

HONG KONG

Semester and Academic Year



2012-2013 Program Guide



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The University of California, in accordance with applicable Federal and State law and University policy, does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy,* disability, age, medical condition (cancer-related), ancestry, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran. The University also prohibits sexual harassment. This nondiscrimination policy covers admission, access, and treatment in University programs and activities. Inquiries regarding the University's student-related nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the campus Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action office.

*Pregnancy includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.



► Scan to get this guide on your Smartphone.

YOUR UCEAP NETWORK

Local UCEAP Support

Campus EAP Office

The Campus EAP Office coordinates recruitment, student selection, orientations, and academic advising; and serves as your primary contact during the application process.

UCEAP Systemwide Office

The UCEAP Systemwide Office establishes and operates programs and coordinates UCEAP administration for all UC campuses from its headquarters in Goleta, California. You will work closely with the following Systemwide Office staff:

Program Advisors provide academic and operational program information to you and your campus as well as administrative support for all aspects of your participation.

Operations Specialists manage the logistics of the program. They coordinate document requirements, visa application instructions, health and safety precautions, acceptance and placement by host institutions, arrival and on-site orientation, and housing arrangements.

Academic Specialists advise on academic policies, review courses taken abroad for UC credit, and document your registration, grades, petitions and academic records.

Student Finance Accountants assist primarily with UCEAP statements, program fee collection, and financial aid disbursements (in conjunction with your campus Financial Aid Office).

Contact Information

Program Advisor

Michelle Hertig

Phone: (805) 893-2831; E-mail: mhertig@eap.ucop.edu

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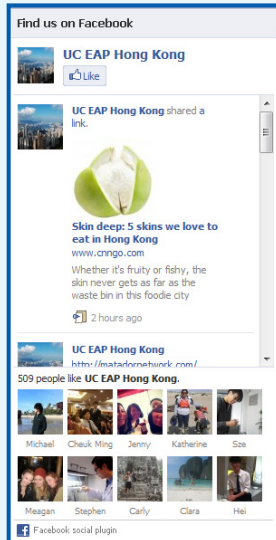
UCEAP Systemwide Office

6950 Hollister Avenue, Suite 200

Goleta, CA 93117-5823

Phone: (805) 893-4762; Fax: (805) 893-2583

► **Join the Conversation!**
Meet fellow UCEAP participants and alumni on Facebook.



UCEAP Online

Bookmark your **Participants** program page. This resource lists requirements and policies you need to know before you go abroad, including your Predeparture Checklist, *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*, Program Calendar, UCEAP Student Budgets, and payment instructions.

Connect with us! Join our Facebook network via the **UCEAP Hong Kong page**.

Study Center Abroad

Once abroad, a host university faculty or staff member representing UCEAP will be your first point of contact for all matters. Among other things, the designated person provides support with academic matters, program logistics, and personal issues.

The **Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)** program is administered by a UCEAP Liaison Officer who is primarily responsible for academic advising. The Office of Academic Links and the International Asian Studies Programme provide additional support for all international students at CUHK.

The **Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HK PolyU)** program is administered by the International Affairs Office in consultation with appointed faculty members responsible for international students in each department.

The **University of Hong Kong (HKU)** program is administered by a UCEAP Liaison Officer who is primarily responsible for academic advising. Additional support is provided through the Office of International Student Exchange (OISE) and the Center of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS).

At the **Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)**, each school has a designated UCEAP Liaison Officer and program administrators who oversee UCEAP students and will assist you with various needs including academic advising.

It is critical that you understand the role of each person involved with program, logistic, and academic issues, and remember to communicate your concerns with all parties (both in Hong Kong and at UC).

Phone Number Codes

U.S. international code **011**
(dial this to call from the U.S.)

Hong Kong country code. **852**

Approximate Time Difference

16 hours

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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 International Asian Studies Programme
 Office of Academic Links, Lady Ho Tung Hall
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Hong Kong Polytechnic University

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M1601, Li Ka Shing Tower
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The University of Hong Kong

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Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...



The activities during the orientation were very helpful and well planned. I was able to explore the campus and adjust to the culture before school started.

Academically, I think the interaction with peers and professors is most important. It greatly affects the academic experience.

One of the greatest benefits of studying abroad is the exposure you get to different ideas and views. Faculty and peer groups offer these new perspectives.



ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Overview

UCEAP in Hong Kong provides rich academic, business, and cultural opportunities in one of the most diverse, vibrant, and stimulating cities in the world. You have a remarkable opportunity to study the innovative “one country, two systems” arrangement; Hong Kong is governed as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) under Chinese sovereignty, and it is deeply engaged with the world. Hong Kong also remains an outstanding academic location for studying China and all of Asia. UCEAP offers programs at four highly ranked English-speaking and bilingual universities:

1. **The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK):** Includes the study of Chinese language (Cantonese and Putonghua) and a variety of coursework in the arts and humanities, business, science, engineering, and the social sciences. Courses are available in both English and Cantonese, and occasionally in Putonghua.
2. **Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU):** Our newest partner with a focus on strong coursework in the area of engineering. Instruction is in English.
3. **The University of Hong Kong (HKU):** Offers most fields of study. Instruction is in English.
4. **Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST):** Concentrates on business, engineering, or the sciences. Instruction is in English.

Chinese (Cantonese) language study is not required, but is highly recommended, as Cantonese is the primary language of Hong Kong. Former UCEAP students have commented that knowing just a little Cantonese made a big difference.

Course Registration

Universities in Hong Kong are in the process of changing from a three-year to a four-year degree structure. This is limiting course availability in many departments. UCEAP recommends being flexible and having several back-up courses when doing course selection.

Course registration procedures vary among the different schools and departments. You will do preregistration with your host institution as part of your predeparture checklist and final registration after arrival. For some departments registration is online and is fairly simple; others require that you go to the department in person and request approval to take the course. Be patient with the registration procedures and seek assistance from the Study Center if needed.

The add/drop period typically takes place the first two weeks of the term. It is very important to attend all classes you may want to take during this time to see if the classes are suitable for you (i.e., you understand the lecturer, the course is taught completely in English, there are no time conflicts, you meet the prerequisites, etc.).

You will also register with UCEAP by completing your MyEAP Registration Study List. Instructions will be provided after arrival.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...



Take advantage of all the help that's out there—advisors, professors, local students, roommates, etc. You can get all the help you need through networking.

Get to know local and international students. The local students can give you a lot of helpful information about classes you're considering.



- ▶ **Attendance is mandatory in most courses, and grades are reduced if you miss class.**

Internships

Due to immigration policy, exchange students, including UCEAP participants, may **not** participate in internships in Hong Kong. However, research, independent study, and volunteering projects may be available. Arrangements for such opportunities are generally made after arrival in Hong Kong.

Academic Culture

While courses are taught in English in UCEAP Hong Kong programs, Cantonese is the language used in dormitories and on the street, and it may also be used in tutorials, labs, and studios. Some basic Cantonese will facilitate your interactions both in classes and in everyday activities. Lecturers may have accents that are difficult to understand. Before finalizing course enrollment, make sure you understand the main lecturer in each course.

You are expected to study independently, do the background reading, and incorporate class work and reading in your written papers. Some courses involve fieldwork, practical experience, or lab work. Student-centered inquiry and problem-based learning are encouraged. At the same time, be prepared for more memorization for exams than you may be accustomed to at UC; local teaching style emphasizes the repetition of lecture material on written quizzes and exams.

Exams & Grades

Grading at Hong Kong institutions reflects the rigorous academic standards. Grading curves are very rare. If you apply yourself and adapt to local practices and expectations, you can earn good grades. Be aware that grades assigned by Hong Kong instructors are likely to be lower than you are accustomed to receiving.

Your academic progress will be assessed by methods that include fieldwork, laboratory assignments, individual and group projects, quizzes, exams, and any other criteria relevant to the particular course. Course attendance and participation may also be considered.

Most exams are in short answer or essay format. Class participation may be especially important in seminars and in courses that have tutorial sessions. You are required to attend class regularly, take all exams given for courses in which you are enrolled, and submit all written work for each course to the satisfaction of the instructor.

Language course grades are usually based on periodic quizzes and tests, homework assignments, class performance, and a final oral and written exam. You must attend every class unless you receive permission to be absent. Classes are small and absences will affect both your personal progress and grade for the course.

Fall grades are usually available in late February to mid-March. Spring grades are usually available in late July or early August (this may not apply to Polytechnic University, which is a new partner).

- ▶ **For more information about grades, see the [Academic Information](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.**

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“ Make sure the instructors that teach your classes speak English at a level that you understand. Also make sure that you speak up and ask the instructor or TA to speak in English if you don't understand Cantonese.

The most important aspect was being able to have classes with the local students. Interacting with them taught me a lot.

The CUHK class sizes are smaller so you can get to know your professors and interact with them.

”

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) offers coursework taught in English, Cantonese, and Putonghua (Mandarin), as well as Chinese language instruction.

Undergraduate students at CUHK belong to one of six colleges, which provide accommodations, sports training, and informal learning opportunities. You will be assigned to one of these colleges along with all other exchange students.

Graduate students take courses through the MBA program and are held to the requirements of the UCEAP Graduate or Professional Student Agreement.

Required:

- Minimum of 21 UC quarter units per semester; usually five courses. UCEAP students typically take 22.5 UC quarter units as most courses are 3 credits (4.5 UC quarter units)

Course Information

Instructors usually distribute syllabi and reading lists at the beginning of the course. Group projects are common in business administration and other disciplines though they are not typical in the humanities.

See lists of courses taught in English at [CUHK's website](#) for the Office of Academic Links. The schedule of courses, called the Teaching Timetable, shows the course offerings by term, including the language of instruction.

If you have advanced Chinese (near-native) language skills you may take CUHK courses taught in either Putonghua or Cantonese. The selection of courses available in the regular departments of CUHK is limited by the following:

- The courses listed in CUHK bulletins as being taught in Putonghua and English (P&E) or Cantonese and English (C&E) are taught in Chinese but usually have English texts and/or technical terms in English. Courses listed as P#E or C#E will be taught in English if there are students in the class who do not understand Putonghua or Cantonese.
- There may be schedule conflicts between regular CUHK courses and Chinese language courses.

