

The University of Hong Kong



Expats@HKU

A brief guide to working at
Asia's Global University
for staff from afar

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Message from the President & Vice-Chancellor

In 2014, I took a leap of faith in uprooting from the U.K., leaving family, friends, research group and patients behind and bringing just my wife Tina (plus dog Darcy and cat Buffy!) with me, to take up the helm at The University of Hong Kong. It has been an exciting adventure so far and we have all adapted well. If you are thinking about the prospect of joining HKU, whether you are from Hong Kong, mainland China or overseas, you may have a number of questions that are critical in the process of your decision-making.



This booklet aims to address some of the more common questions that our colleagues have presented to us, and is

designed to help you decide whether or not we are the right place for you. As a firm believer that it is people that make the difference, we put enormous effort into recruiting, retaining and rewarding our staff, and ensuring that their experience at HKU is both engaging and enriching.

I have witnessed first-hand the myriad of opportunities that this distinctive institution can offer. With my colleagues, we have collectively set out ambitious academic and strategic targets in our vision for the next decade. We are confident that not only will you find the space here to grow professionally and personally, you will thoroughly enjoy being part of the HKU community. Hong Kong is also a fascinating place in which to live and work: everyone knows about the high-rises and the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong island, but do you also know about the outlying islands, beaches, hiking trails, flora and fauna that characterise the place?

This part of the world is really where the action is in higher education, right here, right now. HKU has top students, top staff, wonderful facilities and a world of opportunities: come and join us!

Professor Peter Mathieson
President and Vice-Chancellor

Asia's Global University

Our home

The University of Hong Kong, as an English-medium, research-led, comprehensive university (the only one in China), provides world-class, campus-based education in a wide range of academic disciplines to outstanding students. The University is situated in a geographically and culturally unique part of Greater China and has historically sat at the gateway between East and West, pursuing teaching and research which enhance the understanding of Asia in a comparative way.

Our distinctiveness

We have a strong international focus but also a distinct Asian perspective, and the University is recognised by the international community for its high-quality talents, assets and skills. Our campus reflects both the vibrancy and plurality of Hong Kong and the diverse and cosmopolitan nature of a modern, progressive Asian society. Our programmes are benchmarked against leading global institutions and are internationally competitive. We are committed to training and nurturing future leaders and talents equipped to tackle the grand challenges of a rapidly changing world.



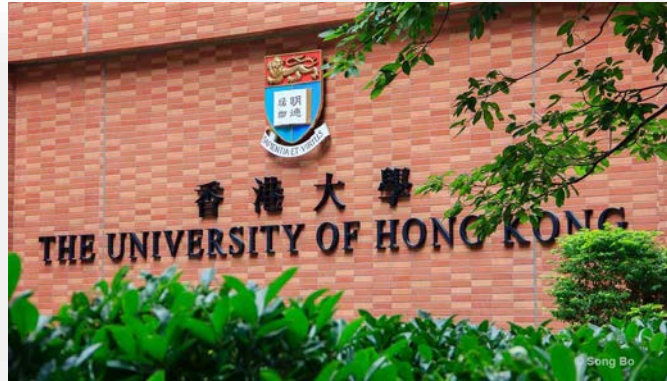
Our contribution

Our deep connections with strategic partners all over the world coupled with our distinct advantages in greater China provide exceptional opportunities for students and staff to make meaningful contributions to the building of knowledge and the advancement of society. By so doing, not only are we supporting student and staff engagement with the global community, we are training them to apply their skills and talents effectively, and to be successful anywhere in today's increasingly globalised society.

Section 1: Why HKU?

Our profile

- Balanced identity of innovative teaching and research;
- Comprehensive range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary programmes;
- A highly-preferred university attracting the best students locally and from around the world;
- High degree of internationalisation and track record of nurturing globally-minded students;
- Significant impact on local, national, regional and international communities.



What we can offer you



Competitive remuneration package

- Salary
- Housing allowance (cash allowance or quarters depending on package for professoriate staff)
- Gratuity or contribution to a pension fund (Staff Provident Fund)

Benefits

- Dental and medical coverage (including on-campus service provision)
- Annual leave
- Sabbatical leave (for professoriate staff)
- Professional leave
- Maternity and paternity leave (and special considerations for extending the tenure clock as a result of childbearing)

Professional development opportunities and mentorship

- Conference support (whether as presenter or delegate)
- Continuous Professional Development grants (e.g. for continuing education)
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Skills training/professional development workshops
- Work-Life Balance programmes
- Induction sessions for new staff members
- Fellowships/visiting programmes
- Training materials

Other

- Start-up funding
- Recognition and rewards for excellence in:
 - teaching;
 - research; and
 - knowledge exchange.
- Historical and contemporary campus setting
- Intellectually-stimulating environment and the opportunity to work with internationally-renowned teachers and researchers
- State-of-the-art teaching and research facilities
- Opportunities to build an excellent research career through competing for an exceedingly high number of grant schemes from the government, foundations and private enterprises
- An innovative culture that values and rewards different forms of academic and research output
- Access to our global network of 320+ partners
- The largest library stock of all government-funded institutions in Hong Kong



What we can offer staff from afar

- Support network for families
- “Acclimatising to Hong Kong” induction
- Language courses (English, Cantonese and Putonghua)
- Relocation package (incoming air passage and baggage expenses for new professoriate staff)

What we are developing for woman academics

- “Lunch and Learn” series: invited speakers give talks and sharing sessions in an informal lunch time setting
- “Conversation Hour” series: invited speakers form a panel to discuss broad issues relating to woman academics for a larger audience.
- Womens Studies Research Centre provides a cooperative framework for researchers within HKU and in the broader community to come together around the common cause of analysing the diversity of women’s experience in different cultures (<http://www.wsrcweb.hku.hk/>)
- Mentorship
- Access to APRU (Association of Pacific Rim Universities) Women in Leadership forum (<http://apru.org/creating-global-leaders/asia-pacific-women-in-leadership>)
- Access to UN Women HeforShe activities (<http://www.heforshe.org/en>)
- An on-site early years education facility (in the pipeline)

What we have available for mothers

- Breastfeeding facilities: <http://www.uhs.hku.hk/he/breastfeeding/main.html>
- HKU Mums Network (in the pipeline)

Section 2: Why Hong Kong?

