

Non-local Student Welcome Guide

Welcome new non-local students! This guide covers the information you will need as you prepare for your time at HKU.

Arrival Checklist

- Check your immigration landing slip after you have passed the immigration counter – make sure it is on “Student” status, NOT “Visitor” status - if you are not sure about the entry arrangement, you may visit the student visa website at studentvisa.hku.hk
- Report to your hall/residence after completing your health check and/or quarantine requirement from the Hong Kong Government (if applicable).
- Report to the International Affairs Office and collect Welcome Package if you are admitted to the student exchange programme.
- Check into your student residences and look for the contacts of the hall buddy team (it is usually listed at the hall reception counter, if applicable).
- Request for a proof of address from the hall office.
- Settle any outstanding payment (e.g. tuition fee, lodging fee for residential halls/colleges, caution money, etc.)
- Purchase housekeeping items like pillows, pillow cases, bed sheets and stationery items, etc.

Registration Procedure and Student Card

You are required to register with the University and obtain a Student Registration Card. For details and procedures, please refer to the following handbooks:

- Undergraduate Handbook handbook.hku.hk/ug
- Postgraduate Handbook (Coursework Programmes) handbook.hku.hk/tpg
- Handbook for MPhil and PhD Programmes
gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/current-students/handbooks

Weeks of Welcome (WoW)

WoW activities are a mixture of fun, fact finding, visits and tours aiming to help you settle down, induct into the local way, enhance cross-cultural experience and sharing, as well as explore new environment and people. Local students will serve as student hosts to lead these activities and introduce HKU and Hong Kong to you.

Programme highlights:

- Orientation for Non-local Students (27 Aug 2021)
- WoW Party – 2021 Special Live (27 Aug 2021)

Orientation for Non-local Students

As one of the WoW highlights, this orientation programme is especially for newly arrived non-local students. Topics include adjustment issues, learning support, immigration formalities, health and safety tips, life in Hong Kong and HKU and many more. Stay tuned to the WoW website for the most up-to-date information.

Learn more: cedars.hku.hk/wow (Registration and details)



Visa-related

Immigration Matters

It is the responsibility of individual students to maintain a valid and legitimate visa status throughout the study at HKU. Should there be any circumstantial or personal changes leading to the termination or change of the prevailing visa status, you are required to report immediately to the Hong Kong Immigration Department and to apply for a fresh visa for study. Pursuing study without a valid visa is a breach of the law.

Visa Formalities

You should have got your student visa label before you came to Hong Kong. When you cross the point of entry, please present the visa label/entry permit with your travel document at the immigration counter. A landing slip will be issued to you, and your student visa status will be activated. Please check the slip and make sure it contains "student-permitted to remain until (a date)" at the top. Keep both the visa label/entry permit and landing slip, and do not lose them throughout your stay in Hong Kong. Staple the landing slip to your passport. You will need to provide it for your student visa extension application or re-entry to Hong Kong (if applicable).



Hong Kong Identity Card (HKID Card)

Every person staying in Hong Kong for more than six months is required to obtain an HKID Card. In order to apply for an HKID Card, a person must have a visa (with the exception of tourist visa) which is valid for more than six months. You are recommended to apply for it without delay. You will also need an HKID Card for extension of your visa and visiting a public hospital.

Make an interview appointment with the Hong Kong Immigration Department for your HKID Card application. You need to bring along your student visa and travel document. Appointments can be booked online at the Hong Kong Immigration Department website:

www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/idcard/hkic/bookregidcard.htm

Your HKID Card will normally be ready for collection in a month's time.

Visa Extension

If you have to extend your study or your limit of stay which is shorter than the normal duration of your study programme, you should apply for extension of student visa four weeks before your limit of stay expires.

It is the responsibility of individual students to renew student visa before it expires in order to maintain a valid and legitimate visa status throughout the study in HKU. Please approach the Admissions Office of the Registry (AO) for a copy of supporting letter before you submit your application to the Hong Kong Immigration Department.