Chinese language instruction is provided through the New Asia, Yale-in-China Chinese Language Center (CLC). Cantonese and Putonghua (Mandarin) courses are offered at the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels and are recommended.

If you take Chinese language instruction, you must choose either 6 CUHK units of Cantonese or Putonghua courses (9 UC quarter units); you cannot take both Cantonese and Putonghua simultaneously. Refer to the [CLC website](#) for additional information.

CUHK courses are numbered by year and level: 1000 to 1999 are elementary courses and will be given lower-division credit by UCEAP; 2000 to 2999 are intermediate courses and are usually upper division except language courses; 3000 to 4999 are advanced courses; 5000 and above are graduate courses.

You will complete a preliminary study plan with your CUHK application that is used for planning purposes by CUHK. You will receive additional course registration information with your acceptance letter from CUHK.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...



Be patient. Don't be surprised to find that local students are often unwilling to participate in class. The instructors, however, are great and so helpful. I found them to be very responsive to my questions. Don't hesitate to introduce yourself. Also, be aware of class representatives. They truly have a part in mediating between students and the professor.

**Independent Research**

It may be possible for you to develop your own directed research or independent study project with an appropriate CUHK professor. Working under the supervision of a CUHK faculty member provides an excellent opportunity to practice language skills while contributing to ongoing research in various fields, including anthropology, art, economics, international trade and commerce, language studies, music, political science, and sociology. Additional information about these opportunities will be provided on request after arrival.

Teaching Opportunities

Selected UCEAP students may participate in the following teaching programs:

- An English tutorial program with high school students in Zengcheng, a provincial town with a mixed rural-industrial economy located about 80 kilometers northeast of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. This is a two-day weekend trip where you teach English at a local middle school and visit with small children at a children's center.
- An English tutorial program with high school students in Shantou, a rapidly developing Special Economic Zone along the eastern coast of the Guangdong Province. Shantou presents an intriguing mix of modern, progressive culture and deep-rooted traditional Chaozhou culture. This is a three-day weekend trip.
- Volunteer (or semi-volunteer) English teaching, mostly in English conversation classes, in Hong Kong high schools.

CUHK will provide information about these opportunities after arrival.

Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)

You may select from regular university courses taught in English in a broad range of subjects that are open to exchange students. Course information is listed on the [PolyU website](#) and individual courses are referred to as subjects.

Some China-related courses, or some courses offered by the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies and the Department of Applied Social Sciences, are taught in Chinese or Cantonese.

Required:

- Minimum of 22.5 UC quarter units each semester (15 PolyU units); usually five courses. Most courses are 3 PolyU units (4.5 UC quarter units).
- The majority of your courses (50 percent or more) must be taken in the faculty in which you are placed.

Course Information

Chinese (Putonghua) language study is offered by the [Chinese Language Center](#) at eight levels from beginning to advanced courses for 4.5 UC quarter units each. Beginning Cantonese is also available.

You will do preliminary course selection as part of the host university application provided in the UCEAP Predeparture Checklist. This will determine the faculty in which you will be placed. It is important to select courses carefully as you will not be able to change your faculty.

Courses start with an alpha numeric code (e.g., ABCT 212, Introductory Cell Biology and Biochemistry) that denotes the department and the level of the course. Courses with a numeric code that starts with a 1 or 2 are usually introductory courses that will be catalogued as lower-division for UCEAP. Courses with a numeric code that starts with a 3 or 4 are more advanced and will be upper-division courses, which usually have prerequisites.

You can make changes to your registered courses from one week before the start of semester until the end of the first week of semester.

The University of Hong Kong

You may take courses in a full range of academic fields (with the exception of the clinical courses in the faculties of Medicine and Dentistry, which are not open to exchange students).

Instruction, written work, and exams are in English, except for courses in Chinese language.

Required:

- Minimum of 22.5 UC quarter units per semester (27 HKU units). Most courses are 6 HKU credits (5 UC quarter units) or 3 HKU credits (2.5 UC quarter units). The usual course load is five courses (four 6-unit courses and one 3-unit course).
- Minimum of 15 HKU credits in the faculty to which you are admitted (usually three courses per semester)—no exceptions. If you are admitted to the Faculty of Business and Economics you may take the required 15 HKU units per semester in the School of Business or the School of Economics and Finance.

Course Information

Chinese language study is offered at HKU through the [Chinese Language Center](#). Cantonese for Foreign Learners (CLDC0001) has been taken by many UCEAP students and is recommended if you do not speak any Cantonese.

Courses in the Department of Chinese are taught in either Cantonese or Putonghua. If you wish to take such courses, you must be fluent in both written and spoken Chinese.

When completing the HKU application, *carefully* choose your courses and make sure you fulfill the courses' prerequisites. If no course changes are required after arrival at HKU, you will sign a form agreeing to all the courses selected before arrival and your courses will be listed online in the HKU course selection system. This is the ideal procedure; however, changes are possible during the add/drop period. If you need to change your courses on arrival you will go through the add/drop process. There is a risk of not getting enrolled in the new classes and this is a very time-consuming and often stressful process.

You must complete your final course selection within the HKU add/drop period. Course descriptions can be found on the [HKU website](#).

HKU courses are numbered by year and level: 1000 first-year courses are lower division (with very rare exceptions); 2000 may be lower or upper division depending on the content; 3000 and 4000 are upper division and generally have strict prerequisites.

Some departments have course numbers that start with 0. In most departments, these are advanced courses with prerequisites.

Common Core (CC) courses are generally broad interdisciplinary courses that are lower division.

Courses codes that begin with Y (YSCN, YEDU, etc.) are broadening courses and are lower division. Avoid putting these courses on your proposed course list as they will **not** be pre-approved.

Tutorials

Most courses include mandatory tutorials in addition to set lecture hours. Registration procedures for tutorials will vary among faculties and may entail: registering for the tutorial time slot during the first lecture; signup at the faculty notice board; or online registration. It is very important to attend the first two sessions of any class you may want to take to learn the specific tutorial registration procedure and to ensure that tutorial time slots do not conflict.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

To assimilate into the culture, make friends with local students. This also helps with culture shock. I was very lucky to meet groups of civil engineering friends with whom I still have contact.

HKUST is on semesters, so it seems to start more slowly than UC's quarters. Don't let this deceive you. At first, you may think it's a lot easier, but in reality, it all adds up in the end.

Go see your professors. They really enjoy talking to exchange students and getting to know them, and most of them would love to give you extra help if you need it.

There is a lot of rote learning in the classes, and the UST instructors give tests that are based on rote learning because that is what local students are used to.

”

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

You may attend HKUST if you are majoring in engineering, business and economics, or science. All instruction is in English.

Required:

- Minimum of 21 UC quarter units each semester; usually four or five courses per term. Most courses are 3 or 4 HKUST credits (4.5 or 6 UC quarter units).
- At least two courses (preferably the majority of coursework) in the school in which you are placed: the [School of Science](#), [School of Engineering](#), or [School of Business](#). No exceptions.

Course Information

Academic expectations at HKUST are high. When choosing courses, be sure you have the requisite preparation; some courses have strict prerequisites. Do not plan to take lower level courses in your major field of study or begin a new field of study while at HKUST. In most cases, you cannot take graduate level courses.

You will take courses in the school in which you are placed or from other schools, including the School of Humanities and Social Science. Some courses offered through this school require Chinese fluency.

- School of Business departments: Accounting; Economics; Finance; Information Systems, Business Statistics and Operations Management; Management; and Marketing.
- School of Engineering courses: bioproduct engineering; building services; chemical, civil, electronic, environmental, industrial, information, and mechanical engineering; logistics; and computer science.
- School of Science courses: mathematics, physics (materials science and optics), biology (molecular biology, biotechnology, and marine biology), chemistry, and biochemistry.
- Minimal Chinese language instruction is available at HKUST. The elementary course, Putonghua for Non-Chinese Background, is offered each semester; a course in business Chinese is sometimes offered. Other Chinese language courses require fluency.

Courses include lectures, case analyses, class presentations, and written papers or projects. Class size is normally 30 to 40 students in 2000- and 3000-level courses. Attendance (which is mandatory), class participation, and final exams (format varies) are considered in assigning the final course grade.

Courses have an alpha numeric code (i.e., CHEM 2112, Fundamentals of Organic Chemistry) that denotes the department and the level of the course. Courses with a numeric code that starts with a 1 or 2 are usually introductory courses that will be lower division for UCEAP. Courses with a numeric code that starts with a 3 or 4 are more advanced and will be upper division. These courses usually have prerequisites. Course listings are in the [HKUST Course Catalog](#).

You will complete your course selection as part of the host university application provided in the UCEAP Predeparture Checklist. At HKUST you will register for your courses online before the semester begins. Detailed information about how to register online will be provided with your acceptance letter. During the add/drop period after classes begin, you can make changes to your registration through HKUST's online system.

EXTENDING UCEAP PARTICIPATION

Plan Ahead

Extending your UCEAP participation is possible. If you are considering an extension, submit a Departmental and College Preliminary Approval to Extend (DPA) form prior to departure. Once abroad, make an appointment with your Study Center to initiate the extension. The Study Center submits a Request for Final Approval (RFA) form to the UCEAP Systemwide Office. UCEAP must receive the RFA by the deadline indicated on the form. If you do not submit an approved DPA before departure, then you must submit a Petition to Extend form, which requires campus and department approval, and can take up to eight weeks to process.

Both UCEAP and the Study Center must approve your extension request. Approval is based on a number of factors including program criteria, academic performance, the support of your UC campus department, and available space.

Once your extension has been approved, UCEAP will notify your UC campus registrar, Financial Aid Office, and Campus UCEAP Office. For information about the steps you need to take with regard to finances, see the [Extension of Participation](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Educate Yourself

Get acquainted with your new host city, country, and culture before you leave the U.S. Travel guides and travel-related websites such as [Lonely Planet](#) are excellent resources.

Keep up with current events by reading articles in newspapers, magazines, and journals.

You will also need to understand the local culture and history. These sources will help you prepare before departure.