This is a special section for prospective employees who are new to Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region



- Modern, cosmopolitan city steeped in history
- East and West perspectives
- Contemporary outlook
- Efficient services
- State-of-the-art facilities
- Modern, efficient healthcare system with excellent options
- English as one of the official languages of communication
- Low tax rate
- High-performing local and international schools

On the doorstep to China and South-east Asia

- Easy access to mainland China. For example, to:
 - Beijing: 3 hours (flight)
 - Shanghai: 2 hours (flight)
 - Shenzhen: 75 minutes (train from HKU)
- Easy access to South-east Asian cities. For example, to:
 - Bali: 4 hours 45 minutes
 - Bangkok: 2 hours 50 minutes
 - Kuala Lumpur: 3 hours
 - Singapore: 3 hours 40 minutes
 - Tokyo: 4 hours
 - Yangon: 3 hours
- Opportunities for collaboration with national and regional partners



Geography

Hong Kong covers an area of approximately 404 square miles, and can be divided into 3 areas:

- Island of Hong Kong
- Kowloon Peninsula
- The New Territories, including the outlying islands



The Island of Hong Kong, covering about 35 square miles, is the administrative and working centre of Hong Kong. Most of Hong Kong's industry is concentrated in Kowloon, which also has the densest population. By contrast large areas of the New Territories are still predominantly rural and agricultural though there are nine new towns in the New Territories which are growing rapidly. The 235 outlying islands (most of them uninhabited and inaccessible except by private boat) are relatively unspoilt.

With the exception of the Kowloon Peninsula, all parts of Hong Kong are hilly, with rugged mountains rising to nearly 1,000 metres in the New Territories and on some of the islands.

Kowloon is linked to Hong Kong Island by three road tunnels and an underground railway, the MTR (Mass Transit Railway). Ferries connect both Hong Kong and Kowloon with the outlying islands.

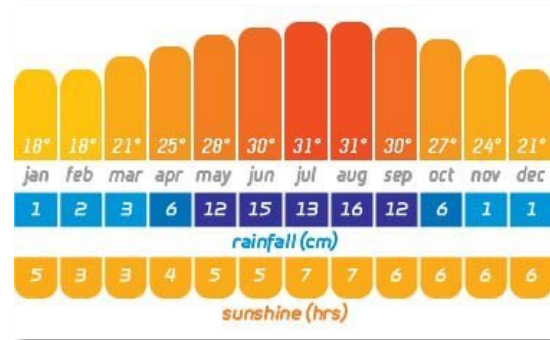
Hong Kong standard time is 8 hours ahead of GMT (7 hours ahead of BST).

Climate

The seasons

Hong Kong lies within the tropics but experiences seasonal changes in weather:

- Spring: March–May
- Summer: June–September
- Autumn: October–December
- Winter: December/January–February



Winter can be chilly and damp; the weather gets warmer and is frequently misty during the Spring; and Summers are very hot, very wet and very humid. The best weather is in the Autumn when it is relatively cool, sunny and dry.

The humidity

Humidity is at its highest in the early morning and can be well over 90% at any time from February to September, and on occasions reaches 99%. It tends to drop during the day and there are considerable fluctuations.

The combination of humidity over 90% and temperature of around 30°C can be enervating (watch out for the dripping walls). A dehumidifier helps to keep the environment more comfortable (and your belongings mold-free). June, July and August are the wettest months; December is the driest.

Typhoons

Typhoons can occur between May and November though they are most likely from July to September. The most destructive element in a typhoon is the very high wind speed. There is a sophisticated advance warning system operated by the Hong Kong Observatory, which comes into operation whenever a typhoon comes within 400 miles of Hong Kong (<http://www.hko.gov.hk/contente.htm>). A direct hit by a severe typhoon with hurricane force winds is an extremely rare occurrence, but some typhoons have been known to leave trails of destruction.



History and people

Hong Kong Island was a barren outpost of South China until it was settled by the British in 1841 during the First Opium War. Kowloon Peninsula was ceded to the British in 1860 and the New Territories were leased for 99 years in 1898.

Under the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1982 the whole territory, whether leased, ceded or settled, reverted to Chinese sovereignty on 1st July 1997, when the lease expired. It is now governed by the People's Republic of China as a Special Administrative Region (SAR).

The population of Hong Kong increased rapidly in the late 1930s but fell after the Japanese occupied Hong Kong itself from the day of Pearl Harbour to the end of the Second World War. There was another huge influx from China in the late 1940s, when the nationalist government fell to the communists.

Today the population is 7.34 million, one of the most densely populated areas of the globe. Around 60% of these were born in Hong Kong and most have their family ties elsewhere in southern China.

Language

Chinese and English are both official languages, although Chinese, or Cantonese in the spoken form, is the common language. Apart from Cantonese, common dialects such as Teochew, Hakka, and Tanka are used within separate communities of the Guangdong and Hong Kong Chinese. The use of Putonghua is very common now in Hong Kong, especially on HKU campus.

