



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

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

Negative. Obviously, the 2019/2020 academic year in Hong Kong was heavily disturbed by events external to both the HKU and the UZH's sphere of influences. The latter events, nevertheless had enormous impacts on the overall experience, be it socially, academically or financially.

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

At the beginning, there were issues concerning the communication of information by the HKU to students, especially for the visa (which required the involvement of the HKU). I had to ask the responsible persons at the HKU secretariat several times to make sure things are moving forward. I recommend visiting the HKU's website for overseas students ("CEDARS"; <http://cedars.hku.hk>), which provides important information for visa and university housing.

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

(e.g. important contact persons at the Partner University and Faculty)

The Faculty of Law's Secretariat (especially Doris Cheng) helps students with any matter or effectively direct students to the responsible persons. Be patient, it can take sometimes days before receiving answers. For academic matters, I would turn to Directors of LL.M. Programs. They personally helped me a lot in matters which the Secretariat did not answer or have refused to proceed.

4 Housing

Be prepared to pay a lot for housing of modest quality. The Hong Kong housing market is ridiculously expensive. It is very important to apply one semester ahead to university accommodations (through CEDARS). HKU provides relatively good and various student housing options for decent prices. Nevertheless, the number of students far exceeds the number of available spots, so give it all in your application form. Read carefully the Halls' eligibilities, since post-graduate students are not allowed in most of the student halls. The final selection of residents are published a couple of weeks before the start of the semester. Regarding the private market, estate agents provide numerous options according to one's budget. Don't hesitate to negotiate prices and consider several options. Neighborhoods (close to the following metro stops) I recommend are 'Kennedy Town', 'Sheung Wan' and 'Tsim Sha Tsui'. Other nice ones are 'HKU' and 'Wan Chai'. I personally stayed 4 weeks at hotels while I was looking

for a decent accommodation (which I never found). Not ideal, but I encourage to first try to get an university housing spot, before turning to the private market, shared apartments ranging from 800 to 1'200 CHF, equipped studios starting at 1'400 CHF.

5 Arrival

Hong Kong Airport is located on an Island quite far from the city center. A fast train ('Airport Express') bring travelers for 13 CHF to the city center. Bus routes are longer yet cheaper. Taxis operate from 35 to 50 CHF, depending upon one's accomodation's location. CEDARS organises pick-ups from the Airport to the University for students arriving by day in weekdays.

6 Telephone

(e.g. costs, carriers)

There are numerous operators providing relatively cheap service compared to Switzerland. I recommend 'Birdy', having very handy activation/termination options as well as cheap and flexible contractual conditions. Be careful that your Smartphone is not 'European SIM Card Only', local Hong Kong Sim Cards will not work on those... (yes, personal experience).

7 Bank account

Revolut or N26 might not suffice in Hong Kong. The city's shops and restaurants mostly only accept cash or 'Octopus Card' (a metro card with which one can also pay in shops, restaurants, etc...). Also, paying accomodations fees as well as university fees are much easier and are free of additional charges when conducted via a local bank account. I would recommend having both a free-membership online-banking account such as Revolut (useful for travels outside Hong Kong and transfers of CHF to HKD on the local Hong Kong Bank account) and a local Hong Kong Bank account with a 'UnionPay' cards (for payments/withdrawals in Hong Kong and more importantly if you travel to Mainland China).

8 Transport

The Hong Kong Metro ('MTR') works very efficiently in and around Hong Kong. Buses and trams are less reliable. Prices are cheap from a Swiss perspective.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

While the faculty is not always very responsive and information-giving, they have understanding for overseas students and will try to sort problems out. Missed delays for example are not so much of a bit issue. The HKU-campus is simply amazing. Freshly renewed, floral location with stunning view over the harbour and Kowloon. Delicious and varied mensas, numerous and spacious library/learning commons with extended opening hours, cheap coffee shops, comfortable classrooms, and so on...

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

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

Unfortunately, my comments might not be very helpful in this section. The protests as well as the coronavirus reduced both the course options and the course attendance. We could only physically

attend to classes from September the 2nd to November the 13th, 2019 (around 25% of the normal yearly attendance...). Afterwards, online teaching and online exams occurred. From what I experienced, the methodology quite heavily differs from the one at the UZH insofar as in-class participation is important (mandatory even), readings before and after classes are required and form a heavy load of work and exams often take the form of a research essay (usually 5'000 to 8'000 words) that students should write throughout the semester. May 2020 Apart from few intensive courses, classes are mostly in the evening (6.30 to 9.30). The 1st semester starts in early september to end early december, examination ending before Christmas. The 2nd semester starts early February to end early may, examinations ending early June at the latest. One reading week per semester (in October and March) allow students to catch up on their readings/papers or take trips. Be aware that while there is a wide choice of courses offered on the HKU website, less are actually available to students, owed to cancellations and more importantly to one's choice of LL.M.'s specialization. Unfortunately, certain courses with high-profile professors are capped in size so that only students opting for the appropriate specialization and after acceptance by the professor will be allowed to attend. Lastly, there exists possibilities in participating in Moot Courts (not counting as courses) or being a Professor's Research Assistant (capped at 20% occupancy rate).

11 City

(e.g. cultural activities, sports, discounts, nightlife, must-sees, short trips, etc.) Endless to mention when life is not disturbed by pandemic viruses of large social unrests. On campus, sports activities and facilities are as diversified as in the ASVZ, yet more crowded. Hong Kong offers food from all over Asia, as well as Western classics for affordable prices. If you're a foodie, there is no better place to be. Stunning hikes are famous activities on and around the Island. Nightlife is also a big thing, especially the 'Wednesday's Pub Crawls' at the Jockey Club following by Wan Chai's Bars Devil's Advocate and Carnegies, as well as the Thursday nights' parties at Lan Kwan Fong. Essentials in Hong Kong are further the Victoria Peak, the Star Ferry, the 10'000 Buddha's Monastery, Lamma Island, Mong Kok's Quartier, as well as the streetfood scene on Stanley Street. Download 'Openrice' and 'Meetup', the latter for entering groups doing activities such as hikes or table tennis, the former for restaurants and bars. I would also take the opportunity to visit nearby metropolises such as Macao, Shenzhen or, a bit more remote, Taipei. Hong Kong being well-located, trips to China, Japan, Korea, Thailand or Indonesia are some hours away.

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