Recommended Websites

- [South China Morning Post](#)
- [Hong Kong Tourism Board](#)
- [Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Information Centre](#)

Recommended Books

Barrett, Richard Edward and Fang Li	<i>Modern China</i> , Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1999.
Knight, Alan and Yoshiko Nakano, eds.	<i>Reporting Hong Kong: Foreign Media and the Handover</i> , New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
Leung, Benjamin K. P.	<i>Perspectives on Hong Kong Society</i> , New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
Mathews, Gordon and Tai-lok Lui, eds.	<i>Consuming Hong Kong</i> , Hong Kong University Press, 2001.
Pan, Lynn	<i>Sons of the Yellow Emperor: A History of the Chinese Diaspora</i> , New York: Kodansha International, 1994.
Rooney, Nuala	<i>At Home with Density</i> , Hong Kong University Press, 2003.
Siu-Kai, Lau, ed.	<i>Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong</i> , Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2000.
Tsang, Steve	<i>A Modern History of Hong Kong</i> , New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004.
Welsh, Frank	<i>A Borrowed Place: The History of Hong Kong</i> , New York: Kodansha International, 1993.

Cultural Adjustments

Be sensitive to local mores. It can be difficult to navigate gracefully amidst Hong Kong's mixture of Chinese and Western customs. Some people will behave one way with a Westerner and another way with Chinese friends and family. Learning the nuances of behavior and attitude comes slowly, at best, unless you are frequently in a Chinese environment.

The line between acceptable and unacceptable behavior is hard to draw in Hong Kong. Chinese people expect Westerners to follow what they understand as Western ways. Even students who try to adapt to local ways have a hard time because most people are too polite to admit that someone else's conduct or dress is conspicuous or offensive, except when it causes embarrassment or misunderstanding. Your curiosity and willingness to adapt will be welcomed by new Chinese friends, who will appreciate the respect you show them and their culture.

A certain code of conduct predominates and you need to be aware of the following aspects of that code, both on and off campus:

- The Hong Kong government deals harshly with foreign students who are caught in possession of drugs. Your status as a foreign citizen does not provide exemption from Hong Kong penalties for the possession and use of drugs. Hong Kong drug laws are extremely severe. Possession of marijuana is treated as a serious offense.
- Visas may be terminated abruptly if local authorities learn of any involvement in public political demonstrations or political activism that they regard as disruptive.
- If you are seen frequently with a boyfriend or girlfriend, you will be the subject of common gossip. If a friend of the opposite sex visits you from the U.S., some people may assume you have an intimate relationship. Note that most residence halls in Hong Kong have restrictions for visitors of the opposite sex. You are expected to obey these regulations.
- Chinese people do not greet each other by kissing or hugging. This common Western custom creates discomfort among Chinese, even if they are only observers. Most people restrict physical contact to a brief handshake. On the other hand, physical contact between members of the same sex is common, and you will frequently see women walking arm-in-arm or a man with an arm around a male friend's shoulder.
- Although some people in Hong Kong speak loudly, calling loudly to someone at a distance is considered impolite. Similarly, loud laughter or shouting in public places attracts unwanted attention.
- Ordinarily, the Chinese do not quibble over small amounts of money when in a restaurant or taking public transportation, and consider the American habit of splitting every expense as somewhat discourteous. When out in large groups, each member will usually pay his or her own way. If, on occasion, someone offers to treat, it is a common courtesy to reciprocate the generosity later.

Conduct in Relationships

Differing attitudes towards romantic relationships can complicate your social life. Young Westerners tend to form both casual and intimate relationships with members of the opposite sex more rapidly. While Westerners often have several girlfriends or boyfriends before settling down and marrying, the ideal among some Chinese remains to fall in love once, with courtship leading to marriage. Chinese are thus much more cautious about love and tend to view the Western approach to romance as irresponsible.

Problems occasionally arise when Chinese friends misinterpret gestures of friendship as signs of romantic interest. Many actions considered perfectly commonplace in the U.S., such as occasional outings or meetings for lunch, good-natured teasing, casual physical contact beyond shaking hands, invitation to tea after a lecture, all without the absolving presence of a third or fourth person, are fraught with meaning to many Chinese people.

Improve Your Language Skills

Although courses in the Hong Kong programs are taught primarily in English, CUHK features Chinese language study, both Putonghua (Mandarin) and Cantonese, which is open to students with some Chinese language background who wish to continue language study.

Cantonese is also the language of Hong Kong, so some Cantonese will be helpful. Whether you plan to study Putonghua or Cantonese, you are encouraged to find Chinese-speaking language partners and practice speaking with them to improve your speaking ability. The following are good methods to prepare:

- Read aloud (anything in Chinese) for 20 minutes at a time.
- Watch Chinese movies in Cantonese or Putonghua.
- Listen to Chinese CDs.
- Keep a diary in Chinese.
- Keep a journal of Chinese phrases, expressions, and whole sentences to expand your vocabulary.
- Practice speaking Chinese aloud, focusing on phrases picked up from conversation and reading.

Advanced Students

- Read Chinese newspapers and magazines, using a dictionary as necessary.
- Read books in Chinese, preferably one fiction and one nonfiction.
- Read a book in Chinese in your major.
- Practice writing about your major field in Chinese.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Before you leave, try to get a multiple-entry visa for China. Applying for a China visa in HK is a hassle because you can only apply for a double-entry visa here in HK (you can only get a multiple entry visa in your home country) and if you go to China more than twice then it is just annoying to go back to your embassy and pay again for a double entry visa. It is extremely easy to get to China from HK.

Make sure to bring a bunch of passport-sized photos of yourself. You'll be needing them a lot on the first day and taking pictures on the first day is quite a hassle.

”

ARRIVAL & ORIENTATION

- ▶ Additional information about passports, visas, and other required documents is provided in the [UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad](#).

Travel Documents

You must carry at all times your Hong Kong Identity Card (HKID) if you have one, or a photocopy of your passport plus your local university student ID card. Police officers make occasional checks and you may be fined if you fail to produce required identification.

Hong Kong Student Visa

A visa is an endorsement issued by the Hong Kong Immigration Department that grants you permission to enter and reside in Hong Kong for the purpose of study.

Unless you have a valid Hong Kong Identity Card (HKID), you must apply for a student visa. The host university will serve as a local sponsor and work with the Hong Kong Immigration Department on your behalf. According to Hong Kong immigration regulations, student visas cannot be issued for nationals from Afghanistan, Albania, Cambodia, Cuba, Laos, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nepal, or Vietnam. If you are a citizen of any of these countries, contact UCEAP immediately.

The student visa is a self-adhesive label that will be placed on an empty page in your passport. The visa is valid for you to use one time as a single entry into Hong Kong on or before the date indicated. Upon arrival in Hong Kong, ensure that the Immigration Officer stamps your visa to activate it.

With an activated visa and valid U.S. passport you may leave and reenter Hong Kong anytime before the expiration date as long as you remain in good standing with your host university. If you are a Taiwan ROC citizen you are required to apply for a multiple-reentry visa if you plan to leave Hong Kong for any reason and return to continue your studies. If you are not a U.S. citizen, contact the Hong Kong Immigration Department to determine applicable travel restrictions and whether or not you will need reentry documents.

Hong Kong Identity Card (HKID)

An HKID is proof of Hong Kong residency and is an official identity document issued by the Hong Kong Immigration Department.

If you maintain the right to reside in Hong Kong, clear immigration with your Hong Kong Identity Card (HKID) and passport. You will not need a visa. Obtain further information through the Hong Kong [Immigration Department](#).

If you are enrolled for the full academic year and maintain a valid student visa, apply for a temporary HKID. Host university staff will provide guidance.

You will not be eligible for a temporary HKID if you stay in Hong Kong for less than 180 days (i.e., for one term only).

Student ID Cards

Be sure to take extra passport-sized photos to Hong Kong, as these will be needed for the student ID card issued by the host university.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Take as little as possible and mix 'n match your clothing for variety. Lugging baggage around is a drag. Take only the bare essentials.

A backpack is essential for traveling (and if you fill it, that undoubtedly will be too much stuff).

Take some dressy clothes and shoes for high table dinners at HKU. Once a month, each hall eats a formal dinner together while listening to speakers.

”

Packing Tips

- ▶ Identify all luggage on both the outside and inside with your name, home address, and destination.

When traveling always carry your passport, visa, airline tickets, prescription medications, and money. Never put valuables in your checked luggage.

Due to limited storage space in the host university dormitories, you should pack reasonable amounts of clothing and personal items. Most items are available for purchase in Hong Kong.

- ▶ The UCEAP Student Budget does not include funds for the purchase of clothing abroad.

Essential

- A limited and comfortable wardrobe, including washable, easy-to-care-for clothing, lightweight shirts, slacks, jeans, and conservative shorts
- Appropriate attire for formal dinners and special events (a sport coat and tie for men, a dress for women)
- Comfortable walking shoes that are easy to slip on and off (large-sized shoes are impossible to find in Hong Kong)
- Vitamins
- Prescription medication (for more information, see the [Health](#) chapter of this guide)
- Several passport photos (to use for identification cards and government forms)
- A few books, including a Chinese-English dictionary and a travel guide with a detailed map of Hong Kong (books in English are expensive in Hong Kong)
- A few American gifts for foreign hosts and new friends (suggestions: Frisbees; T-shirts; UC pens, pencils, or decals; baseball caps representing major league teams; California pistachios or almonds, postcards, or scenic calendars)
- Pictures of family, friends, and the UC campus to have a reminder of home and share with new friends

Optional

- Laptop
- Electric converter and plug adapter for any electronic items you pack (Hong Kong's electrical system operates on 220V 50Hz)
- Digital recorder (especially useful if you will be studying Chinese language)
- Mosquito repellent and after-bite medicine
- Athletic gear, including a swimsuit
- Bathrobe and slippers
- Small travel backpack

Do Not Pack

Pepper spray, knuckle-dusters, tear gas, flick-knives, crossbows, and other items used for self-defense, which may be legal in the U.S., are considered illegal weapons in Hong Kong and prohibited. If found with these items, they will be confiscated and you may be arrested and prosecuted.

