



PRE-DEPARTURE NOTES FOR OUTGOING STUDENTS 2026



MESSAGE FROM CEDARS

This booklet has been created to help you adjust to your new environment as you embark on your studies and living experience. We recommend reading it alongside any information provided by your host university/organisation. If you require additional assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS) at cedars@hku.hk.

We wish you a delightful and enriching experience abroad. Remember to embody the proud traditions of HKU and be a positive ambassador for both Hong Kong and our university.

May 2026



cedars

Centre of Development and Resources for Students
學生發展及資源中心

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**Hong Kong Immigration
Department Hotline**

香港入境事務處求助熱線電話

(852) 1868



CHAPTER 1 PLANNING YOUR STAY

Most students experience a certain degree of ‘culture shock’ upon arrival in a new country. Learning some basic knowledge of your host university and host country before your departure will definitely smooth your transition and make your stay more enjoyable.

1 PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

- Apply for a student visa and ensure it is valid for the entire stay.
- Purchase comprehensive travel and medical insurance.
- Pack essentials (e.g., clothing, adapters, documents).
- Bring your medications (especially if you have serious health or mental issues).
- Confirm flight and accommodation arrangements.
- Set up online banking and ensure access to funds.
- Check vaccination requirements and complete necessary immunisations.
- Familiarise yourself with local laws and customs.
- Check and register for the [HKSAR Outbound Travel Alert](#)

2 GETTING TO KNOW YOUR HOST UNIVERSITY

Here are some suggestions for you to consider:

- Location and surrounding environment of your host university.
- Availability of on- and off- campus accommodation.
- Provision of facilities and services (e.g. healthcare).
- Travel distance and time between your hall/residence and the campus.
- Public transport network around campus.
- International student fees (e.g. medical insurance, registration, information technology and other administrative fees), if any.
- Mandatory immunisation or body check-up before departure, if any.
- Availability of support services (e.g. language programmes, student advising services).
- Catering outlets.
- Course requirements and your study plan.
- Rules and regulations of your host university.



3 GETTING TO KNOW YOUR HOST COUNTRY

Here are some issues / questions to help you prepare:

Clothing

Is there any dressing custom you should know? What types of clothing should you avoid? What types of clothing should you prepare for various occasions such as banquets and cultural events?

Communications

Bring your laptop, mobile phone and other communication devices and accessories with you.

Cultural Sensitivity

What cultural norms and values should you be aware of? Are there any gestures or behaviours that might be considered offensive? For instance, tipping practices can vary significantly: it is often viewed as impolite in Japan, while it is customary in the U.S. Find out the different norms or cultural differences in greeting, body language, gift giving, etc.

Daily Life

Can you bargain in shops and markets? What is the tipping practice in restaurants? Is it appropriate to visit friends in late hours?

Electrical Appliances

Check the electrical voltage and sockets and buy an electrical adapter and/or a transformer. For example, the voltage in Hong Kong is 220 volts, 50Hz.

Environmental Hazards

Is there any recent or recurring natural disaster in your host country (e.g. earthquakes, tornadoes, etc.)?

Food

What are the common food choices? What are the dining etiquette rules in your host country (e.g. proper placement of plates, glasses and cutlery)?

Health Issues

What kinds of health service are available? Is the health service available in English? Is there any prevalent disease and what are the precautions? Is tap water potable?

Health Policy

Does your host country require you to arrange your own health insurance before arrival? Are you required to take any vaccination before your departure? Will you need to undergo any special health checking at the airport?

Immigration & Customs

Check the customs department of your host country to avoid bringing prohibited or restricted items. Check if there is any restriction on the amount of local/foreign currency that you can bring to your host country.

Interpersonal Relationship

What are the norms of dating and intimate relationships in your host country? Is it okay to hold hands, hug or kiss in public?

Language

Learn the language of your host country as much as you can. Have a translation app ready. Prepare some notecards with translated phrases or a pocket-sized phrase book for survival.



Local Laws and Customs

Always obey the laws of your host country and respect local customs. Pay special attention to regulations regarding alcohol, drugs, smoking, sexual conduct, photography, and traffic rules, as these may differ significantly from your home country.

Pandemic-control Measures

Comply with relevant preventive measures and restrictions of your host country in response to outbreaks of pandemic.



Religious Services

What are the dominant religion and state religion, if any, in your host country? Check the availability of the places of worship for your religion. Be mindful of heretical cult organisations.

