything going in a calm and orderly fashion.

As a student, you can apply for an MTR card which gives you a significant discount that applies to both the MTRs and the buses. The cards work the same as the OV card in The Netherlands, and the process is extremely simple, and instructions are given during the introduction to the campus.

The only gripe I had with the public transport system was that the MTR shut down at around 11 pm, and then the main option was to take a night bus, which I never personally got the hang of, and was also very infrequent compared to the MTR, where there is only ever really a three minute wait if you miss one. However, going out as a group means you can split a taxi, and if you have four people it really isn't expensive at all.

## Other

CityU's campus is small, but jam packed. There is a pool, a gym (which was under renovation during the semester I spent there since the old gym's roof had collapsed the semester before - but no one was hurt!), many canteen options, from pizza, to Teppanyaki, to falafel, to dim sum, to an English breakfast (definitely give the English breakfast a try).

All of the lecture buildings (of which there are two main ones) are connected to each other through passageways (if you can find them at least. I didn't discover them until around two months into my stay), so you never have to see the sun. The shopping mall is also connected by an underground passageway, and the first time I was brought there it honestly felt like I had stepped into Narnia. It also means that everything is easily accessible: within a ten to fifteen minute walk from your student dorm, there is a supermarket, MTR station, a food court, and various shops (although some are a bit pricey)