Travel to Hong Kong

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements and strongly urged to purchase changeable airline tickets. Standby tickets are not appropriate.

You may be subject to dismissal from the program if you fail to arrive on the Official Start Date (Student Agreement, Section 10). Refer to the program calendar posted on the UCEAP website for the Official Start Date. The dates of the program can change due to unforeseen circumstances. You are responsible for making modifications in your travel itinerary to accommodate such changes. UCEAP is not responsible for any unrecoverable transportation charges incurred for independent travel arrangements.

Detailed arrival instructions are provided in your UCEAP online Predeparture Checklist. Most programs in Hong Kong make arrangements for students to be met at the airport by local students.

Financial Aid Students

You must buy your ticket yourself—the Financial Aid Office will not buy it for you.

Your financial aid package is based partly on the UCEAP Student Budget for the program. The estimated round-trip airfare is based on the cost of a changeable student fare to Hong Kong. If your independent travel costs are greater than the airfare estimate in the UCEAP Student Budget, notify your financial aid counselor. Neither UCEAP nor the Financial Aid Office can guarantee that financial aid will fund the additional cost.

Orientation

After arrival you will participate in **mandatory** on-site orientations organized by your host university that cover a variety of topics. Orientations vary by location, but most include a welcome dinner, lunch, or other get-together and various outings to the local neighborhoods.

The orientations cover such topics as:

- Safety
- Money matters
- Course registration for both your host institution and MyEAP
- Academic policies (unit requirements, course loads, etc.)
- Introductions to important offices and people

You are expected to attend and actively participate in all orientation events.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Don't forget to ask for a student discount; it'll save you a lot of money.

Hong Kong's transportation system is one of the best that I have ever seen. It is extremely convenient, advanced, efficient, and affordable. You need virtually no planning to get from one part of Hong Kong to another as long as you're on a subway or a bus.

In Hong Kong, your number one friend in terms of transportation is the subway system called MTR. Your other number one friend is an Octopus Card. The Octopus Card is your way to pay for the MTR, and it is also accepted at almost every store and at many restaurants to be used like a debit card. You can add money to your Octopus card at all MTR stations.

”

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Public Transportation

Hong Kong's public transportation system is both varied and extensive, with double-decker buses, minibuses, trams, taxis, electric trains, subways, and a train line that continues into China. The system is efficient and inexpensive. Most options accept a specialized debit card (the “Octopus Card”) for payment, making it convenient to get around town.

Ferry Service

Hong Kong is built around a harbor, and there is a considerable amount of water travel. The main service across the harbor between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island is provided by the Star Ferry, which is about a five-minute ride at a reasonable cost. Ferries also make frequent runs to the larger Hong Kong islands.

MTR

Hong Kong has a very good transportation system called the Mass Transit Railway (MTR). The MTR closes early, so if you like to stay out late at night, be prepared to pay a cab fare to return home. A trip from the CUHK or HKUST campuses to downtown Hong Kong takes about 45 minutes, while a trip from HK PolyU takes about 25 minutes.

CUHK Shuttle Bus

If you have a valid CUHK student ID card you can use CUHK's free shuttle bus service during the term. This shuttle is very convenient for getting around the tri-level campus with steep hills.

► It is important that you carefully read all of the information available in the [UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad](#) and discuss it with the person who will assist you with your finances while you are abroad.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Understanding Your Finances

Understanding your finances before, during, and after your program is crucial to having a successful time abroad. The following list outlines just a few of the many things you will need to know before departure.

Detailed information on the following topics can be found in the [Money Matters](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*:

- Contact information for finance questions
- How to estimate the cost of your program
- Budget instructions and information
- How to and who can make payments to UCEAP
- UCEAP student account information
- Banking before and after arrival
- Fees and penalties
- Loan information
- How financial aid works while abroad (how do I get my financial aid from my home campus and how are my fees paid?)
- Various forms (e.g., direct deposit, etc.)

MyEAP Student Account

Your MyEAP Student Account is similar to your UC campus financial account. It will be available as soon as you are selected for your program in MyEAP. You can make payments through this account using e-checks or credit cards (MasterCard, American Express, or Discover). The fees that you owe UCEAP will be applied to your account after your program predeparture withdrawal date, which is listed in MyEAP. For the amount due to UCEAP prior to fees being posted on your account, refer to the UCEAP Student Budget Payment Vouchers. Program fees are subject to change.

UCEAP Student Budget

Carefully review your [UCEAP Student Budget](#).

Your UCEAP Student Budget lists the fees you will pay to UCEAP and an estimate of the personal expenses you will need to plan for. It does not include the cost of recreational travel or personal entertainment. Review your UCEAP Student Budget frequently. The Payment Vouchers are on the second page of the UCEAP Student Budget.

Instructions

- **Download** and **print** your UCEAP Student Budget and Payment Vouchers.
- Note the deadlines on the Payment Vouchers.
- Give the UCEAP Student Budget and Payment Vouchers to the person responsible for paying your UCEAP bills. Sign this person up for Third Party Authorization so they can make payments online.

For further information see the [Money Matters](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad* and the Money Matters tab of your Participants Portal. If you will be receiving financial aid, see also the [UCEAP Financial Assistance](#) web page.

- ▶ The official currency unit in Hong Kong is the dollar (abbreviated HK\$ or HKD). Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.

Handling Money Abroad

Before leaving the U.S., you are encouraged to exchange \$100 into Hong Kong dollars. Besides providing an opportunity to become familiar with the currency, the funds will be useful upon arrival for snacks, transportation, tips, and unexpected purchases. U.S. banks can purchase the foreign currency; the process may take a week or more. You may also exchange money at the airport in Hong Kong. Transportation from the airport must be paid in Hong Kong dollars.

It usually takes a few weeks to become financially established abroad. Prepare enough funds to cover expenses for the first two months (at least U.S. \$1,500). Long delays in receiving mail and clearing personal checks abroad are more often the rule than the exception. Personal checks are rarely accepted in Hong Kong.

You will need to have enough money upon arrival to pay the housing fee for the semester in Hong Kong. This must be paid directly to your host institution in local currency. Be sure to keep receipts.

You will be required to pay a refundable deposit for the residence halls, facilities, and libraries. The amount varies by host university. This money will be refunded after completion of the program if you have no outstanding debts and follow the appropriate check-out procedures.

Banking

UCEAP students have had bank accounts at the large American banks in Hong Kong, including Bank of America and Citibank. The Bank of America operates 14 branches throughout Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories, and Citibank has 17 branches.

Opening a bank account in Hong Kong, with both savings and checking options, is relatively simple. To do so, you must apply in person and take a valid passport. There is a charge every time money is transferred to Hong Kong from another country (or vice versa) and there are standard fees for cashing travelers checks.

UCEAP students have used banks such as the Hang Seng Bank, which has branches in the CUHK John Fulton Center, HK PolyU Shaw Amenities Building, and HKU Shaw Building. The Bank of East Asia has a branch at HK PolyU. On the HKU campus, there are also branches of the Bank of East Asia and HSBC. There are two banks located on the HKUST campus: Hang Seng Bank and the Bank of China. The campus branches are open Monday through Saturday and provide normal banking services.

Credit Cards

Many businesses throughout Hong Kong will accept credit cards (such as Visa, MasterCard, and American Express). However, most universities and venues on campus will take cash only.

Transferring Money Abroad

There are several basic ways to send money to Hong Kong from the U.S.:

- You can have money deposited into your U.S. account, from which you can draw funds using the account's corresponding ATM and Visa, Citibank, or MasterCard debit card. There is no fee because it is not a cash advance. This system usually works for the following debit cards: Cirrus, Global Access, PLUS, Jetco, and EPS. Check with your bank in the U.S. to see if this option will work abroad for your card.
- If you open a Hong Kong bank account you can also get an ATM card from that bank and use it in ATMs in MTR stations. There is an annual charge of about HK \$50 for the ATM card.
- Money can be sent directly as an interbank deposit from a U.S. bank to its Hong Kong branch.
- Funds can be cabled from any U.S. bank to any Hong Kong bank; funds sent in this way are usually available a week from the date they are sent.
- You can deposit U.S. travelers checks into a local account in Hong Kong and withdraw cash immediately. Most foreign currencies and travelers checks can be exchanged at Hong Kong banks, hotels, or money exchangers.
- Up to HK \$500 can be sent through an international money order, available at selected banks.
- You can deposit a bank draft or any check, personal or institutional, into your local account; however, the Hong Kong bank will require one month for such checks to clear, during which time the funds will not be available. An additional service charge will be assessed for this kind of transaction.
- **Western Union** can be used to have money wired from home in a short amount of time (sometimes minutes). In most instances, you will receive local currency at competitive foreign exchange rates.

Of all these methods, the most efficient and convenient is to use a U.S. ATM card at a Hong Kong ATM, or to have remittances sent directly from a bank in the U.S. to the local bank account in Hong Kong. Funds should be transmitted in U.S. dollars to avoid poor exchange rates. Funds remaining in the account at the end of the program can be converted to any currency, including U.S. dollars.

COMMUNICATIONS ABROAD

Mailing Address

CUHK

You will have a mailbox in the Office of Academic Links. Mail and packages (under 10 kilograms) can be sent there for you. Mail is delivered each weekday. The mailing address is:

International Asian Studies Programme
Office of Academic Links, Lady Ho Tung Hall
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Shatin, New Territories
Hong Kong SAR

HK PolyU

There are multiple dormitory options. You will receive your mailing address after arrival in Hong Kong.

HKU

There are multiple dormitory options. You will receive your mailing address after arrival in Hong Kong.

HKUST

There are three different schools and multiple dormitory options at HKUST. You will receive your mailing address after arrival in Hong Kong.

Phone

Most dorms have shared phones and normally do not permit international calls. You can purchase a phone card, which can be used to make both local and international calls. These cards are available at supermarkets and convenience stores throughout Hong Kong. Many students buy cell phones and use them for both local and international calls.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), the technology for transmitting voice conversations via the Internet, is popular with students who take a laptop abroad. Social networking software such as [Skype](#) is commonly used to make free or low-cost calls over the Internet.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

It is easy to buy a new cell phone in Hong Kong, and many students choose to buy a cheap one so they are not as afraid of losing an expensive smart phone.