Security

Is it safe to tour around on your own or after dark? Has the Security Bureau of HKSAR issued any outbound travel alert to the places you are going to?

Social Etiquette

What is the social etiquette that you need to follow in your host country? How do people greet and say goodbye to each other?

Transportation

Check the public transportation network and learn how to go to your hall/residence and school campus. Any smart card or travel pass for public transport? Unlike Hong Kong, cars may turn right at junctions on red lights in some countries. Does traffic travel on the right or the left? Can you drive with an International Driving Permit in your host country?

Weather

Check the climate and bring suitable clothing and bedding.



4 INSURANCE

Study Abroad Programmes that are arranged by the University will be covered by the Corporate Business Travel ('Travel') Insurance Policy, which provides basic benefits to the students. **The insurance coverage will only be valid for the first 183-day of the trip. A new 183-day period will be activated from the day of a second departure from Hong Kong if the student returns to Hong Kong during the first 183-day period.** It has been confirmed with our insurer that no extension can be arranged beyond the 183-day under the travel insurance policy. Details of coverage under the Travel Insurance are available at <https://intraweb.hku.hk/local/finance/student/insurance.html>

If you are planning to take separate/occasional short travel trip(s) for leisure purposes when you are abroad or your whole trip will exceed 183 days and if you are uncertain whether you will return to Hong Kong during the first 183-day period, you should make your own travel insurance arrangements at your own cost to ensure that you are properly and adequately covered by a comprehensive insurance policy for the entire study abroad period and/or the leisure trip(s).

In addition to the Travel Insurance Policy, the University has also arranged a Group Personal Accident (GPA) Insurance Policy for students. This GPA Insurance Policy covers events of accident or injury happening during the period of insurance. The compensation would only cover accidental death, permanent disablement and accidental medical expenses. Details of coverage under the GPA Insurance are available on the FEO intranet homepage.

Make sure you have met the health requirements of your host country before departure. Check your medical insurance coverage with the International Office of your host university. If it is inadequate, or if your host university does not offer a mandatory medical plan, you are advised to get a private medical/travel insurance. Most travel insurances include a medical coverage for sickness and the scope of coverage could vary significantly depending on the amount of premium paid. Make sure you know the claim limits and what items and services are covered. Except for prior approval from the Insurer through the 24-hour emergency hotline service, claims under Travel and GPA Insurance are made on a reimbursement basis. Make sure that you have kept all the receipts and supporting documents such as police and doctor reports, etc., if applicable. Prepare a contingency plan for emergencies. Consider the level of risk that you are willing to take. If you intend to travel elsewhere during the period when you study abroad, please arrange supplementary travel insurance that covers international trips prior to the departure or with a local travel agent in your host country.

When considering/reviewing your supplementary medical insurance and/or additional travel insurance, please pay attention to the following features:

- Scope of coverage before departure and after your return.
- Cover renewable from abroad and the maximum period of stay.
- 24-hour emergency contact number in English (with translation services for health care providers in non-English speaking countries).
- Coverage for medical evacuation costs including hospitalisation for illness or accident.
- Coverage for visits to doctor and prescriptions.
- Direct payment of bills abroad by the insurance company so that you will not need to pay in advance and wait for reimbursement.
- Reduced coverage or null cover of existing health problems (make sure that your policy covers congenital or pre-existing conditions but you may need to pay a very high premium).
- Deductible costs or policy excess: these may be quoted in a specific dollar amount or as co-insurance requiring a shared percentage of the total bill (plans with 100% coverage are more expensive but may save you considerable expenses in case of illness or accident).
- Repatriation of remains (costs may exceed the coverage in your plan).
- Emergency dental care.
- Ambulance and emergency transportation.
- Exclusions which significantly limit coverage during your desired travel or sojourn abroad (ensure all regions and countries of travel are covered).
- Amount of compensation for accidental death and permanent disabilities.

5 CRISIS AND EMERGENCY OUTSIDE HONG KONG

Travelling outside Hong Kong (including exchange programmes, overseas internships, career learning trips, service learning, competitions, academic activities, etc.) may involve potential health and safety risks. The University has a range of resources and information available to support you in planning your trip and coping with crises outside Hong Kong. The one-stop 'Crisis and Emergency Outside Hong Kong' webpage (<https://www.cedars.hku.hk/overseasemergencyassistance>) brings together information and support services available at the University such as insurance coverage and arrangement, engagement of the Global Travel Emergency Assistance Programme (GTEA) for provision of general assistance, local information and travel advice, key contact information of the University, reminders before departure, and other useful tips and precautions.