Enquiries: studentvisa.hku.hk/contact-us

Employment during the Study Programme and No Objection Letter (NOL)

Upon the issuance of student visas, "eligible students" will receive a "No Objection Letter" (NOL) from the Hong Kong Immigration Department along with the student visa package. Your NOL will spell out the type(s) and conditions of employment such as internship, part-time on-campus employment and/or summer employment, which you may take up for the academic year. Please do not discard this letter and keep it in a safe place for future reference. For detailed regulations and information on employment during the study programme, you can refer to the website of the Hong Kong Immigration Department (imm.d.gov.hk/eng/faq/imm-policy-study.html).

Student visa holders cannot take up work in Hong Kong unless they have got the NOL. Violation of the conditions of stay is a serious immigration offence.

Learn more: studentvisa.hku.hk/student-visa-faq (Common visa and immigration questions)

For more information on banking arrangement, non-local student profile, medical care and insurance, etc., please refer to the Weeks of Welcome (WoW) website: cedars.hku.hk/wow

Housing-related

Housing Services

Living outside campus allows you to understand more about and be better integrated into the local community. If a few students come together to rent an apartment, they can also learn to take care of and collaborate with one another. If you are interested in renting a flat near the University or finding a classmate to share a flat with you, visit and meet CEDARS staff at the enquiry sessions about finding off-campus private accommodation. The sessions aim to provide you with private accommodation information, gather students who want to find housemates to rent a flat together and also provide information of property agencies near HKU if needed. CEDARS also introduces "Bursary Scheme for Outside Accommodation" to non-local undergraduate students to enrich their residential experience at HKU.

Enquiries:

cedars.housing@hku.hk

(Undergraduate Students) &

pghousing@hku.hk

(Postgraduate Students)



Websites on Health Issues

1 HKU COVID-19 Info Hub

<https://covid19.hku.hk>

2 Department of Health of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

<https://www.dh.gov.hk/>

3 HKU University Health Service

<http://www.uhs.hku.hk/>

4 Gearing Up

<https://covid19gearingup.hku.hk>

Travelling to HKU

Instructions to Taxi Driver (in Chinese and English)

You may like to make use of the instructions in Chinese and English to ask a taxi driver to bring you to your student residences.

Learn more: cedars.hku.hk/wow

(Arriving HK - Instructions to Taxi Driver)



Introduction to Hong Kong

Social Customs

Greeting

Chinese in general may not greet or smile to strangers, but they are warm to their friends.

Names

A name card should be presented to a Chinese person by holding it in both hands with the Chinese side up.

Use of name: The family name, being the first Chinese character, is followed by the given name. The whole name e.g. Wong Tai Ming, or the given name e.g. Ah Ming are used more frequently. Use of English name is common on the campus. Use of nicknames is also common in Hong Kong.

If you have any doubts about what to call someone, simply ask, "what shall I call you". If people seem unsure what to call you, tell them the name you prefer.

Making Friends

During your stay in Hong Kong, you will have many opportunities to meet local people but you may find that it is not so easy to become good friends with them. Hong Kong people are not always approachable and they may not appear to be eager to talk to strangers.

When you meet a local person on the street, he/she may smile to you and say "hi" or "bye" but not necessarily stop and talk to you. However, Hong Kong people are friendly and good to their friends. Once you have developed friendship with them, you will find that they are helpful and kind. So, it is best to be open and friendly. Take the first step and you can make some close and lasting friendships.

Other Customs

A few numbers bear special meaning: with the numbers 4, 14, 24, etc. being extremely unlucky while numbers 2, 3, 8, 18 and 28 signify good luck. Therefore, gifts (e.g. flowers) or tips (paper money) should never be given in these unlucky numbers. Other unlucky or inappropriate gifts are clocks and sharp objects such as knives. Presents should be wrapped in brightly coloured paper (avoid grey or black). A Chinese will open the gift privately later.

