

Hong Kong

UCEAP Advising Notes

Objective of the Advising Notes Document

This document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad adviser to review program specific details that may impact a student's *decision to apply* for an EAP program. The document is *not* a summary of eligibility requirements, academic, housing, application and other logistical details freely available to students on the UCEAP and BSA website, and reviewed by a student in the Program Self-Assessment. The best source of detailed program information is always the [UCEAP Program Guide](#) from the prior academic cycle. If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website, in the Program Guide or the Advising Notes document, please contact the BSA adviser for this program.

Advisor Contact Information

For BSA Adviser name, email and drop-in advising hours, visit <http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/advising>

Newer UCEAP Hong Kong Programs

The [Summer Global Internship, Hong Kong](#) program was offered for the first time last cycle. This program allows students to intern in one of a variety of fields in Hong Kong. The UCEAP Global Summer Internship program is different than Berkeley Global Internships, although the programs are very similar. If you are unsure about which program to apply to, feel free to reach out to the UCEAP adviser for the Hong Kong programs (Marie Bartz) or the Global Internships adviser (Breanne Tcheng). Contact information is available in our [advising schedule](#).

Citizenship and Passport Considerations

Students who were born in Hong Kong and who still hold a valid Hong Kong Permanent Residence Identity Card (HKID) are eligible for admittance and will not need to apply for a visa to study in Hong Kong.

Students who are neither U.S. nor Hong Kong citizens should contact the nearest Chinese Consulate to determine their student visa requirements.

Students who are in the process of applying for US citizenship or making any legal name changes are not eligible to apply unless the changes will be completed before application to the EAP program.

According to Hong Kong Immigration policy, nationals from Afghanistan, Albania, Cambodia, Cuba, Laos, Korea (Democratic People's Republic of), Nepal and Vietnam are not allowed to undertake studies in Hong Kong and will not be issued a student visa.

When booking your flight, keep in mind that your student visa may not arrive until shortly before the start of the program. You are advised not to travel until you have received your student visa.

A valid passport is required to apply to all host universities. If you do not have a valid passport, or if your passport will expire less than six months after the end of your program, please apply immediately.

See what UCEAP Alumni Say about Studying Abroad in Hong Kong

Alumni Blog: <http://studyinghk.wordpress.com/>

HKUST Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xR55gCCtVtM>

UCEAP Hong Kong Site Visit Video: <https://youtu.be/M5coPQC6Ks>

UCEAP's Five Reasons to Study Abroad in Hong Kong: <http://blog.eap.ucop.edu/reasons-study-abroad-hong-kong/>

Financial Considerations for EAP Hong Kong programs

Semester and year EAP programs in Hong Kong often cost **less** than a semester or year at UC Berkeley (including the airfare to/from Hong Kong!), so they are highly recommended for students on a tight budget. However, students receiving financial aid need to be aware that financial aid while on EAP is based on the *cost of the EAP program* rather than the cost of attendance at Berkeley. As your student budget decreases, the total amount of your aid decreases, too. Contact a financial aid counselor with any questions about study abroad and financial aid. Counselors from the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office are available during drop-in advising hours in 160 Stephens Hall. Prior to your visit, please call +1 510 642-1356 to confirm counselor availability.

Transfer Student Advisory

Transfer students who do not have a UC GPA at time of application are eligible to apply for all UCEAP programs in Hong Kong *except for the Fall/Year terms of [Hong Kong University of Science and Technology \(HKUST\)](#) and all terms for [University of Hong Kong \(HKU\)](#)*. For these two programs, Transfer GPAs cannot be considered for admission.

Additionally, for *HKUST*, transfer students applying for the HKUST Business program must have completed at least one year at UC Berkeley by time of application.

Impacted Programs

In some academic years, we receive more applications for Fall & Year terms of the *HKU* program than allotted Berkeley spots on the program. Students should not be discouraged from applying to their first choice; however, all applicants are encouraged to consider all three of the excellent Hong Kong partner universities offered through UCEAP. If *HKU* applicants cannot be accommodated at *HKU*, they will be offered the option to switch to an alternate Hong Kong university, or another EAP Asia program with available space (e.g. in China, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand).

Chinese Language Considerations

There is no language requirement for EAP Hong Kong programs because the majority of courses taken by students at *HKU*, *Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)*, and *HKUST* are offered in English. However, Cantonese is the language used in dormitories by local students and in the wider Hong Kong community, so some basic knowledge of Cantonese will facilitate interactions both in classes and in everyday activities.

Chinese language study is not a focus at *HKU* and *HKUST*, though limited language courses are available. Students with a strong interest in Chinese language study should apply to [CUHK](#), and they will take a placement test upon arrival in Hong Kong. Students at *CUHK* can take a maximum of 6 CUHK units (which is the equivalent of 6 UC Berkeley semester units) of Cantonese or Putonghua language study.

Students with advanced Chinese skills (usually three years or more at the university-level or the equivalent proficiency) may take regular *CUHK* coursework taught in either Putonghua or Cantonese.

Academic Considerations

Due to high demand, Hong Kong universities prefer that enrollment in Business and Economics courses be limited to students in Business and Economics related majors. Non-majors are not prevented from taking courses at *HKU* and *CUHK*, however, students who do not have a strong background do not typically perform well in these courses. Strong math skills and some background on Chinese or Hong Kong economy are important for success in Business and Economics courses.

Hong Kong universities recently completed a transition from 3 to 4 year undergraduate degree programs. Improvements are expected in housing access, class size and academic calendars, but there may still be issues with class availability due to continued prioritization for local students in a major.