While most students experience a safe and healthy time abroad, it is still beneficial to be informed of the support available and to keep the information handy. Taking simple precautions and getting familiar with the tips and information on the 'Crisis and Emergency Outside Hong Kong' would make your trip and learning experience a safer and healthier one.



6 FINANCIAL MATTERS

BUDGET

Extra costs will arise in the first month of your stay (e.g. rental, set up expenses, textbooks, etc.) It is important to have a realistic financial budget beforehand. You may get an estimated cost of living from your host university and tips from your HKU predecessors as well.

Try to find out the answers to the following questions:

- How much does it cost for daily necessities and transportation?
- How much do you plan to spend for a week?
- Have you settled the tuition fee and other fees in Hong Kong before you depart?
- What else will you have to pay while you are abroad?
- How will you access money while studying abroad?
- Can you use your Hong Kong ATM card abroad? Will there be any additional charges?
- Have you set up online banking facilities for settling fees outside Hong Kong?
- Is it necessary to open a bank account in your host country? What are the application procedures and required documents?
- If you have a sudden financial hardship, where can you seek immediate financial support?
- Do you have a sufficient amount of money for emergency use, such as a sudden increase in the cost of flight and hotel owing to unforeseeable circumstances?

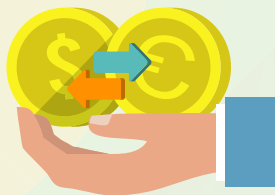
Here is a list of the basic living expenditure items (not exhaustive) for your reference:

- Airfare
- Tuition fee
- Books and other academic expenses
- Rental/hall fees
- Utilities/miscellaneous
- Groceries
- Laundry
- Meals and drinks
- Transportation
- Optional study/sightseeing tours
- Insurance
- Medical expenses
- Entertainment
- Personal items (not covered by your host university)
- Telecommunication (e.g. mobile phone charges, internet fees, etc.)
- Contingencies



TRAVEL MONEY ESSENTIALS

- Check the prevailing currency exchange rate.
- Prepare digital payment tools for use where digital payment is the primary method.
- Bring adequate foreign currency, credit cards, traveller's cheques or bank drafts to cover your first month expenses.
- Do not carry too much cash at any time.
- Check the currency exchange service in your host country.
- Money transfers should be arranged well before your departure.
- Most of the host universities provide on-campus banking facilities.
- Clear all debts (e.g. library fines, loan, etc.) before your departure.



BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE

- For those who are taking bank loans to finance your study abroad expenses, make sure you know the interest rate and loan repayment details.
- For those who have applied for the HKSAR Government's Tertiary Student Finance Scheme (i.e. Government Grants/Loans), make sure you have arranged for someone you trust to check your mail, respond to possible enquiries from the Student Finance Office of the Government and send the loan undertaking form to you. You should have appropriate access to your bank accounts, such as online banking, for the purpose of monitoring money transactions while you are abroad.



IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Arrange to pay your HKU tuition fee before it is due. Even though you are living abroad, you still have to settle your fee on time to maintain your student status at the University. Check your HKU email account or Student Information System (SIS) regularly to update tuition fee information and to make payment before the due date. It is wise to have someone pay the tuition fee on your behalf.
- If you expect that you will miss the Government Grants/Loans application deadlines, please make appropriate arrangements prior to your departure. You can, however, submit a late application (for the next academic year) upon your return to HK. Contact CEDARS for assistance if necessary.

7 TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

VALID STUDENT VISA

Most countries require international students to apply for a valid student visa. Failure to comply with the entry visa requirements may result in delayed arrival or even deportation. Check the requirements with your host university or with the relevant consulates in HK (refer to Chapter 7).

VALID PASSPORT / TRAVEL DOCUMENT

Ensure that your passport/travel document will remain valid throughout your study abroad period. Many countries do not allow anyone to enter the country if the person's passport has less than six months of validity from the proposed departure date.

FLIGHT BOOKING

Check online or contact local agents for the best deal. Discounts are often available early. An open-ended plane ticket may give you a flexible return date option. Prepare a contingency plan to respond to sudden flight cancellations or schedule changes. You also need to know about your checked baggage allowance, from the number of items you can take to weight limits, as well as the excess baggage charges.

DRIVING LICENSES

Obtain an International Driving Permit (IDP) before your departure if you plan to drive while you are abroad. For details, please refer to the Transport Department website at <http://www.td.gov.hk>.

