

Exchange Report City University of Hong Kong, Autumn 2019

From August 26th to November 14th 2019

1. Study programme

For exchange students, there was not a really large choice of courses especially that many courses turned out to overlap on the schedule so it reduced the choices we had. Unfortunately, when choosing the courses, the schedule is not available, however, during the add/drop period when the schedule is available, you can change courses if you don't want to take the course anymore or you don't like the schedule. There is a specific procedure to go through to add or drop a course, however I advise you to email the Professors as it goes faster and there are also higher chances to get a spot in the course. Indeed, some professors do not mind to accept you in their course even though it is full, so once they agree you just have to inform the administration, while the administration would simply inform you that the class is full.

In order to fulfill the 30 credits requirement, you have to take 5 courses at CityU: some of them have working groups and some not. Lectures usually last 3 hours and working groups 50 minutes. The courses I took are:

- Law and Gender: B3 level, only lecture, favorite course, the Professor made it interactive and interesting. He was very passionate about the subject. I highly recommend this course. The assessment: Participation and attendance in class, assignment, a gender debate and a final open book exam.
- International Human Rights Law: B4 level, only lecture. The assessment: 3500 words essay and presentation.
- Intellectual Property: Theory, Design and Copyright: B4 level, only lecture. The assessment: Presentation, 7000 words essay in groups of 3-5 and final open book exam.
- Mooting: B2 level, we had only 4 lectures. The assessment: memorial and moot court in groups of 2.
- Criminal Law I: B2 level, lectures and working groups. The assessment: Presentation, essay in groups of 4, final open book exam.

Basically all the courses come with a presentation, essay and final exam so it is very important to check the various deadlines when you enroll otherwise you will have extremely busy weeks. The 4th year courses were not difficult, so you don't have to worry about the level, however, I don't advise you to pick only B4 courses. The courses' level is in my opinion lower and less demanding than in Groningen.

This is a description of how courses are usually taught, however, in my case due to the protests and the escalation of the situation, the University had to close for security reasons and the

semester was suspended. I ended up having take-home exams and managed to pass the courses.

The way of teaching is very different from the one in Rug: it is less interactive and way more competitive. The big difference is also that it is a semester and not two blocks, so you have the same 5 courses for 4 months which I personally didn't like.

Overall, the Uni part of the exchange experience made me appreciate more the Dutch system which, although very demanding, gives you a lot of independence and the possibility to organize yourself as you wish while at CityU it felt a bit like highschool.

2. Application procedure

The application procedure is easy as long as you provide all the necessary documents and respect the deadlines. Sometimes it gets a bit confusing so I advise you to stay in touch with the exchange office.

3. Language

City University: You are expected to have a score of 7 at the IELTS test.

Hong Kong: not everyone speaks English in Hong Kong so you may have some problems communicating with the locals. I usually used google translator or simply communicate with hand signs.

4. Finance and other conditions

Hong Kong is very expensive so you should really be financially prepared. Eating out twice a day can be sometimes cheaper and more convenient than grocery shopping and cooking. For grocery shopping I used to go to Wellcome or the local markets for fruits. For Lunch and dinner I would eat at uni (very affordable) when I had classes: they have few canteens and restaurants, you can choose between Chinese/Asian food, Western food or middle eastern food.

Transport is not expensive especially when you get the student Octopus card: you pay half price for the MTR.

I didn't buy any book, everything was available at the library.

5. Preparation and contacts with the faculty before, during and after your stay

You will have a contact person at CityU, mine was Miss Lillian. She is very nice, friendly and helpful. She invited us for coffee, gave us few tips and would always check on us. Your contact person will always send you emails to remind you of what you need to do or send before mobility and keep you up to date about your application, course enrollment, visa application etc. During mobility, the contact person is the one who you should refer to in case you have any problem at Uni or outside Uni. The University will also assign you a buddy who will guide you through Hong Kong if needed, you can ask him/her anything.

There will be an introduction week starting in the last week of August with Uni/library tours, social events, city tours, sport activities ... Not all of them are free and sometimes you have to sign up.

After mobility, my contact person always responded swiftly to my emails.

6. Housing

APPLY FOR THE STUDENT RESIDENCE! I can't stress this enough because it is super cheap, it is around 1200 euros for the whole semester. You get to share a room with another person, the bathroom with 3 persons and the kitchen with the floor. The rooms are a bit old and small but I didn't spend that much time in my room and to be honest residence rooms are the best you can get. It's 5 minutes walking from Campus, directly connected with a bridge to the University buildings and it is quiet. Otherwise you would have to rent a room and the minimum rent is usually around 700 euros per month for a tiny shared room. Getting a room is not guaranteed, you are chosen randomly, so good luck!

7. Culture

Get ready for a culture shock! At least that was my case. Everything is extremely different although very interesting. It takes some time to get used to the way and rhythm of life. People are very competitive and stressed and that is something you can really feel on a daily basis. They are always in a hurry and not cheerful. However, they are usually nice when you ask for help.

8. Free time and travelling

Hong Kong has a lot to offer, you can never get bored. You can go hiking, camping, swimming or all at once. You can visit temples, islands, street markets or simply walk around. There is always something to do or something to discover in Hong Kong when you have some free time. You can simply take the MTR, stop at a random station and go sightseeing for hours, it is totally worth it!

Hong Kong has also a thrilling nightlife and LKF is a must!

Travelling from Hong Kong is very easy and quite cheap, there are so many flights every day for various destination. During my semester abroad I went to Thailand, the Philippines and Taiwan.

9. Tips and Suggestions

- Get your Octopus card as soon as you arrive
- Start your visa application as soon as possible
- Pack for both winter and summer clothes because even if it very hot outside, it is freezing inside because of the air-conditioning.