”

Computer Access & Use

CUHK

The Information and Technology Services Centre (ITSC) has a large system of PC and Mac computers for student use. The ITSC is open 24 hours a day. Each college also has a computer lab, and some departments have computer labs.

The Electronic Resources Center (ERC), located on the first floor of the Wu Chung Library in United College, is open to all students. There are PC and Mac computers through which you can use the available CD-ROMs. The computers also can be used to access the network of the University Library System and the Internet.

A computer account will be automatically created for you at no charge. All CUHK dorms and classrooms are wired for Internet access. There are also wireless LAN access points in many locations on campus.

HK PolyU

Wireless Internet is available anywhere on the HK PolyU campus. Multi-purpose PC workstations with MS Office applications installed can be found in Student Computer Centers located at Li Ka Shing Tower and Pao Yu Kong Library. A computer room is available in the Student Halls of Residence and all HK PolyU dormitory rooms are wired for computer access.

HKU

The HKU Computer Center and the student amenities centers provide computer terminals. The Computer Center has a full range of facilities, with both Mac and PC computers with up-to-date software and campus Intranet and Internet access. You can sign up for an HKUSUA account upon arrival, which will allow you to use the networked PCs in the various amenities centers and labs.

Color and standard printers are available for a standard fee. The main computer lab (located in the Shaw Building) is open 24 hours a day, and a help desk is available. You may take your own laptop and use HKUACE (Access Everywhere Network) from various locations on campus to access the campus network. There are also wireless LAN access points at many locations on campus.

HKUST

The university's computer facilities are extensive, and some labs are open 24 hours a day. Access is reliable except during exam time when it is busy. All dormitory rooms are also wired for computer access.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

What my roommate helped me learn was the difference between American and Chinese students. She gave me a view of a lifestyle that I would have never been able to make up or learn if I didn't live with her for four months.

My local roommate was really friendly and helpful. She shared a lot about herself and her family. I recommend asking for a local roommate.

Live in the halls and mingle with the locals. Halls are known for their strong hall spirits and ridiculously busy hall activities. Participate in one or two events so you can get a taste of what local student life is like.

”

HOUSING & MEALS

General Housing Information (All Programs)

Temporary Accommodations

If you arrive early, you will be responsible for making your own temporary accommodations until the residence hall opens. The host universities recommend the Anne Black [YWCA](#).

Housing Regulations

You may find striking differences between residential life in Hong Kong and dormitory experiences in the U.S. Chinese and British influences create a greater sense of formality and hierarchy than is customary on American college campuses. For example, in some dormitories men and women may meet only in the public lounges.

Every dormitory is locked at a certain hour each night, and you will receive a key or security code so you can enter after hours. Although the security codes may occasionally change, this system is convenient. Some dormitories have a security guard who will open the door after hours and a registry that must be signed by residents who return late.

You might disagree with some of the regulations, but they are designed in the context of Hong Kong norms and should be respected. Failure to abide by the regulations may have unfavorable consequences. For instance, one female student was expelled from her assigned housing because a male friend stayed in her room after curfew hours.

Roommate/Hallmate Relations

Expect that your roommate(s) will speak English, some fluently and others with less confidence. Often a Chinese roommate will help you with your Chinese language studies, if asked. Cantonese is the language most commonly used in the dormitories and social settings.

Adjusting to different living habits may also cause tension between roommates. Many Chinese students, especially females, are extremely modest and prefer to undress in complete privacy. They will expect consideration. It is a good idea for you to be aware of your roommate's way of doing things in these and similar matters. For example, donning a pair of flip-flops rather than going barefoot (which is considered unhygienic by most locals) will assist you with building good roommate relations. If a situation is especially problematic, discuss it with your roommate tactfully.

Student experiences in the university accommodations vary. Living in a residential hall is a challenge in cross-cultural adaptation. Past participants liken dorm life to that of a fraternity or sorority, in which group activities are organized to promote a sense of camaraderie between hallmates. Halls can become quite lively at night with local students staying up late to work on projects or socialize.

The differences in dorm life between UC and universities in Hong Kong will take some adjustment. It is important to adapt to local residence hall culture if you are to make the most of your experience. Flexibility, cooperation, consideration, sensitivity, and respectful communication are critical for success.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“
Having another
exchange student as
a roommate could be
favorable if you don't
want the language
and the culture to be a
constant barrier.
”

Weekend Atmosphere

The atmosphere in the residence halls changes remarkably on weekends when most of the local students go home. On Saturdays and Sundays the residence halls will empty out. The weekly exodus can be frustrating, because you'll be spending more time with the other international students and it may hinder your efforts to make local friends.

To counter this problem, you can arrange to meet Chinese schoolmates off campus for meals, movies, or other activities on weekends. Convenient public transportation makes it easy to meet in town—and while the Chinese may be slow to extend an invitation, they may eagerly respond to the suggestion of an outing. Housing in Hong Kong is crowded; therefore, an invitation to visit a friend's home may not be a common gesture.

CUHK Housing

Q: What are the housing options at CUHK?

A: Housing accommodations are referred to as hostels at CUHK. For the first few days during the fall orientation program, students live in one of the specially designated orientation hostels. You will share a room and bathroom with other exchange students. These hostels are minimally furnished, include bed linens, and have card-operated air-conditioners.

At the end of the orientation week, you will move from the orientation hostel to your permanent hostel in a shared double or triple room with local roommates. There are 21 undergraduate hostels. All hostels are situated on the CUHK campus in the New Territories within 45 minutes by public transportation from central Hong Kong.

Spring students move into their assigned hostels upon arrival.

Q: What types of facilities are available?

A: All rooms are air-conditioned and modestly furnished. The bathrooms, showers, kitchen, and laundry facilities are shared. Hostels are wired for phone and Internet access.

Q: Are linens and towels included?

A: You will be charged a bedding fee for rental of linens, pillows, and quilts. The bedding fee is charged whether or not you choose to use the linens and quilts. The rooms are cold in the winter, so you will want to purchase additional blankets or quilts at that time. You will need to pack or buy your own towels.

Q: What are the housing regulations?

A: Each hostel is independently administered. A resident authority in each hostel enforces the rules and provides support services. Although the regulations may slightly vary depending on your assigned hostel, all of them forbid smoking, alcoholic beverages, pets, and overnight visits, especially by someone of the opposite sex. Some hostels are coed and some unisex, in which the visiting hours of the opposite sex must be closely observed. The social climate and personal moral codes are generally conservative. You are expected to abide by all rules and regulations.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

I strongly recommend living on campus. The cost of rent on campus was a fraction of the cost of rent off campus. The living proximity to classes and other university facilities proved to be very convenient.

”

Q: Are the rooms cleaned?

A: You will be responsible for cleaning your own room and the common rooms—the cleanliness of these areas will be determined by the cleanliness of the tenants. While the university’s facilities are generally modern and convenient, it takes time to adjust to the new living conditions. The hostels are kept in sanitary condition but may not be as clean and well furnished as facilities at UC.

Q: Do I have to live on campus?

A: It is highly recommended that you live on campus to get the most out of your experience. However, you may seek permission from CUHK to live off campus. UCEAP and CUHK do not provide assistance with off-campus housing. It would be your responsibility to research all options and understand the leasing terms.

Q: Can I select my hostel and roommate?

A: The university will determine hostel and roommate assignments. Assignments may be based on your affiliated faculty or college. Most local students are placed in hostels near their academic department so they will be conveniently located near classes.

Q: Where do graduate students live?

A: If you are a graduate student you may live on campus and share a room with a local student or reserve a single room at a higher cost. In addition, you have the option to live off campus if you seek permission from CUHK.

How to Prepare**Q: Is a housing application required?**

A: You will complete a Student Accommodation Preference Form as part of your CUHK acceptance packet. A final notification about your housing placement will be sent via e-mail prior to departure.

Q: How much does housing cost and how are fees collected?

A: Hostels cost approximately HK \$5,000 per term for undergraduates. You are also responsible for a variety of housing-related fees. These include bedding at HK \$350, a refundable hostel deposit at HK \$1,500, and air-conditioning at HK \$1/hour for electricity (costs are subject to change). All housing fees are paid directly to CUHK. You will receive more information about housing cost, related fees, and payment methods via e-mail prior to departure.

Q: When do the hostels open?

A: The hostels usually open one to two days before orientation. If you arrive in Hong Kong before that time, arrange for temporary accommodations in a hotel or with family (if applicable). See the UCEAP program calendar for details.

Q: How do I get from the hostel to classes?

A: CUHK has a campus bus service that you can use. Some students also walk to classes. The campus is too hilly to ride a bike.

HK PolyU Housing

Q: What are the housing options at HK PolyU?

A: The Student Halls of Residence comprise eight undergraduate halls and one postgraduate hall. The halls are adjacent to the university campus within 10 minutes' walk.

Q: What types of facilities are available?

A: All rooms are shared and fully furnished with a shared bathroom between two adjacent rooms. Each room is air-conditioned and equipped with a phone and broadband Internet access. Hall facilities include function rooms, laundry rooms, a dining hall, a swimming pool, a computer room, and a fitness room.

Q: Are linens and towels included?

A: No. You will need to pack or buy your own bedding and towels upon arrival.

Q: What are the housing regulations?

A: Each hall is independently administered by a Hall Warden and assisted by Hall Tutors. The Hall Warden is an academic staff member appointed to provide support to student residents, guidance to hall activities, and enforcement of hall rules. A Hall Tutor, usually a postgraduate student, is assigned to each floor to assist the Hall Warden by serving as the first contact point for student residents and ensuring a peaceful living environment. While regulations may vary slightly depending on your assigned hall, the social climate and personal moral codes are generally conservative. You are expected to abide by all rules and regulations.

Q: Are the rooms cleaned?

A: You will be responsible for cleaning your own room and the common rooms—the cleanliness of these areas will be determined by the cleanliness of the tenants. While the university's facilities are generally modern and convenient, it takes time to adjust to the new living conditions. The halls are kept in sanitary condition but may not be as clean and well furnished as facilities at UC.