Some expats have mentioned that while some of the local Chinese speak English very well, English is not as widely spoken in Hong Kong as originally thought. For example, the use of English by taxi drivers can be a bit patchy. (To be on the safe side, ask someone to write down your destination in Chinese on a piece of paper and show it to your taxi driver.)

Some considerations for expatriate staff

- High housing costs
- High-cost of English-medium child education and access to limited places
- Language and cultural challenges

Useful links

www.asiaxpat.com

www.geoexpat.com

www.timeout.com/hong-kong

<https://hk-magazine.com/>

<http://dollarsaver.com.hk>

www.gov.hk/en/about/abouthk/factsheets/

www.scmp.com

Section 3: Expatriate life in Hong Kong

What's Hong Kong like to live in?

We asked several colleagues what Hong Kong was like to live in. This is what they said.

It's busy, vibrant and hectic. It can be a pain to live here but somehow you keep coming back.

It's one of the most exciting cities I've ever lived in; it's dramatic and has an amazing buzz to it.

Fabulous!

High-pressure, hectic, infuriating.

Extreme and sometimes crazy.

Noisy, but beautiful.

A city full of contrasts. To enjoy it, decide what your priorities are – you can't have everything."

Exciting. I love it!

Cost of living – basic necessities

According to the Economist's **Cost of Living Index** (2015), Hong Kong was the second most expensive city to live in (tying with Zurich) after Singapore. However, the final cost can vary enormously depending on individual needs and tastes. We've put together a list of prices to give you some basis for comparison. At the time of writing the exchange rate was around HK\$10.2 to GBP, HK\$8.8 to EUR and HK\$7.8 to USD.

BASIC EVERYDAY ITEMS	HK\$
Milk (1L)	\$20+
Loaf of bread	\$15+
Packet of cereal (500g)	\$40-100
Pot of yoghurt (1kg)	\$50+
Block of cheese (250g)	\$40+
Apples (1kg)	\$22+
Coffee (250g)	\$50+
Coffee (Starbucks)	\$30
Sandwich	\$40-80
McDonald's hamburger	\$20+
Bottle of wine (mid-range)	\$120+
Pizza	\$120+
Pint of beer in bar	\$50+
Three course meal + wine	\$200+
Local English newspaper	\$10
Foreign magazine	\$70-140
Paperback	\$80+
Cinema ticket	\$80-120
CD	\$100+
DVD	\$100+
Stamp (overseas)	\$3+
Stamp (local)	\$1.70
Haircut	\$150+
Utilities (850sq.ft apartment, 2 people)	\$1,500+
Internet (10Mbps, unlimited data)	\$200+

Supermarkets

There is a number of large supermarket chains which carry a wide range of goods and various expensive delicatessens, which sell pretty much anything you want. Large supermarket chains dotted all over Hong Kong are:

- Marketplace by Jasons: www.greatfoodhall.com/eshop/LoginPage.do
- Park'n Shop: www.parknshop.com/
- Wellcome: www.wellcome.com.hk/wd2shop/en/html/index.html

These supermarkets also sell a lot of imported products, and all have deli counters:

- CitySuper (at International Finance Centre Mall, Central; Times Square, Causeway Bay and New Town Plaza, Shatin): www.citysuper.com.hk/en/
- Great (Pacific Place, Admiralty): www.greatfoodhall.com/eshop/LoginPage.do
- Oliver's (Prince's Building, Central): www.oliversthedeli.com.hk/
- ThreeSixty (Elements, Kowloon): www.threesixtyhk.com/

Imported fruit and vegetables at these places can be fairly expensive, but you can buy vegetables extremely cheaply in the markets.

Wet markets

There are wet markets in most neighbourhoods. They are full of local colours and fresh produce at great prices.

Eating out

Hong Kong is a restaurant society, and something for everyone. You can find almost any kind of food you want. Asian restaurants of all varieties are plentiful, as are French, Italian, hamburger and pizza joints, and pubs serving steak and kidney pies or bangers and mash. There are also examples of most other food varieties; Mexican, German, Spanish, Mongolian etc.

How much you pay depends on how much your budget is. Eating out can be incredibly cheap but also incredibly expensive: e.g. if you like Chinese food, you can have something to eat in a local noodle cafe for as little as HK\$30. Alternatively, you can dine at a very nice restaurant and spend an exorbitant amount on the food and wine there. A typical meal for two in Lan Kwai Fong, a young and trendy hub in Central, can cost an average of HK\$500, and more if you order wine, coffee and desserts, etc.

Dining options on campus

There are many good dining options on campus offering food at reasonable prices. These include:

- Maxims: 4th Floor, Chong Yuet Ming Cultural Centre
- Pacific Coffee: Global Lounge, Ground Floor, Fong Shu Chuen Amenities Centre
- Ebenezer's Kebabs & Pizzeria (Halal): 1st Floor, Fong Shu Chuen Amenities Centre
- Starbucks Coffee: Ground Floor, Main Library Building (Old Wing); Ground Floor, Composite Building, near Centennial Campus
- Rome Café (Postgraduate Hub): Level P3, Graduate House
- Robert Black Dining Room: Robert Black College, University Drive
- Senior Common Room: 15th Floor, K K Leung Building
- Bijas Vegetarian: Ground Floor, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus
- Delifrance: Ground Floor, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus
- Grove Café: Lower Ground Floor, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus
- The Bridge (Senior Common Room): 4th Floor, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus

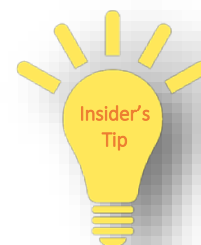
Dining options near campus

Near HKU, two restaurant hubs are Kennedy Town (affectionately known as K-Town) and Sai Ying Pun (meaning "Western encampment"). If you don't know how to choose, act like the locals and check restaurant reviews on www.openrice.com/en/hongkong. (*Openrice* in Chinese means "Food is ready!")

