Berkeley | Study Abroad

# Hong Kong UCEAP Advising Notes



## Objective

This document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad advisor to review program specific details that may impact a student's decision to apply for an UCEAP 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. The best source of detailed program information are the UCEAP webpages for Hong Kong. If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website or this Advising Notes document, please contact the BSA Advisor for this program.

*Updated August 2023*

## Table of Contents

# Quick Links

Below is a summary of 2024-2025 UCEAP Hong Kong programs available to Berkeley students:

|  | Summer 2024 | Fall 2024 | Year 2024-25 | Spring 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Immersion*** | | | | |
| [Chinese University of Hong Kong](#) | | X | X | X |
| [Hong Kong University of Science and Technology](#) | | X | X | |
| [University of Hong Kong](#) | | X | X | X |
| ***International*** | | | | |
| [Hong Kong Summer, CUHK](#) | X | | | |
| ***Research*** | | | | |
| [Research in Hong Kong](#) | X | | | |

# Video & Blog Resources

There are a number of videos provided by UCEAP or UC Berkeley Students to help students learn about their study abroad options. Here are some you can check out:

Videos



[Study Abroad in Asia and Oceania | UCEAP Open House](#)



[HKUST Lipdub](#)



[Top 5 Reasons to Study Abroad in Hong Kong](#)



[Highlighting tips and cultural events from studying abroad in Hong Kong](#)

# Citizenship and Passport Considerations

**For all UCEAP Hong Kong programs**, students cannot be accepted to a host university without a valid passport. Your UCEAP application will state how long your passport must be valid after the end date of the program and when a photocopy of it will be due. U.S. permanent residence and a green card are not sufficient documentation for admittance to a university in Hong Kong, and they do not substitute for a passport. If you do not have a passport or need a renewal, please review the Passport Information section of the UCEAP How to Apply Page, and take action immediately.

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 U.S. citizenship or making any legal name changes are **not** eligible to apply unless the changes will be completed before application to the UCEAP program. There are no exceptions to this.

Due to Hong Kong Immigration policy, nationals from Afghanistan, Cuba, Laos, Korea (Democratic People's Republic of), Nepal, and Vietnam are not allowed to study abroad in Hong Kong. There are no exceptions to this.

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.

# Financial Considerations

Semester and year UCEAP 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 UCEAP is based on the cost of the UCEAP program rather than the cost of attendance at Berkeley.

All UCEAP students are encouraged to apply for a UCEAP Scholarship, which offers a $1000 award for summer programs. For more information, visit the UCEAP Scholarships page.

US Citizen Pell Grant recipients are encouraged to apply for the Gilman Scholarship, which offers a possible award of up to $5000. For more information, visit gilmanscholarship.org. Another scholarship to explore is the Freeman-ASIA Scholarship.

More information on financial aid and scholarships can be found on our website: http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/finances

Financial aid students can request a financial aid estimate for the program here: https://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/finances/financial-aid-advising

# Chinese Language Considerations

There is no language requirement for UCEAP Hong Kong programs because the majority of courses taken by students at CUHK, HKU, 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

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 Considerations: HKU

HKU is modeled after the British structure of higher education, offering a full curriculum of coursework taught in English. After being nominated for this program, students submit host university paperwork 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. You must be a declared Business major to take business courses, and you must be a declared Economics major to take Economics courses. 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. Students who do not have a strong background do not typically perform well in these courses. Strong math skills and some background on the Chinese or Hong Kong economy are important for success in Business and Economics courses. Students who are in their final year, in particular, should be warned that course enrollment is **NOT** guaranteed.

Law: Students who apply to the 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.

# Program Considerations: HKUST

HKUST semester students are no longer required to take the majority of their courses within their HKUST school. HKUST will place students into the school that corresponds with their UC major. Students receive priority for courses offered by their own school. Some courses are only open to students placed with that school.

To be placed into the Business school, students must be a Business/Economics major and have completed at least one year of study at UC by the time they submit their host university application.

# Program Considerations: CUHK

Due to high demand, CUHK prefers 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 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 the Chinese or Hong Kong economy are important for success in Business and Economics courses.

Students live with UC and international students in a foreign student dorm next to the Peking University campus; students may apply for a homestay with a local Chinese family with approval from the UC Study Center.

