

I chose to study at HKU as I wanted to get closer to my roots and improve my Cantonese. I also wanted to travel and explore more of Asia.

Accommodation

When applying for university-owned accommodation, you list three preferences. I was not given any of my three choices and was instead allocated a room in Lee Shau Kee Hall. I spoke to several other exchange students who could not get university-owned accommodation at all, so I was fortunate to get a room, as the rent was much cheaper than renting privately.

I requested a single room but was given a double. I was initially apprehensive about this, but I got on very well with my roommate, so it turned out fine. The bedroom and shared bathroom were acceptable, although I did need to dust the room when I moved in. The kitchen was very small and not well suited to cooking, so I ate out most of the time. The hall was well located between campus and Kennedy Town and was only a 10–15 minute walk from both.

Food

There are plenty of places to eat for under £6 in both Kennedy Town and outside the B exits of the HKU MTR station. Most places have English menus. However, I am not sure how easy it is to order in English, as I can speak enough Cantonese to order. You can also get very cheap meals on campus, but many locals I spoke to said that the food there is not that great.

Academics

Only 50% of your modules need to be from your chosen faculty, so I was able to explore modules outside of maths. I took a Mandarin class, a music composition course and an introductory accounting course. There were also Cantonese classes, but I don't know much about these as I was ineligible to take them as a heritage speaker. You cannot take modules with lecture clashes, which meant I had to adjust my initial module selection.

Unlike at Warwick, lectures are not recorded, and all my maths lectures were taught from slides which were annotated in class. Another difference was that we had midterms as part of our assessment. This took some time to get used to, as I often had to revise for these while completing assignments, but I found this helpful for the final exams.

Things to Do

There are plenty of things to do in Hong Kong. Hiking is very popular. I went hiking along part of the MacLehose Trail in Sai Kung. This was an interesting hike as you pass through many old villages, some of which are now abandoned. I did not get to do as much hiking as I would have liked, as it was often too hot for me to go out.

There are many student societies, but I was told that many of them only converse in Cantonese. However, I joined the Chinese Martial Arts society, and they were very accommodating to English speakers. CEDARS also organises events for non-local students, which are a good way to meet others and try different activities. One event I attended was a dim sum making workshop.

Hong Kong is also an ideal base for visiting other countries. I visited Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Beijing. It was also very easy to take day trips to Shenzhen, as you can get there directly on the MTR.

Other Tips

I booked my HKID appointment before I left for Hong Kong in August so I was able to get an appointment for the beginning of September. Having the HKID gives you access to heavily discounted public healthcare.

Getting the student Octopus card gives you about a 50% discount on MTR fares.

The supermarket, Wellcome, in the Westwood gives HKU students a 5% discount if you spend over 100HKD.

The Happy Valley Racecourse offers free entry if you present them an overseas passport.

Conclusion

Although I do not think living in Hong Kong is for me, I did enjoy my year abroad and would recommend it, as I got to experience new things and learn more about the culture there.