Program-specific Considerations: *Undergraduate Research*

The [Undergraduate Research](#) program in Summer 2019 ended on August 18, which was right before the start of the Berkeley fall semester. The calendar may be similar for the Summer 2020 program. Participants should be able to return to campus in time for the start of instruction, but please keep these dates in mind if you have student group or housing commitments. Students are not permitted to leave UCEAP programs early.

Prospective students are encouraged to accept placement in this program only if they are certain they will be able to participate within the lab they are assigned. Lab research placements such as this are often competitive; if you accept and later decline a placement, you may be taking an opportunity away from students who were not selected. Research teams at *CUHK* also count on having selected students as part of their lab, so you are encouraged to accept the placement only if you can commit to participation in the program.

Program-specific Considerations: *HKUST*

HKUST programs are not appropriate for students who want to start a new major or study outside of declared their major. *HKUST* applicants are accepted to a specific school within *HKUST* (Business, Engineering, Science, Humanities, or Social Sciences), and they are expected to take the majority of their courses from that school. Students interested in the *HKUST* Business program must be advanced undergraduates with a strong background in economics, management, or business administration, as well as mathematics. All other students are expected to complete some advanced coursework in their area of study prior to departure for EAP.

Program-specific Considerations: *HKU*

HKU is modeled after the British structure of higher education, offering a full curriculum of coursework taught English. After being selected by EAP for participation, students submit host university paper work listing the courses they would like to take at *HKU*. Students are then admitted into a specific faculty (department) at *HKU* and are required to take at least 60% of their courses (usually 3 of 5 courses) in the faculty to which they are admitted.

Please note the following faculty restrictions at *HKU*:

- **Architecture:** The Architecture faculty at *HKU* admits very few exchange students. Students applying to Architecture should have completed at least 1.5 years of relevant studies before applying. In addition to the standard application documents, applicants to Architecture will need to submit a portfolio in Architecture Design. Only single semester (NOT full year) exchange students will be considered.
- **Economics/Business/Commerce:** Courses offered by the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) are highly competitive. Students who are in their final year, in particular, should be warned that course enrollment is **NOT** guaranteed. Students should have already completed the course prerequisites before they request to take a course. Co-registration (e.g. taking Microeconomics I and II together in the same semester) is not allowed. Economics courses have high emphasis on mathematics.
- **Law:** Students who apply to Law Faculty must be majoring in Legal Studies at UC Berkeley.

Grading at *HKU* reflects the university's rigorous academic standards. If you apply yourself and adapt to *HKU* practices and expectations, you can earn good grades.

Housing Options for UCEAP Programs in Hong Kong

The information below provides a brief description of housing options for each program:

- **CUHK:** on campus in dorms, in rooms shared with local students; off campus housing is also an option
- **HKU:** university apartments or dorms with local students; off campus housing is also an option
- **HKUST:** on campus in a dorm or apartment with local students; off campus housing is also an option
- **Global Summer Internship, Hong Kong:** furnished apartments

Internships

In recent years, internships have not possible for exchange students in Hong Kong due to immigration policy. UCEAP is discussing this policy with Hong Kong host universities to determine if internships may be possible in the future.

Considerations for Graduating Seniors

If you are a graduating senior who is applying to the Spring semester programs in Hong Kong, please be advised that the finals period at these universities (especially *HKU* and *HKUST*) often stretches to the end of May. Returning to Berkeley to walk in a commencement ceremony is an unrealistic expectation for *HKU* and *HKUST* Spring participants. A final exam schedule is often not released until mid-semester of the current academic term, so it's not possible to choose courses based on the final exam date in order to make it back for graduation. If walking in graduation is very important to you, we recommend that you apply to *NUS* in Singapore; the Spring term at *NUS* has historically always ended before UC Berkeley final exams/graduation ceremonies. As an alternative to walking in a Spring ceremony, there is also a UC Berkeley "December Graduates Convocation" if you would like to have the experience of walking in graduation (not department specific). Similarly, you can wait and walk in the following Spring departmental ceremony.

Graduating seniors participating on a spring semesters program should ensure that they are on the Spring degree list. If they are not yet on this degree list, students should petition to move their graduation term with their UC Berkeley college. However, *HKU* does not report grades to UCEAP until mid-August, or even

September, so your grades will not arrive in time for your degree to be processed with the spring degree list (which occurs in mid-July). You will be automatically removed from the spring degree list and placed onto the summer degree list, which is processed in October. Thus, your diploma would display a summer graduation date rather than a spring graduation date. *This policy is subject to change.* For all students, after your EAP grades arrive and you are waiting for the next degree list to be processed, you can request a "Certificate of Completion" from the Berkeley Registrar that can serve as "proof" of graduation.

Considerations for LGBTIQ+ Students

Hong Kong is included as part of China on UCEAP's list of destinations where extra caution is advised for LGBTIQ+ students. This list includes locations where (1) the rights LGBTIQ+ of persons are less definitive or (2) there are restrictions on the freedom of expression and association of LGBTIQ+ individuals. As in many countries, tolerance levels vary by region; major cities may be more accepting of the LGBTIQ community than rural areas. You can review the [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018](#) from the U.S. Department of State for more information.

No laws criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity in Hong Kong. While the SAR has laws that ban discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, and family status, no law prohibits companies from discriminating on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. The government claimed public education and existing civil and criminal laws were sufficient to protect the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community and that legislation was not necessary. No additional legislative mechanisms existed to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBTIQ+ community.