# Internships

In recent years, internships have not been 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 Transfer Students

Transfer students should review BSA's [I am a Transfer Student webpage](#) for an overview of considerations. As a general rule, transfer students are eligible to apply for study abroad programs that take place after the student has completed one term at UC Berkeley (i.e., if their first term at Berkeley is Spring 2023, the earliest they could study abroad is Summer 2023. If their first term at Berkeley is Fall 2023, the earliest they could study abroad is Spring 2024). This applies for the following Hong Kong programs:

- CUHK
- Hong Kong Summer, CUHK
- Research in Hong Kong

There are 2 exceptions to the general rule stated above.

Applicants to HKU or HKUST (for all departments <u>except</u> business) must have a UC GPA at time of nomination. This refers to the timing of when nominations decisions must be processed, which typically occurs a couple months after the application deadline. The pattern for the earliest you could go abroad is as follows:

- Fall 2023 admits are eligible for Fall 2024 and beyond.
- Spring 2024 admits are eligible for Spring 2025 and beyond.

Applicants to the HKUST Business program must have completed at least one year at UC by time of application.The general pattern for the earliest you could go abroad is as follows:

- Fall 2022 admits are eligible for programs in Spring 2024 and beyond.
- Spring 2023 admits are eligible for Fall 2024 and beyond.

# Considerations for LGBTQ+ Students

Hong Kong is **not** included on UCEAP's [list of LGBTIQ-tolerant countries](#), which was compiled using information from the [Spartacus Gay Travel Index](#).  For additional information, review BSA's [I am a LGBTQIA+ Identifying Student webpage](#) for an overview of considerations.

Information from the U.S. Department of State's [2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) is as follows:

> No laws criminalize private consensual same-sex conduct between adults. Individuals and organizations working on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) issues continued to report discrimination and harassment from authorities similar to that experienced by other organizations that accept funding from overseas.

LGBTI individuals reported incidents of violence, including domestic violence; however, they encountered difficulties in seeking legal redress, since regulations on domestic violence do not include recognition of same-sex relations. Accessing redress was further limited by societal discrimination and traditional norms, resulting in most LGBTI persons refraining from publicly discussing their sexual orientation or gender identity. Nonetheless, the May 28 civil code includes a provision that protects certain tenancy rights for designated partners of deceased property owners without officially defined family relationships.

NGOs working on LGBTI issues reported that although public advocacy work became more difficult for them due to laws governing charities and foreign NGOs, they made some progress in advocating for LGBTI rights through specific antidiscrimination cases.

# Considerations for Graduating Seniors

If you are a graduating senior who is applying to the Spring package 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 the [National University Singapore](#), as there is a better chance that the program will end before commencement.  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 in a spring semester program should ensure that they are on the Spring degree list. If you are not yet on this degree list, you should contact your UC Berkeley College Adviser to petition to move your expected graduation term. However, spring program grades are often not reported 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 UCEAP 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.

More information can be found in the [I am a Senior page](#).

# Considerations for Students With Disabilities

Students seeking accommodations should review BSA's [I am a Student With Disabilities webpage](#) for an overview of considerations. If you receive accommodations at UC Berkeley and would like to know if they are also available in the program abroad that interests you, it is a good

idea to email your BSA adviser to inquire about your specific needs. That way, if your needs cannot be accommodated in that program, you can investigate other programs that might.

Students with emotional support animals or service animals will need to request accomodations from their UCEAP Program Specialist prior to departure on their UCEAP program. Emotional support animal accomodation requests are not guaranteed. Below are additional resources to consider:

Traveling Internationally with a Guide Dog or Service Animal
*Pros and cons, legal and health considerations for going abroad with your service animal*
http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/serviceanimal

10 Steps to Bring Your Service Animal or Guide Dog to Another Country
*Start planning early and consider international quarantine and vaccination laws*
http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/10steps

Should I Take My Guide Dog or Service Animal?
http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/guidedogdecisions

Caring for Your Guide Dog or Service Animal Abroad
*Learn tips for supplies to take along, climate preparations, and animal health while traveling internationally*
http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/preparingyouranimal

# Considerations for Undocumented Students

The Advance Parole processing timeline can take anywhere from 10-13.5 months to process and it is highly encouraged that students interested in studying abroad reach out to the BSA office as soon as possible to discuss the next steps to submit an early application. The BSA Office collaborates with the Undocumented Student Program and the East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC) to support undocumented or DACA students interested in studying abroad. For more information, review the I am an...Undocumented Student page.

# Diversity Abroad Resources

BSA recognizes that there are many nuances to exploring your identities abroad, and these articles may not be representative of all identities and experiences. Diversity Abroad resources, however, are a great starting place for your exploration. You can find a variety of articles to help you prepare for your study abroad experience.