Getting around

Public transport is cheap and very convenient; you rarely have to wait more than a few minutes for any mode of transport.

The first thing you should do is to purchase an Octopus card from any MTR (metro) station, which can be used not only on public transport, but also in many shops and supermarkets as well as vending machines and photo booths. They cost HK\$50 and you can add stored value into the card (www.mtr.com.hk/en/customer/tickets/more_octopus.html). Many shops such as 7-11 and supermarkets will let you add value or top up at the counters.



Link your Octopus card to a credit card, where the value is automatically added once you've used it all up. This will save you from having to top it up yourself.

Buses

Single and double deckers are relatively cheap, and almost all are air-conditioned. You can use your Octopus cards, but if you don't have one or your's has insufficient credit, you need to have the correct coins/notes ready as no change is given.

- Kowloon Motor Bus: (www.kmb.hk/en/)
- Citybus: www.nwstbus.com.hk

Minibuses

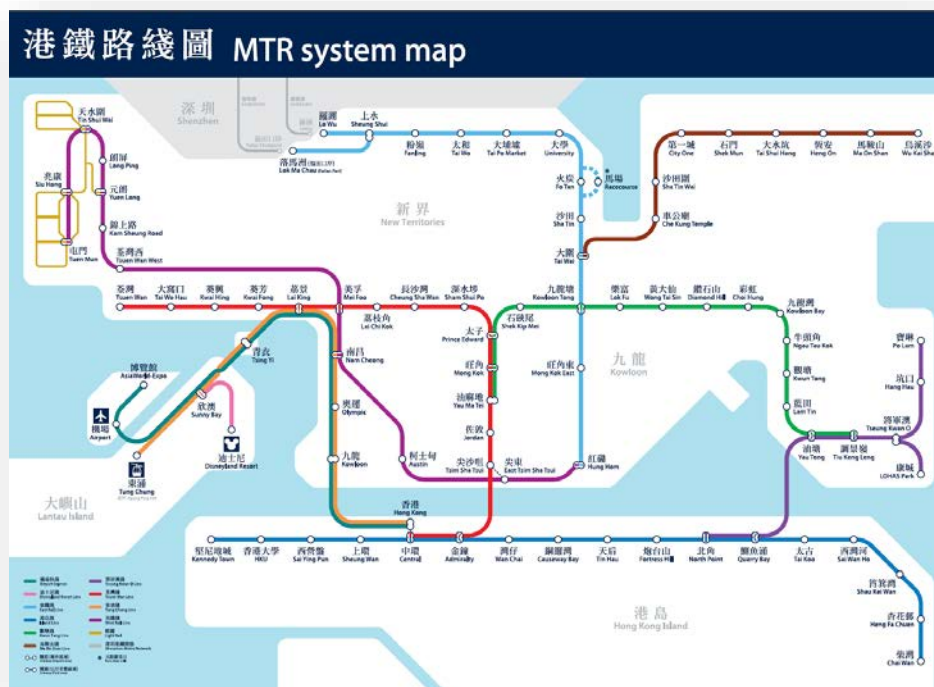
Minibuses (or Public Light Buses [PLBs]) are usually 16-seater vans, which are a really nifty and cheap way of getting around. Transporting around over 300,000 passengers daily, some PLBs are used on scheduled services (green minibuses) and others on non-scheduled services (red minibuses).

Green minibuses to Central, Admiralty and beyond stop on Bonham Road (opposite the East gate), take around 15 minutes and cost around \$6.

As they are smaller than the large double-deckers, they are usually faster – with some in the New Territories travelling at breakneck speed sometimes! One thing you might need to do is to tell the driver where to stop, so if you decide to use the handy minibuses, you might want to learn how to say “*yau lok, m-go!*”, which literally means, “want to get down, thank you”. Some minibuses now have bells you can ring to let the driver know you want to stop.

MTR

The MTR (Mass Transit Railway) is an extremely convenient form of transport, which links many areas of Hong Kong. They are clean, highly efficient and safe, and can get you around Hong Kong quickly and cheaply. HKU has its own MTR station (**HKU Station**) on the (blue) Island Line! From the Main Campus or the Centennial Campus, you can get to Central, the business district, in ten minutes.



www.mtr.com.hk/en/customer/services/system_map.html

Trams

Affectionately called ding-dings (because of the bell that's rung), the trams on Hong Kong island are a cheap (HK\$2.30 flat fare) and scenic way of getting around. However, they are relatively slow, often crowded and because they are not air-conditioned, very hot.

www.hktramways.com/

Taxis

Taxis are plentiful, except when it's raining, and they are very affordable. At the time of writing, the flag fall for taxis were:

- HK\$22.00: red taxis of Hong Kong and Kowloon;
- HK\$18.50: green taxis of the New Territories; and
- HK\$17.00: blues taxis on Lantau Island.

Approximate taxi fares from HKU to:

- Central: HK \$50
- Wanchai: HK \$50-60
- Sha Wan Drive: HK \$30-40 (or take the no. 10 minibus for around HK \$5)
- Pokfulam: HK \$40

A word of warning: People can be a bit aggressive about getting taxis, especially during the rush hour and when it's raining.