There are five major Chinese festivals, the most important being the Lunar New Year. This is followed by the Ching Ming, Tuen Ng, Mid-Autumn and Chung Yeung festivals. There are no classes in the University on these days. The festival dates are well published in newspapers and local calendar.

Western festivals are widely celebrated too. Please visit the website of Hong Kong Government for public holiday information (www.gov.hk/en/about/abouthk/holiday).

Meals and Table Manners

Chinese normally eat three meals a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner. Afternoon Tea has also become common in Hong Kong. When eating together, Chinese usually place a few dishes in the centre of the table and share the dishes among themselves. Each one, however, has her/ his own bowl of rice. They usually eat with chopsticks. On some occasions, they use spoons to eat rice.

Weather Signals

Hong Kong in general has a mild weather. It can sometimes be affected by extreme weather. Severe weather phenomena that can affect Hong Kong include tropical cyclones, strong winter and summer monsoon, monsoon troughs and thunderstorms with associated squalls that are most frequent from April to September.

The government has implemented a warning system. Examples of warnings are Tropical Cyclone Warning, Rainstorm Warning, Cold Weather Warning and Very Hot Weather Warning. There are a few grades of Tropical Cyclone Warning Signals (signals No. 1, 3, 8, 9 and 10 being the highest). In addition, there are three Rainstorm Warning Levels (amber, red and black being the highest).

When typhoon signal No. 8 or above and/ or black rainstorm warning signal is in force, classes are suspended.

Air heating system is uncommon in Hong Kong. Prepare yourselves with cold resistant clothes and quilts in winter.

For weather information of Hong Kong, please visit the website of the Hong Kong Observatory (www.hko.gov.hk).



Language and Slangs

Hong Kong has two official languages: English and Chinese. English is spoken widely by the foreign community and in business circles. The local Chinese community speaks Cantonese, a dialect spoken in the neighbouring Chinese province of Guangdong. Putonghua is becoming widespread while other Chinese dialects such as Shanghainese, Hakka, Teochew may also be heard.

You may hear a lot of slangs in daily conversations among local people. Acquisition of some common phrases will smooth your daily life.

Living in HK



Transportation – Getting Around

Hong Kong is geographically compact and boasts one of the world's most efficient, safe and frequent public transport systems.

Learn more: cedars.hku.hk/wow (Settling-in – Transportation & MTR Student Travel Scheme)

Making Phone Calls

Hong Kong is using the GSM network. You can explore a wide range of packages offered by different service providers. When you sign a contract with a service provider, you are normally requested to show your HKID Card, passport, proof of residential address in Hong Kong, etc. As an alternative, you can purchase a roaming pre-paid SIM card.

Learn more: cedars.hku.hk/wow (Arriving HK – Making phone calls)

Medical Care

How do I access to specialist care or hospitalisation?

When specialist care and hospitalisation are required, you can consider using the services provided at public clinics and general wards of government hospitals. The charge for HKID Card holders is subsidised. Non-local students without an HKID Card MUST present a valid student visa label/sticker/stamp along with your travel document(s), or else you are required to pay full fees for services and hospitalisation in government hospitals.

Learn more: www.ha.org.hk (Services Guides – Fees and Charges).

Tips on Healthy Living



Food

- General food hygiene should be observed.
- Hong Kong is famous for its gourmet seafood; however, one should ensure that seafood is well cooked, especially shellfish.
- Serious food-borne diseases include: Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Amoebic Dysentery and Cholera; however, they are not common in Hong Kong.



Drinks

The government-run water supply in Hong Kong complies with the standard of the World Health Organisation. However, contaminations may still occur in the storage tanks and pipes of the buildings. Boil tap water before drinking.



Air Quality

Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is reported by the Environment Protection Department daily. The AQHI provides different health advice for people having different degrees of susceptibility to air pollution, including: people with existing heart or respiratory illnesses, children and the elderly, outdoor workers and general public. Information on the AQHI is regularly reported via newspapers, radio and television.

Learn more: www.chp.gov.hk



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