Q: Do I have to live at the HK PolyU Student Residence Halls?

A: It is highly recommended that you live in the halls to get the most out of your experience. However, you may seek permission from HK PolyU to live elsewhere. UCEAP and HK PolyU do not provide assistance with outside housing. It would be your responsibility to research all options and understand the leasing terms.

Q: Can I select my hall and roommate?

A: You can indicate your preferences on your housing application. However, HK PolyU will determine hall and roommate assignments.

How to Prepare

Q: Is a housing application required?

A: You will complete an online housing application as part of your HK PolyU acceptance packet. A final notification about your housing placement will be sent via e-mail prior to departure.

Q: How much does housing cost and how are fees collected?

A: Student Residence Halls cost approximately HK \$6,000 per term. You are also responsible for a variety of housing-related fees. This includes a HK \$500 refundable deposit (hall caution money) and HK \$100/term hall function fee (costs are subject to change). All housing fees are paid in cash or e-payment directly to Hong Kong PolyU via Hang Seng Bank. You will receive more information about housing cost, related fees, and payment methods via e-mail prior to departure.

Students are required to pay the caution money on or before the specified payment due date in the notification e-mail to confirm acceptance of their housing offer. Upon receipt of the caution money, HK PolyU will update the status of the applicant to Provisional Hall Resident. Those who fail to pay this amount will have their residential offers withdrawn.

Provisional Hall Residents will receive an invoice and are required to submit payment by a specified deadline. Once the payment is received, the status of Provisional Resident will be changed to Hall Resident. Students who do not pay their invoice will lose their hall caution money and room.

Q: When do the halls open?

A: The halls usually open one to two days before orientation. If you arrive in Hong Kong before that time, arrange for temporary accommodations in a hotel or with family (if applicable). See the UCEAP program calendar for details.

Q: How do I get from the halls to classes?

A: Most students walk to classes, but you can also take public transportation such as buses.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“ HKU dorms are close to the campus. They are normally very tall apartment buildings with shared bathroom and shower facilities. The common rooms are nice and security is very good.

Some UCEAP students have a difficult time with the O-Camp (Orientation Camp) conducted at move in. It is like a fraternity environment with mandatory activities. But you meet new people and have fun.

I found the cost of HKU housing to be reasonable. However, hall life is much different from that of my home campus. Living in a residence hall is like living in a fraternity house.

”

HKU Housing

Q: What are the housing options at HKU?

A: There are thirteen halls, eight that are directly administered by the university and two that are financially and administratively independent. The residence halls provide housing to over 3,000 undergraduate students. About 22 percent of HKU’s full-time students reside in these halls. Nine of the halls are coed, one is for women only, and three are for men only. Most halls are located within either a short bus ride or walking distance to the main campus. The nonresidential halls serve as meeting places for student groups such as sport teams, “high meals,” or study. Each hall has a warden or manager to assist with the administration of the hall and several tutors.

Q: What are the halls like?

A: They differ in size, cost, location, and amenities due to university availability and resources, but are usually quite pleasant and a convenient distance from the campus. All rooms are air-conditioned. Each room has a bed, mattress, wardrobe, writing desk with a lamp, chair, and bookshelf. Residence halls usually have shared bedrooms (doubles or triples). You will most likely share a room with local students.

Common rooms, such as bathrooms, lounges, laundry facilities, recreational facilities, and quiet study rooms can be expected. Communal bathroom and toilet facilities are provided on each floor. Each floor has its own pantry and is equipped with a refrigerator, microwave, hotplate, water boiler, and drinking fountain.

Check the [HKU website](#) for photographs and detailed up-to-date housing information.

Q: Are linens and towels provided?

A: Linens and towels are not included, but you may purchase them after arrival. You can take a twin-size sheet set and a towel from home to get started. The rooms are cold during January and February, so you will want to purchase additional blankets or quilts during this time.

Q: Is there Internet access in the rooms?

A: Yes, each room has a network connection and a shared phone line.

Q: Can I arrange for off-campus housing?

A: Yes; however, keep in mind that off-campus accommodations are scarce and extremely expensive. Housing is in great demand throughout Hong Kong and living space for most residents is restricted. UCEAP discourages arranging private housing.

Q: Can I select my hall and roommate?

A: You may indicate hall and roommate preferences on the housing application, although preferences cannot be guaranteed. HKU determines final assignments, and notification will be sent to you via e-mail prior to departure.

How to Prepare

Q: Is a housing application required?

A: HKU requires a housing application. The application is included in your admission notice.

Q: Which hall is right for me?

A: When choosing a hall, read the HKU online descriptions carefully. The various halls have different and distinctive identities and activities, attracting specific types of students. You should choose one that meets your interests. Regardless of which hall you live in, you will be expected (by your fellow hall residents) to fully participate in all hall activities.

Go to the [HKU website](#) for specific residence hall descriptions and information. Each hall also has its own website.

Q: What are the housing costs?

A: Charges for undergraduate halls last year were HK \$4,600 to HK \$9,300 per semester. Fees are subject to change for this year. Some halls have mandatory meal plans, which cost around HK \$5,800 to HK \$7,900 per year. Not all meals are covered in this plan. Charges for other hall-related costs, such as hall association fees, the key deposit, high table fees, etc., are paid with the rent at the beginning of each semester. HKU recommends that you budget HK \$1,600 to HK \$3,000 per semester for other hall-related fees.

Q: How are housing fees paid?

A: You will pay rent in Hong Kong dollars directly to the residence hall or to the housing office, depending on the hall policy. You must make your own housing payments (even if you are on financial aid). If you live in the residential hall for the academic year, you will pay hall charges in two installments (one in October, and one in January). If you participate in a semester program, you will pay the entire semester's rent on arrival.

Q: When can I move in?

A: You are encouraged to arrive during regular business hours on the Official Arrival Date so you can easily check into your room. If you arrive in Hong Kong before then, you may have to pay additional fees for your room for that time (pending availability) or arrange temporary accommodations. See the UCEAP program calendar for details.

Q: How do I get from the halls to classes?

A: Most students walk to classes, but you can also take public transportation such as buses.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“HKUST dorms are fantastic, and many have gorgeous ocean views. Not bad for an exchange student!

The building that I lived in, PG3, had a window that overlooked Clear Water Bay. When I was homesick, I would look out my window and realize that I would never have this scenic view in the States.

I had no problems with the HKUST housing. They picked good choices for roommates and dorm mates.

Dorm rooms at PG2 were really small, so I wouldn't recommend that hall.

The HKUST dorm rooms are a bit smaller than you may be used to. Try to avoid a dorm room with a bunk bed—they are the smallest type.

”

HKUST Housing

Q: What are the housing options at HKUST?

A: You will live on campus in a residence hall. Many of the rooms have spectacular views overlooking Clear Water Bay. You will share a double or triple room with Chinese roommates or other foreign students.

Q: What are the residence halls like?

A: The rooms are furnished with desks, chairs, bookshelves, and beds, and provide closet space. The rooms have either bunk beds or two twin beds. All rooms are wired for computer access to the university network. Common facilities include bathrooms, showers, TV rooms, pantries with microwave ovens and phones. Air-conditioning, washing machines and dryers require prepaid card activation.

Q: Do the residence halls have phones?

A: The rooms do not have private phones; students share two phones (free local calls) on each floor. To make international calls, you must use public pay phones around campus.

Q: Can I select my hall and roommate?

A: You may indicate preferences on the housing application form; however, HKUST determines the final placement and roommate decisions.

Q: What will I need to provide?

A: You must provide your own pillows, linens, towels, and kitchen utensils. While most students purchase these items after arrival, you may want to bring a twin-size sheet set and a towel to get started. The rooms are cold during January and February, so you will want to purchase additional blankets or quilts at that time.

Q: Am I required to live on campus?

A: You have the option to make your own off-campus housing arrangements. However, UCEAP students recommend living on campus for convenience and social interaction with local students. HKUST is located in the New Territories and is slightly difficult to access by public transportation. Therefore, arranging off-campus housing and commuting may be problematic and more expensive.

How to Prepare

Q: Is a housing application required?

A: HKUST requires a housing application, which is included with your admission notice. A final notification about your housing placement will be sent via e-mail prior to departure.

Q: How do I pay housing fees and what are the costs?

A: Upon check in, you must pay the housing fees for the entire term in addition to a refundable security deposit in Hong Kong dollars. Credit cards are not accepted for payments, so you must pay with cash or travelers checks.

Last year's rates for the residence hall were HK \$6,000 per person per semester for a room with a twin bed. These costs include all utilities except air-conditioning (which requires a prepaid card for activation).

Q: When can I move in?

A: The residence halls open a few days before orientation. See the program calendar on the UCEAP website for details. A security officer or housing staff member will be available 24 hours a day for check-ins. If you arrive late at night, go to your assigned housing and then complete the official check-in process with the housing office the next day.

Keys will not be issued until all the housing charges are paid.

Q: How do I get from the residence hall to classes?

A: Students usually walk to class. HKUST is too hilly to ride a bike.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

People eat with a tiny bowl, not with a plate. The plate is for bones—don't eat off of it. In small eateries, soak your utensils in the tea to disinfect them.

Eating really became a dream come true in Hong Kong. Snack stands are at every corner of the street. Sweet waffle balls or deep-fried edibles on a stick are sold for less than U.S. \$1 for five pieces. If you want fresh seafood, go to the seafood market (in Choi Hung, I believe) where I guarantee that your fish and shrimp will be moving until you get home.

”

Meals in Hong Kong

Q: Where do students usually eat?

A: Most students prepare food in shared kitchenettes in the residence halls or eat in the numerous canteens (cafeterias) on campus. In the canteens, every meal features a standard entrée served over a big dish of steamed rice. There are also menus that offer combinations of stir-fried meat, seafood, noodles, vegetables, bean curd, and mushrooms. Tea, coffee, and soft drinks are served in all canteens. Menus vary by canteen. Some canteens also have Western menu items such as sandwiches, salads, and pasta. There are also many dining options available off campus.

Q: What is the food like in Hong Kong?