Ferries

A ferry links Hong Kong Island (Central Pier and Wan Chai Ferry Pier) to Kowloon (Star Ferry Pier, Tsim Sha Tsui), and is a wonderful opportunity to witness the spectacular sights of Hong Kong.

www.starferry.com.hk

If you live on an outlying island, ferries will also get you to work and back very comfortably. The journey times differ depending on your choice of island as do the cost and the frequency of the ferries.

Cultural activities

For culture vultures, there are a lot of things that Hong Kong has to offer:

- resident orchestras (www.hkphil.org and www.hkco.org/en/index.html) and plenty of visiting musicians;
- a resident ballet company (www.hkballet.com);
- a couple of modern dance companies plus occasional visiting dance groups;
- an annual visiting opera plus regular performances by the students of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (www.hkapa.edu);
- several local amateur theatre groups which perform in English;
- an annual Arts Festival (www.hk.artsfestival.org/).

Movies

Film fans don't miss out either: most major American and British films show here in English (with Chinese subtitles), though if there's not much action in them they tend to come and go fairly quickly.

- Broadway Circuit (ifc, Central and Cyperport): www.cinema.com.hk/en
- AMC Cinemas (Pacific Place, Admiralty): www.amccinemas.com.hk/index.php?lang=e
- Cityline: www.cityline.com.hk/eng/main.html

Most Cantonese films come with English subtitles (not always comprehensible, but always interesting). The Alliance Française (www.alliancefrancaise.org.hk/) shows French films regularly. Then, there's the annual International Film Festival, British Film Week and French Film Week.

Entertainment

If none of these things appeal, join one of the many societies in Hong Kong, sing in a choir, play bridge, learn ballroom dancing or Morris dancing (www.hkmorris.com/) or go for a wine tasting event. And if you prefer, stay at home and read one of the two English language newspapers, the South China Morning Post (www.scmp.com) and the Standard (www.thestandard.com.hk/) or watch something on the English language TV channel (programme.tvb.com/pearl/).

Keeping fit

Membership of private health clubs is expensive; public sports facilities are much cheaper, good, but heavily used. As a member of staff at HKU, you can use the sports facilities at the university for a small annual charge.

http://www.ihp.hku.hk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=304&Itemid=280

Crime

Hong Kong is one of the safest cities in the world.

Flats do get burgled, but usually large, expensive flats (i.e. not yours), and there is some pickpocketing in the tourist areas.

It is quite safe for women to travel on public transport or walk through the streets at any time of the night or day.

The Hong Kong Police Force is one of the largest in the world per capita. The police officers do carry guns but shoot-outs are very rare – so don't panic. Some speak English: they can be identified by a little red star pinned on their uniforms.

General and university holidays

There are 17 general (public) holidays in Hong Kong – one of the highest around the world. In addition to these, HKU has three university holidays:

HKSAR general holidays	
1	The day following the first day of January
2	Lunar New Year's Day
3	The second day of Lunar New Year
4	The third day of Lunar New Year
5	Ching Ming Festival
6	Good Friday
7	The day following Good Friday
8	Easter Monday
9	Labour Day
10	The Birthday of the Buddha
11	Tuen Ng Festival
12	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day
13	The day following National Day
14	The day following the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival
15	Chung Yeung Festival
16	Christmas Day
17	The first weekday after Christmas Day

HKU holidays

1 Foundation Day (16th March)

2 Christmas Eve

3 New Year's Eve

<http://www.gov.hk/en/about/abouthk/holiday/>

<https://intranet.cs.hku.hk/csintranet/contents/general/shared/holidays.jsp>

Section 4: Accommodation

Overview

Renting a place to live in Hong Kong is not cheap. It is common to feel like you're having a minor seizure when you find out just how much it actually costs. Depending on where you decide to live, a small, unfurnished flat can cost as much as HK\$20,000 – HK\$30,000 per month. Rents for luxury properties can go for more than HK\$300,000 per month. In general, accommodation on Hong Kong Island is the most expensive. But don't be disheartened because there are decent places out there which are pleasant and affordable.

