



August 2020 Faculty of Law, The University of Hong Kong (People's Republic of China)

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

Mixed feelings. Obviously, my year in Hong Kong was heavily disturbed by both the protests for democracy as well as the pandemic, which shortened my stay. I could however enjoy and experiment the vibrant city that is Hong Kong.

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

The University of Zurich itself is very diligent and provide help and information in a speedy and efficient manner. With HKU however, the process is slower and more complicated. Our contact person at HKU was on leave during the preparation of our admission at HKU and when we had to apply for the visa. We had to trigger both processes ourselves, by writing directly to HKU's administration. Be prepared and proactive for all administrative processes with HKU. The Cedars website as well as the HKU website provide a lot of useful information.

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

(e.g. important contact persons at the Partner University and Faculty) As I said, our contact person for the Double Degree was on leave. It was therefore the Faculty of Law's secretariat which took care of us. For most administrative manner, you can contact them. They however can take quite some time to answer. For information concerning precise courses, you can directly e-mail the professor in charge, they usually respond very quickly and can redirect you to the person in charge.

4 Housing

Hong Kong is quite complicated concerning housing. You can either apply to an HKU student hall or try to find a flat on the private market. Concerning student halls, the admission process begins pretty early during the semester prior to your arrival. There are a lot of different halls available and you can pick only three, in order of preference. You should read each hall's admission conditions very carefully, as taught postgraduate are not eligible for a lot of them. Moreover, some halls only take your application into account if you put them in first place on your list, so be aware of that. Also, you should really send all required documents after the application for them to accept your application. On the private market, you can either use an estate agent who can organise flat visits, or try to find a shared flat or a studio by yourself, which happens mostly on Facebook. This is what I personally did, there are a lot of Facebook groups for flat searching. I found my shared apartment on the group "French in Hong

Kong". All neighborhoods on the islands are nice to live in, and you can consider the Kowloon side if you want a less expat-filled neighborhood.

5 Arrival

Hong Kong airport is quite far away from the city. To reach the centre, you can take a bus, a taxi or the airport express.

6 Telephone

There are a lot of operators available. I chose the operator "Birdie", pretty cheap and quite flexible.

7 Bank account

In Hong Kong, people use cash a lot. However, credit card (I used Revolut a lot) are widely accepted and you can also use the octopus card (a sort of prepaid card used for the subway) in some supermarkets. I did not have a local bank account, I had heard that it was pretty complicated. If you are in a student hall, you will most likely be required to have a local account. Those can be very handy, since there are a lot of occasions where you have to make payments to the University itself and having a local bank account makes those transfers a lot easier and cheaper

8 Transport

(e.g. from Switzerland, to the University)

The Hong Kong subway is very efficient in Hong Kong. Buses and trams are pretty reliable too, but are definitely slower. At night, private small buses can take you from one side of the city to another quite easily, you just have to find them. At the harbour, ferries can bring you to the surrounding islands, which are definitely worth seeing. Except for the night buses which only accept cash, all public transports accept the octopus card.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

The HKU campus is incredible, located between the jungle and skyscrapers. A lot of different food options are available, including a very nice vegan buffet close to the law building. The associative life is very strong and there are clubs for pretty much any activity. There are libraries to study in, as well as working spaces pretty much everywhere. It can sometimes be a bit tricky to find the classrooms.

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

(e.g. program structure, methodology, exams, etc.)

Because of the protests and the pandemic, we had an usual year study-wise in HKU. You can choose between different L.L.M. programs with different option and courses, or go for the general stream L.L.M. and take any class you're interested in. Lectures usually happen in the evening, between 18:30 and 21:30, or on the weekends, to allow part-time postgraduate students to work next to their studies. You can also chose intensive courses, which are done in a shorter period of time with a higher frequency of courses. HKU also has a "winter" and a "summer" semester, in February and June (if I'm correct),

where some intensive courses take place as well. Class participation is important, students get called out to answer questions and it counts between 10 and 30% of the grade. Class attendance counts for 10% as well. Concerning the exams, they are mostly papers to submit or what they call "at-home exam", which you have to write and submit in one or two days. It is very complicated to learn cantonese/mandarin at HKU. There are some courses, but they are weirdly not available to taught postgraduates. If you want to take some lessons outside of the Uni, you have to file for a Non-Objection letter, first from the Law department and then from the HK immigration (the same applies if you want to work next to your studies). It takes roughly a week to get the letter from the Law faculty, and then more than 2-3 weeks to get the letter from the immigration. At the end, I could not take lessons at all. I presume that you can find some private professors quite easily.

11 City

(e.g. cultural activities, sports, discounts, nightlife, must-sees, short trips, etc.)

Hong Kong offers so much. Foodwise, you can find cuisine from all over Asia and from all over the world. Small local places are very good and cheap as well. The city is filled with (former) Michelin-star small restaurants. There are a ton of hikes and beaches, all around the island itself but also in Kowloon and the new territories. Hikes like dragon's back, suicide cliff or lion's head are very popular. The small islands surrounding Hong Kong are a very nice escape from the city life, Lamma island is especially pleasing. It is easy to apply for visas to China in Hong Kong, either directly through the Chinese immigration, or through small firms that then deal with the Chinese immigration (a bit more expensive but very efficient).

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