A: Chinese cuisine in Hong Kong is likely to be different from your prior experience. You can choose from hundreds of regional varieties of Chinese cuisine, ranging from popular Cantonese *dim sum* to pricey Chiu Chow fare. Hong Kong is a culinary paradise. Food guides can be purchased at local bookstores and at the Hong Kong Tourist Association.

Your initial dining experiences may be daunting—especially if your local roommates start you off with chicken feet and pig intestine. Avoid retreating to the nearest fast-food chain. As you learn more about Chinese cuisine, you will find a range of choices and dishes palatable to your taste.

Q: What if I am a vegetarian or follow a religious dietary practice?

A: Vegetarian students report that eating at the canteens is difficult. You will be better served by either preparing your own meals or eating off campus. If you eat fish, you may have more options.

If you follow Kosher or Halal dietary practices, you will find that food options are very limited, perhaps even nonexistent, on campus.

Meals at CUHK

You can do light cooking in the hostels; kitchens are furnished with a stove, boiler, microwave, and refrigerator. Be considerate when using the kitchens as the appliances must be shared with all of the students on the floor. You will need to supply your own pots and pans, and should store them in your room.

The residence associations sometimes organize cooking parties or evening snacks in the hostels, and you are encouraged to participate.

Since there are canteens located in every college, you will find it convenient to eat your meals outside of the hostels. The canteens serve a great variety of food at reasonable prices (*dim sum*, sandwiches, pasta, salads, stir-fry and rice, etc.). Meals on campus are affordable and range from HK \$20–30.

If assigned to Morningside College, you will be required to join a meal plan and attend a certain number of communal dinners each week. The dining fee is about HK\$1820 per semester.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Eating was very convenient. There was an eatery next to my dorm at HKUST that was open past midnight. The food was home cooked and you got varieties of stir-fry combinations with rice. The main dining hall was further away, but there you could have McDonald's, Japanese, Chinese, pizza, or noodle soup. Downstairs from the main dining hall was cafeteria-type dining, serving more authentic local food with a nice cup of dong-lai cha (ice tea with milk) or dong-ling cha (ice tea with lemon).

”

Meals at HK PolyU

There are seven on-campus eateries available to students. HK PolyU canteens, restaurants, and cafés serve a range of Asian and Western cuisines to suit different needs of the university community. Meals on campus typically cost between HK \$20 and HK\$30. You can also dine in the Student Residence Hall Restaurant which has about 1,000 seats and serves local and Western food and Chinese *dim sum*.

In addition, there are many restaurants located in the Hung Hom, Whampoa, and Tsim Sha Tsui East areas, which are within walking distance of campus and the Student Residence Halls.

Meals at HKU

Three major restaurants are located on the main campus, in the student centers below Swire Hall and Simon K.Y. Lee Hall, and in the Chong Yuet Ming amenities center. Meals cost between HK \$20 and HK \$40. You can choose from a menu of Chinese or Western dishes, as well as a variety of sandwiches and drinks. The restaurants are crowded around lunchtime, so plan your schedule accordingly. Off campus there is also a wide variety of reasonably priced restaurants, food stalls, coffee shops, and even a McDonald's.

If you have special dietary restrictions (for health or religious beliefs, for example) you may find that the offerings at the restaurants on campus do not meet your needs. You cannot cook in the residence hall, but grocery stores for snacks and drinks are available nearby.

You will have a special opportunity to meet and discuss various issues with prominent individuals from different sectors of the Hong Kong community during the high table dinners held at the residence halls. These are traditional, formal events. Participation in the high table dinners is mandatory for residents and fees are assessed.

Meals at HKUST

Meals are available at canteens on campus. The average cost of lunch is between HK \$20 and HK \$30. Set meals, breakfast through dinner, are available for HK \$15–50. Eateries on campus include a coffee shop, cafeterias, and restaurants serving Chinese and international cuisine. You can also find a small grocery store on campus. One of the restaurants at HKUST serves fabulous *dim sum*.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

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Do something you enjoy (e.g., sports, arts, or social events). It's the best way to meet other people and to learn how local students do things.

What I liked to do most (I wish I had done it more often) was to get up early, ride the minibus out of HKUST and into the city, and get myself lost. I'd shop around, eat, buy things, take pictures, and then find a way back home. There's nothing like it to see the raw nature of a culture and experience it firsthand.

There were many buildings and structures, but you won't see buildings everywhere in Hong Kong. There are also trees and very scenic nature places.

”

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Get Involved

Participating in extracurricular cultural and social activities while abroad is an excellent way to meet people, improve your language skills, and integrate more fully into the community.

Join sports, musical, theater, or arts groups; volunteer at local organizations; attend lectures and receptions held in academic and community circles; and get the most out of your time abroad.

Cultural Activities

The international and contemporary influences on Hong Kong may prevent you from noticing the hidden cultural richness. You will need to be proactive and seek out cultural opportunities. This may mean speaking Cantonese (even in situations where English is acceptable), willfully spending less time with American friends, or asking a Chinese friend for information about local activities. Chinese traditions will become more apparent the longer you are in Hong Kong.

UCEAP Study Center staff has information on cultural activities and may arrange various excursions. University-based and civic organizations also sponsor cultural and educational programs. For example, CUHK arranges excursions and special events to introduce students to different aspects of Hong Kong and Chinese culture, such as demonstrations of traditional Chinese opera and music, movie nights, the Teaching-in-China Programmes, and field trips to the Trade Development Council Business InfoCentre, and Lee Kum Kee Co. Ltd (famous soy sauce maker).

For information about upcoming events, visit the Hong Kong [Leisure and Cultural Services Department](#) website and the events calendar on the [Hong Kong Tourism Board](#) website.

Buddy Programs

The universities provide buddy programs through which you will be introduced to local or expatriate hosts.

Most Chinese students socialize in groups. Camping trips in the New Territories, barbecues, organized singing contests, and various clubs are all popular activities. Housing in Hong Kong is extremely cramped; therefore, most social activities take place outside the home.

Student Clubs & Organizations

Since many local students live off campus, you are encouraged to join at least one club or organization to increase your interaction with local students. UCEAP students have previously participated in several student clubs, including photography, music, drama, chess, and debate. At CUHK there are more than 200 student clubs, including kung fu, photography, and film.

Student organizations offer a wide variety of ways to interact with the student body and to reach out to the local community.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“Travel, travel, travel! Take advantage of weekends and the time between classes to see the country. There is so much to see. Traveling can be amazingly cheap.

Perhaps the best tip I can give for future students in Hong Kong is that they should get a multiple-entry visa to China. One of the cool experiences of Hong Kong is the convenience of simply taking a 40-minute train ride to China for a day of shopping in Shenzhen.

Go to the popular attractions as well as the less popular ones too! You never know what neat surprise you can find in the New Territories or some of the outlying islands.

”

Festivals

Festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Mid Autumn, are celebrated with enthusiasm in Hong Kong. Host universities and local students are usually eager to include exchange students in these activities.

Religion

While the traditional Chinese religions of Taoism and Buddhism are the most widespread, other faiths are practiced and English-speaking religious services are available in Hong Kong.

Sports

You can participate in numerous sports activities while in Hong Kong, including martial arts, tennis, aerobics, swimming, and golf. There are also intramural team sports at the host universities. If you enjoy outdoor sports and activities, review the Hong Kong [Agricultural, Fisheries, and Conservation Department](#) website for a variety of information including hiking trails, camping permit instructions, and mountain bike regulations.

Newspapers & Television

There are about 20 local newspapers in Hong Kong, including a few in English. In addition to local news, regional and international news is also very well covered by the press in Hong Kong.

There is a wide variety of both English and Chinese television channels and programs in Hong Kong, which suit all tastes and interests. Programs are either locally produced or bought from international sources.

Travel

- ▶ **The UCEAP Student Budget does not include funds for recreational travel.**

Most students travel to the People's Republic of China, including trips to Guangzhou for a weekend and more extensive tours of the mainland. Research visa requirements when traveling outside of Hong Kong. People's Republic of China tourist visas can be obtained in the U.S. prior to departure or after you arrive in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is also the transportation hub of Asia. It is relatively easy and inexpensive to travel from Hong Kong to other locales in Asia.

Additional information about traveling throughout Hong Kong and Asia can be found in such guides as Lonely Planet's *Travel Survival Kit for Hong Kong, Macau & Canton*, and *Southeast Asia on a Shoestring*.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

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Always take toilet paper with you anywhere you travel in Asia.

Students are expected to wear surgical style masks in public when sick with a cold or flu.

”

- Counseling services are available at the university health centers.

HEALTH

Physical Health

While serious health concerns are low, it is beneficial to follow basic health precautions such as washing your hands often with soap and water (if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel with at least 60% alcohol), drinking bottled water, protecting yourself from insect bites, and observing hygiene standards. Avoid raw or undercooked seafood. Be wary of poor sanitary practices by street food vendors.

If you feel sick or have a medical emergency, seek medical attention and contact the Study Center immediately. Study Center staff can recommend a clinic to visit, help with the UCEAP medical insurance claim process, and assist if arrangements need to be made with your professors due to extended absence from class.

Emotional/Psychological Health

Speak with returnees and gather as much information as possible before you leave for Hong Kong.

If you are currently seeing a specialist for a psychological health condition, meet with the specialist to make sure that you have a plan in place if you need to reach out to local resources. The [U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong](#) compiles a list of counseling and specialized services. There are several community organizations that provide mental health support or referral services. The [Community Advice Bureau](#) (CAB) provides confidential referral services and maintains a comprehensive list of English-speaking support groups and individual counseling services. The [Resource Counselling Centre](#) offers individual counseling in up to seven languages, including English, and is a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. [The Samaritans](#) maintains a multilingual 24/7 suicide prevention hotline. When calling from Hong Kong, dial 2896-0000.

Do not be surprised to think, “It’s not what I expected.” Expect the unexpected and be sensitive to romanticized misconceptions or unrealistic expectations. Living abroad is stressful by its very nature. Life in Hong Kong is fast-paced and adds crowds, noise, and a foreign surrounding. Ask for insight from locals and acknowledge that this is a valuable learning experience.