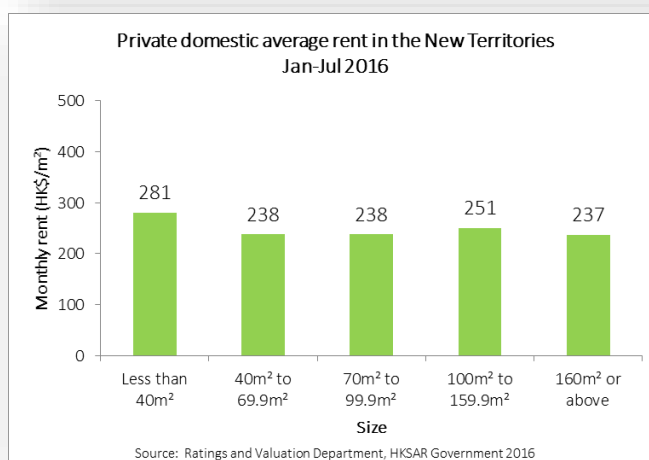
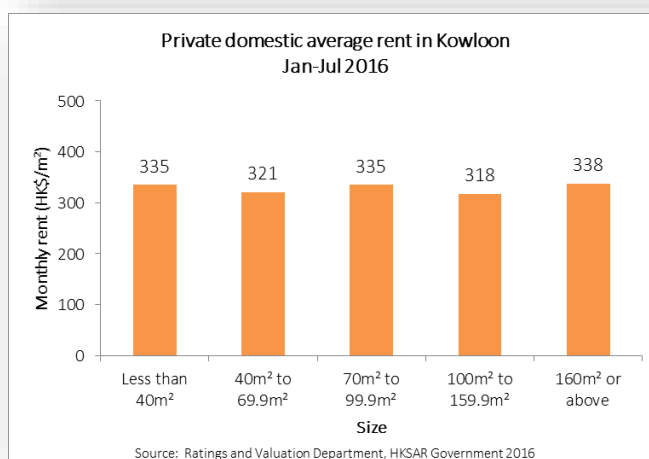
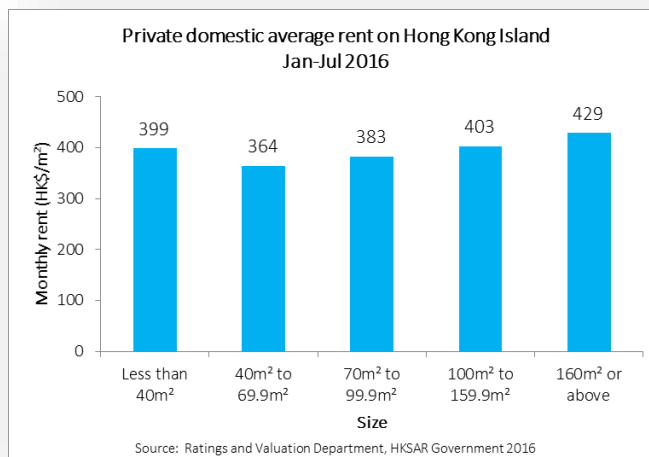
Getting your mind geared towards looking for a place

If you need to find a place to live, you may not be able to make any real decisions until you have familiarised yourself to some extent with Hong Kong but we suggest that you start considering what your priorities are – e.g. location, size, community feel – right away.

Finding a place

One of the most common ways of looking for a place is through an agent. Rents are negotiable, so if you really love a place but find the cost too challenging, try impressing on the owner (either through the agent or personally) that you work in higher education. Owners may prefer to accept a lower monthly rental income from a “stable teacher/tenant” over a higher one with an unstable tenant. Here are a few links to agents:

- <http://home.gohome.com.hk/en/>
- <http://www.squarefoot.com.hk/>
- <http://www.statelyhome.com.hk/en/>
- <http://www.hongkonghomes.com/en/property/rent>



Getting a salary advance to cover the initial rent expenditure

The normal financial arrangement for the lease of your place is to pay up-front:

- the first month's rent; and
- a two-month deposit; and
- the agent's fee, which is usually 50% of a month's rent.

So if, for example, you rent an apartment at HK\$15,000 per month, you will have to put down approximately HK\$52,500 up front. Additionally, you must find out if your rent includes the monthly management fees and rates, which can vary depending on what is offered.

In order to help finance this initial expenditure, the University allows a salary advance of up to HK\$15,000.

Furnishing a place

Flats come in all stages of "furnished" from having everything you need to having just bare walls. Rent usually increases with the amount of furniture provided so you may be inclined to take the empty option and buy your own furniture. It's up to you to negotiate this with the landlord. (In this town, everything is negotiable). Sometimes you and the landlord can agree that he will give you a certain amount of money and you yourself can go and buy what you want.

In addition to some furniture being provided, the kitchen is usually equipped with a two-burner "cooker" and a fridge. Unless you live in an expat enclave like Discovery Bay, you will probably not have an oven. Often a TV and a washing machine are provided. Again, it's up to you to try and negotiate the best deal you can with the landlord.

There's a good market for second hand furniture and appliances. The main problem is usually transporting the stuff once you have got it but vans can be hired at a relatively low cost.

Again, because there is a large expat community in Hong Kong, there is a lot of coming and going in and out of the region so this means that you can pick up a lot of items second hand at very good prices.

- <http://hongkong.asiaxpat.com/classifieds/>
- <https://geoexpat.com/classifieds/>

Buying electricals and household appliances

There a number of large chains that sell all the things you'll need for your home:

- Fortress: www.fortress.com.hk/en/home
- Chung Yuen Electrical Company Limited: <http://www.cyeshop.com/cy/indexEN/main.asp>
- German Pool: <http://www.germanpool.com.hk/eng/products/>

Your accommodation options

During your first week here a lot of time will be spent looking for somewhere to live. Obviously you won't be able to make any real decisions until you have looked around Hong Kong, but it will be helpful if you spend some time considering your priorities beforehand.

To help you start sorting out potential flat-hunting areas, here is a brief description of the most popular areas amongst current staff.

Near HKU

Kennedy Town, Mid-Levels, Pokfulam (Hong Kong Island)	
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">– close to campus;– close to amenities.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">– rent is more expensive;– crowded.

The city

Causeway Bay, North Point (Hong Kong Island), Tsim Sha Tsui (Kowloon)	
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">– well served by the MTR, buses and trams;– shops, restaurants and bars are very easily accessible;– good access to sports facilities, it's easier to go to concerts, films, etc.;– wide variety of food or have food delivered;– great if you like the 'buzz' of city life – you are right in the thick of it here.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">– rent is more expensive per square foot;– almost all flats are in big buildings;– noisy and crowded;– lack of fresh air.

A new town/housing estate

Tai Koo Shing (Hong Kong Island), Mei Foo (Kowloon) Shatin (New Territories)	
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">– more affordable rents (generally speaking rent tends to decrease as you go further up north on the MTR lines from Kowloon);– trains are frequent;– convenient for shops and other facilities;– new, modern buildings, often with access to a swimming pool or health club.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">– trains are very crowded during rush hour;– it may be too self-contained or compound-like;– can be isolating.