Culture shock and homesick feelings are normal. It is easy to become worn down from physical and mental stress due to the vastly different environment. Eat balanced meals, stay hydrated, get plenty of rest, share concerns with the Study Center, and be open and accepting of the differences you encounter. It will make your stay more enjoyable as you adapt to the new environment.

Medical Facilities

Good medical facilities are available, and there are many Western-trained physicians in Hong Kong. Prescription drugs are widely available, although they may have different names than those in the U.S. Hong Kong emergency service response times for police, fire, and ambulances are good. Doctors and hospitals require immediate cash payment for health services and generally do not accept credit cards.

In addition to the information provided in this guide, the [U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong](#) maintains a listing of English-speaking medical providers.

University Health Centers

University health centers serve as primary care facilities and provide clinical services to all local and international students. The host university is not responsible for any charges incurred for visits with a private physician without a referral from a university health center physician.

CUHK has a University Health Centre on campus. Normal outpatient treatment (with the exception of dental care or travel inoculations) is provided. If hospitalization is required, students are referred to the local public hospital.

There is a University Health Service clinic located in the Chung Sze Yuen building at HK PolyU. The clinic provides primary health care services to students. Dental care and traditional Chinese medicine services are also available. If hospitalization is required, students are referred to [Queen Elizabeth](#) hospital, which is the nearest public hospital.

HKU provides primary health care through a clinic located in the Meng Wah Complex on the main campus. Preventive care and other services, such as dental treatments, are also available for a standard cost. When specialist services or hospitalization is required, students are directed to public clinics and government hospitals nearby.

There is a medical and dental clinic at HKUST that is open Monday through Saturday for non-emergency appointments. Outpatient and specialist services are provided at the clinics and are subject to charges. If hospitalization is required, students are referred to the local public hospital.

Public Hospitals

Bring your passport and valid student visa with you to the public hospital. Persons permitted to stay in Hong Kong by the Immigration Department, and not classified as visitors, may be eligible for local rates when admitted into public hospitals. The cost of hospitalization in general wards, related treatment, and surgery depends on the residential status of the patient. Treatment for permanent residents of Hong Kong is provided at subsidized rates. Visitors to Hong Kong are not eligible for subsidized treatment and are charged as private patients.

In general, semiprivate and private rooms at Hong Kong public hospitals are considerably more expensive, as are the corresponding charges for medical treatment and operations. If you want coverage for semiprivate and private hospital accommodations in Hong Kong, talk with the UCEAP assistance provider, Europ Assistance. You can call international collect on a UC-dedicated line at 1 + 202-828-5896 or e-mail: ops@europassistance-usa.com

Public clinics and hospitals do not operate on an appointment system and waiting times are often unpredictable.

Prescription Medications

You are responsible for confirming in advance that your prescription medications are legal in Hong Kong.

Contact the University Of California travel assistance provider, Europ Assistance, to find out whether your medication is legal in Hong Kong:

Europ Assistance

Phone: 1 + 866-451-7606

E-mail: ops@europassistance-usa.com

More information is accessible through the Hong Kong [Customs and Excise Department](#).

Plan to take an adequate supply of prescription medications for the duration of your time abroad.

Pack your prescription medications in your carry-on luggage and store them in the original, labeled containers. Upon arrival, Hong Kong customs officials may ask for a copy of the prescription or letter from a physician with a detailed explanation including treatment, generic name of the medication, and prescribed dosage.

Do not plan on mailing medications to Hong Kong as they may be confiscated.

Pharmacies in Hong Kong are reliable. Both pharmaceutical and herbal Chinese medications are generally available. Pharmacies offer convenient hours and locations but they will not acknowledge U.S. prescriptions. However, some prescription-only items in the U.S. may be available over the counter at pharmacies in Hong Kong (for example, birth control pills).

Health Risks

Access the U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) website for travel health information to any destination.

Toilet paper and hand washing facilities may not be available in public restrooms in Hong Kong. It is advisable to carry tissues and antibacterial hand wipes as you travel throughout the city.

Most fruits and vegetables sold in Hong Kong originate in mainland China where pesticide use is unregulated. Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables before eating.

Avian Flu & other Infectious Diseases

UCEAP continually reviews information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization, works closely with medical experts on the UC campuses, and monitors local host university and country health resources. Do not travel if you have a fever or cough. Be sure to carry emergency contact information in case you are quarantined or isolated due to illness.

The risk of avian flu transmission to humans remains low, but avoid live birds and undercooked poultry. Feces of infected birds contain large amounts of the virus. Avoid direct contact with surfaces or objects contaminated by bird droppings in live food markets. Monitor your health for 10 days after leaving China and consult a health care provider if fever or respiratory problems occur.

Refer to additional information on the [UCEAP website](#).

In the event of a pandemic, UCEAP's ability to assist you abroad may be severely limited; foreign governments or the United States may impose restrictions on local and international movement for public health reasons.

Air Pollution

Hong Kong has been facing two serious air pollution issues. One is local street-level pollution. The other is the regional smog problem. Diesel vehicles are the main source of street-level pollution. Smog, however, is caused by a combination of pollutants from motor vehicles and from industry and power plants both in Hong Kong and in the Pearl River Delta region. The Hong Kong SAR Government's [Air Quality in Hong Kong](#) website has more information on air quality and related issues.

The short-term symptoms of exposure to air pollution include itchy eyes, nose, and throat, wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, chest pain, headaches, nausea, and upper respiratory infections (bronchitis and pneumonia). It also exacerbates asthma and emphysema. If you have a chronic medical condition, consult with a health care provider before travel, carry sufficient medication, and ask whether a breathing mask is recommended for days of high pollution concentration.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...



Women traveling alone should avoid the unmarked taxis, known as pak pai. Although cheaper, they are not registered and can be dangerous.

In general, I would not suggest traveling outside of Hong Kong alone. Always travel with at least one other person, carry enough cash and contact numbers in case of an emergency, and inform people on campus where you are and when you are expected back.



SAFETY

Avoiding Petty Crime

Hong Kong has a low crime rate. Even so, exercise caution when in congested areas and pay particular attention to personal belongings while in crowded markets and while traveling on public transportation.

Tips:

- Watch personal belongings in crowded areas
- Travel in groups at night and in certain areas including parks in the Victoria Peak area, where there have been recent incidents of assault and robbery
- Keep a close eye on your drinks and food while at bars or nightclubs and never accept a drink or food from strangers; criminals have been known to drug victims in order to rob them
- Report criminal incidents, including theft, immediately to the Study Center, the local police, and the U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong
- Carry picture identification and emergency contact information at all times
- Sign out through MyEAP any time you travel for more than 24 hours
- Update your local contact information (including cell phone number) through MyEAP

Police Response

The general police support and response to foreign victims of crime is excellent. The Hong Kong Police Force is highly trained and professional. There are numerous police stations strategically located throughout the various districts and communities of Hong Kong. Their response time to emergencies is under five minutes.

Demonstrations

Protests involving democracy activists, labor organizations, and civil society groups occur with some frequency. Pro-democracy rallies can be quite large, but are usually peaceful and disruptions are typically limited. Do not participate in illegal demonstrations.

U.S. Department of State Registration

Register online with the U.S. Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#). With STEP enrollment you can subscribe to receive updates on Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts and other information for a particular country; enrollment also makes it easier for the Department of State to assist you in an emergency.

Road & Transportation Safety

About 90 percent of the population in Hong Kong depends on public transportation. Taxis, buses, and the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) are readily available, inexpensive, and generally safe. The MTR is an underground railway network and is the most popular mode of public transportation, carrying an average of 3.5 million passengers a day.

Hong Kong has a highly developed and well-maintained road and highway network. Traffic moves on the left. During the daytime, traffic congests Hong Kong's urban areas. Traffic accidents are a serious problem. UCEAP does not recommend that you operate any vehicle abroad.

Pedestrian Safety

Be mindful that traffic flows on the left in Hong Kong (opposite of the U.S. driving system).

Allow more time to reach your destination; do not rush.

Use marked crossing facilities, e.g., footbridges, pedestrian subways, zebra crossings & light signal crossings.

Find a safe location to cross the road if no crossing facility is available.

For more information refer to the [Hong Kong Road Safety Council](#).

Natural Disasters

In the late summer/early fall there is an increase in typhoons in Hong Kong. Public notification of weather conditions is excellent.

Fire Safety

The Hong Kong Fire Services Department is an emergency service responsible for firefighting and rescue on land and sea. It also provides an emergency ambulance service for the sick and the injured, and gives fire protection advice to the public. There are altogether 80 fire stations, 37 ambulance depots and six fireboat fire stations. Facilities are strategically located to provide emergency response for all areas. The graded response times for building fire calls are 6 minutes for built-up areas and 9 to 23 minutes for areas of dispersed risks and isolated developments.

Purchase a battery-operated smoke detector. Know all exits and have a fire escape plan. Read more in the [Fire Safety](#) section of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.

Emergency Contacts

What Is an Emergency?

An emergency is a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action. The following are considered emergencies:

- Any life/death situation
- A traumatic event requiring immediate assistance
- An arrest
- Civil unrest or natural disaster in the host country

In an Emergency

Contact local emergency services first and then contact the following:

If you are in the U.S.

- During office hours (8 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific Time): Contact your Operations Specialist at the UCEAP Systemwide Office
- After office hours: Call the 24-hour emergency phone number at (805) 893-4762

If you are abroad

- Ambulance, Fire, Police: call **999**
- **U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong**
American Citizen Services
26 Garden Road, Hong Kong
Phone: (011-852) 2841-2211, 2841-2323, 2841-2225
Fax: (011-852) 2845-4845
Hours: M–F: 8:30–noon & 1:30–4 p.m.; Wed: 8:30–noon only
After-hours emergencies: (011-852) 2523-9011
E-mail: acshk@state.gov
Web: hongkong.usconsulate.gov

Carry the local emergency contact information at all times. If you have a health, travel, or safety emergency and do not have access to local or UCEAP representative emergency information, contact the UCEAP travel assistance provider, Europ Assistance, available 24/7:

- **Call international collect:** 1+202-828-5896
- **Call within the U.S.:** at 1+866-451-7606
- **E-mail:** ops@europassistance-usa.com