Kowloon

Tsim Sha Tsui, Jordan, Mongkok	
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">– rents are generally cheaper;– cost of living generally cheaper;– more of a local feel;– easy access to transport and amenities.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">– can feel quite crowded, especially during weekends;– communication may be challenging (as not as many English speakers).

The New Territories

Sai Kung, Clearwater Bay	
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">– well served with shops, facilities and buses;– lots of small, more affordable flats in village houses;– imported goods easily available;– easy access (by foot or bus) to several country parks and walking trails; some of the best hiking and most beautiful beaches are in the Sai Kung peninsula.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">– rents can be very high;– no MTR service;– can feel quite crowded, especially during weekends.
Tai Po, Fanling, Sheung Shui	
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">– well served with shops, facilities and buses;– cost of living generally cheaper;– lots of small, more affordable flats in village houses (generally cheaper than Sai Kung and Clearwater Bay).	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">– can feel isolating;– may be difficult to find imported goods or you may have to pay a premium.

A village

A village (New Territories)	
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">– pace of life is slower;– rent tends to be cheaper;– no big buildings – flats are in three-storey houses;– pet-friendly;– wonderful if you like the countryside.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">– commuting can take a long time – you probably have to catch a bus to the MTR station;– villages may not be served with shops/facilities – there is usually one small “mom & pop” shop quite possibly in somebody’s living room;– possibly no other foreigners;– not good if you don’t like dogs.

An outlying island

Lamma Island	
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">– more space for the same money you'd pay for somewhere more central;– no tower blocks; flats are usually in three-storey village houses, the majority with a patio or balcony;– no roads – only footpaths;– ferry journey is a relaxing way to commute – the views are lovely;– feeling of community; you're likely to get to know people quite easily;– go for a walk in pleasant surroundings;– pace of life is more relaxed.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">– you're bound by the ferry schedule; and the last ferry is around 12:30AM;– no major supermarket;– deliveries (if available) will cost more.
Discovery Bay, Lantau	
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">– no cars, only golf carts and buses;– good facilities – supermarkets, swimming pool, a variety of restaurants, etc;– excellent ferry service – every 20 minutes during the day and at intervals all night; journey time is approximately 25 minutes;– convenient – the ferry pier is in the main area, which is well served with buses to and from all residential areas;– more laid back feel to the place and you can quite easily get to know people;– the community consists of mainly expat families, so great for children;– close to Disneyland.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">– feels less like a village than Yung Shue Wan on Lamma;– can be much more expensive than Lamma

Section 5: Education

Overview

There are three main types of schools in Hong Kong:

- government schools, which are operated by the government;
- aided schools which are fully subvented by the government but run by voluntary bodies; and
- private schools, some of which receive financial assistance from the government.

Government and aided schools deliver a curriculum recommended by the government, and offer free primary and secondary education.

Fees

There are many **international schools** offering non-local curricula mainly to children of overseas families living in Hong Kong and coming to Hong Kong for work or investment. Annual **international school fees** are relatively high, e.g. at the time of writing:

Kindergarten/early years

- [Canadian International School](#): HK\$134,150 (Prep-Grade 3)
- [ESF international kindergartens](#): HK\$72,000-84,000
- [French International School](#): HK\$100,288-114,242
- [German Swiss International School](#): HK\$137,400
- [Harrow International School](#): HK\$139,959-160,261 (K1&K2; Y1-5)
- [Hong Kong International School](#): HK\$87,900-175,100 (R1(half day) – Grade 2)
- [The ISF Academy](#): HK\$112,750 (2yrs 8m – 3yrs 8m)
- [Yew Chung Kindergarten](#): up to HK\$177,000 (3-5 yrs old)

Primary

- [Canadian International School](#): HK\$135,200-156,200 (Grades 4-8)
- [Chinese International School](#): HK\$182,000 (Y1-Y6)
- [ESF primary schools](#): HK\$83,800 (Y2-6 or 6-11 yrs old)
- [French International School](#): HK\$100,288-114,242 (Y1-6)
- [German Swiss International School](#): HK\$142,100 (K1-5; Y1-Y6)
- [Harrow International School](#): HK\$183,058 (Y6-8)
- [Hong Kong International School](#): HK\$176,000 (Grades 3-5)
- [The ISF Academy](#): HK\$167,530 (Foundation yr- G5)
- [Singapore International School](#): HK\$118,000 (P1-P6)

Secondary

- [Canadian International School](#): HK\$171,900-178,200 (Grades 9-12)
- [Chinese International School](#): HK\$215,200-218,200 (Y7-Y13)
- [French International School](#): HK\$111,944-184,038 (Y7-13)
- [ESF secondary schools](#): HK\$117,600 (Y7-11 or 11-16 yrs old)
- [ESF secondary schools](#): HK\$123,500 (Y12-13 or 17-18 yrs old)
- [German Swiss International School](#): HK\$181,200 (K11-12+; Y12-Y13)
- [Harrow International School](#): HK\$183,058-190,317 (Y9-13)
- [Hong Kong International School](#): HK\$181,900-203,500 (Grades 6-12)
- [The ISF Academy](#): HK\$167,530-211,590 (Grades 6-12)

- [Li Po Chun United World College](#): HK\$226,000-331,000 (17-18 years old)
- [Singapore International School](#): HK\$139,000 (S1-4; 17-18 years old)

Some schools will also charge a capital levy, which may or may not be returned.

Admissions

Admission into international schools is generally very competitive, and becoming more so, especially as more local parents decide to leave the local system and put their children into the international system.

Expect to pay an (often unrefundable):

- application fee for your child to be considered; and
- assessment fee.

Section 6: Getting started

Getting your visa and Hong Kong identity card

For more information, visit: <http://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/index.html>.

Opening a bank account

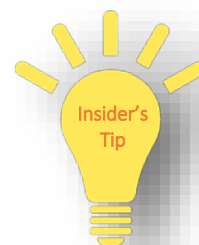
On campus

- HSBC
- Bank of East Asia
- Tip: Bring supporting evidence of your home address in Hong Kong AND your permanent address in your home country (e.g. bank statements of the last three months showing your permanent home address).

Getting a mobile (cell) phone and getting connected

There are a number of mobile network service operators in Hong Kong:

- China Mobile Hong Kong Company Limited
<https://www.hk.chinamobile.com/en/>
- Hong Kong Telecommunications (HKT) Limited
http://www.hkcsll.com/global_html/en/index.html
- Hutchinson Telephone Company Limited (“3”)
<http://www.three.com.hk/website/appmanager/three/home?lang=eng>
- Smartone Mobile Communications Limited
<http://www.smartone.com/en/?s=345300122d034e6e56323a5a786b>



If you're from the U.K., get your phone unlocked before coming to Hong Kong and you can buy a SIM card here and use it in your phone straightaway.

Setting up broadband

Some of the more common internet service providers include:

- CableTV
<http://www.cabletv.com.hk/en/broadband.php>
- Hong Kong Broadband Network
<https://www.hkbn.net/new/en/>
- Netvigator
<https://www.netvigator.com/eng/>
- Smartone Mobile Communications Limited
<https://www.smartone.com/en/FibreBroadband/service.jsp>

Getting a domestic helper

The most common approach to securing help at home is to employ a full-time foreign domestic helper (FDH). The minimum monthly salary is HK\$4,210 + food + accommodation in *your home* + insurance. You can approach an agent to help you find a helper; or you can look for one who has advertised on line; or you can advertise for one yourself:

- amahnet.com is a free service that enables you to locate a suitable helper. The advertisements are posted by the helpers themselves.
- <https://geoexpat.com/classifieds/> enables you to view advertisements and post one yourself.

For more information about employing an FDH, visit <http://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/faq/foreign-domestic-helpers.html>.

Please note it is illegal for an FDH who has signed a full-time contract with a local employer to work part-time for someone else, e.g. you. If you are looking for a part-time helper, the person cannot be a FDH with a full-time contract, and would need to be able to work legally in Hong Kong. For more background information: <http://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/article/1568215/maid-pay>

Setting up utilities accounts

To set up your utilities accounts, contact the suppliers a few days before moving in (otherwise you might not be able to turn the lights on the first day). If you are transferring the utilities from a previous tenant, make sure the meters are read so you're not charged for utilities you haven't used.

Electricity

You are normally asked for a deposit of two months' electricity charges. In some cases, this will have been paid for by the landlord, so you'll just be paying the monthly bills. The electricity supply in Hong Kong is rated 200–220 volts. Plugs can be either square (British) or round pin. Some older apartments have a mixture of both, so you may have to buy plug adapters.

- Hong Kong Island and Lamma Island
Hong Kong Electric Company: <https://www.hkelectric.com/en>
- Kowloon, the New Territories, Lantau and Cheung Chau
China Light and Power Company: <https://www.clp.com.hk/en>

Gas

Most areas are linked to the *Towngas* network. To open an account you need to pay a deposit.

- Towngas: <https://www.towngas.com/eng/cust/index.aspx>

Older apartments and village houses, especially those in parts of the New Territories and apartments in the outlying islands, are not connected to the gas main. In this case you will need to use gas in canisters, which you can get delivered.

Water

Water bills are very low in Hong Kong and are paid quarterly.

- Water Supplies Department: <http://www.wsd.gov.hk/en/home/index.html>

Household insurance

Your landlord should have insurance coverage for your apartment, but you might want to take out an additional household insurance, which covers your furniture and belongings against fire, theft, typhoons and burst pipes. Your bank should be able to give you a quote for household insurance.

Our plans to enhance the employee experience

As part of our strategic goals for the next decade, we will:

- ensure that our remuneration packages are sufficiently competitive to support the recruitment and retention of high calibre staff in an international market;
- ensure a smooth transition to Hong Kong for staff recruited from overseas. This will include enhanced support in respect of immigration formalities, housing and school arrangements;
- develop an increasingly diverse staffing profile through both recruitment and career development. In particular, we will ensure that all departments employ strategies so as to enable women to better excel;
- provide a performance management system that fosters and rewards performance, motivates staff and aligns their efforts with University objectives;
- strengthen support arrangements for all groups of staff, including courses for personal and professional development, mentoring and the use of regular opportunities to review progress and promote career development; and
- enhance our leadership and management capability and introduce effective succession planning.

Come to HKU. *Asia's Global University.*

Recruiting outstanding staff to promote excellence in teaching and learning, research, and knowledge exchange is one of The University of Hong Kong's top priorities. In recognising that having staff with diverse backgrounds and experiences contributes to the intellectual and multicultural vibrancy of HKU, we actively recruit academic talents from around the world.

If you are considering joining HKU, we have a stimulating environment for you to thrive academically and professionally, and a supportive network to help you fit in and feel part of the HKU community.

Our ambitious plans for the next decade brings promise of an exciting period in the history of HKU, and we very much look forward to welcoming and working with you to become *Asia's Global University.*