RAIL PASSES

Purchase a rail pass (e.g. Eurail Pass, Japan Rail Pass, etc.) to save money for extensive travel. Some of these passes can only be purchased outside their countries/regions.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD

Apply for an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) to enjoy a broad range of discounts overseas on travel, shopping, museums and more.

INTERNATIONAL PHONE CARD/PLAN

Check with various phone companies and carriers for the best deal on international phone card/plan before your departure.



8 ACADEMIC MATTERS

Before you study abroad, you need to settle a few academic matters.

DEVISE STUDY PLANS

- Formulate your study plan for your study abroad period. Check the course selection website of your host university and choose the courses that you wish to take. You should bear in mind that you may not be able to take all the courses in your plan due to the quota limit, pre-requisites or other restrictions. You are advised to identify some back-up courses as well.
- Refine your study plan for the remaining semesters at HKU. Very often the courses you intend to take abroad do not fit perfectly into your curriculum. You should therefore consider the impact of your intended course enrollment and adjust your study plan accordingly. For instance, check whether you will miss, during your study abroad programme, any pre-requisite courses you need to take and/or the major/minor or graduation requirements. If this really happens, there will be a possibility that you have to overload in the following semester(s) after you are back or postpone your graduation. Consult your Faculty Academic Adviser, Course Selection Adviser or Faculty/Department office in advance for advice if you are in doubt.
- **If you wish to transfer credits back to HKU**, you need to plan well and seek prior approval from your Faculty. It is important for you to do course mapping before you seek approval from your Faculty and register for courses at the host university. Some Faculties provide online references on the equivalency of courses taken previously at different host universities. This information is for reference only and you should consult your Faculty Academic Adviser or Faculty/Department office whenever you have questions. Do not forget to check the submission deadline of your Faculty and adhere to the requirements. You may have to submit other supporting documents (e.g. course syllabus, etc.) with your credit transfer application.
- Some Faculties have set an upper limit to the number of transferred credits that can be counted towards their programme/major/minor requirements. Check your Faculty's website and consult your Faculty Academic Adviser or Faculty/Department office if in doubt.
- **If you do not wish to transfer credits back to HKU**, make sure you take the normal study load at the host university. While taking courses that are not offered at HKU may broaden your horizons, you may need to defer your studies for one semester or a full year if you do not transfer credits back from your host university. Please check with your Faculty well in advance as you may need to adjust your academic plan accordingly.

PREPARE FOR DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES

It may take some time for you to adjust to the differences between studying in Hong Kong and your host country. In your new academic environment, teaching styles and classroom interactions will be heavily influenced by cultural values and the education system of the host country. Therefore, it is helpful for you to prepare ahead:

- Conduct research about the academic structure, teaching styles, and classroom culture at your host university. If possible, meet with students who have studied there before.
- Conduct research about the academic support services for international students and exchange students at your host university.
- Once you have identified key characteristics of the learning environment at your host university, determine how you may need to adjust your learning style in order to adapt to the new academic environment.

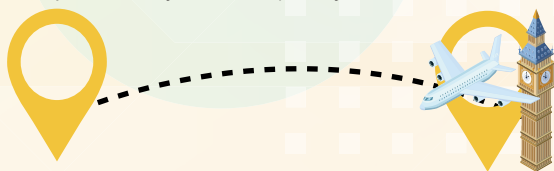
GET READY TO SHARE

Remember that you will be an academic representative of HKU and will likely be asked many questions about your experience studying in Hong Kong. You are an HKU student ambassador and can help attract reciprocal study abroad students to our campus.

ENROLLMENT AT HKU AND YOUR HOST UNIVERSITY (APPLICABLE TO EXCHANGE PROGRAMME)

Even though you will be studying overseas for one or two semesters, you are still required to maintain your student status at HKU. To maintain your enrollment at HKU, you must follow these important steps:

- Apply for a leave of absence at your Faculty office. You may need supporting documents such as a letter issued by the International Affairs Office (IAO) and/or an admission letter issued by the host university. It is important that you obtain an official letter of approval.
- For registration with your host university, you should check the registration process with the International Office or the Faculty office of your host university before you depart.
- If the course you intend to take has a pre-requisite requirement, your host university may request you to submit proof of completion of a comparable course at HKU. Check the pre-requisite requirement of your intended courses carefully and have the relevant documents (transcript, course syllabus, etc.) ready.



FORWARDING ADDRESS

Make sure an appropriate forwarding address is maintained as your 'contact address' in the Student Information System (in HKU Portal) that will be valid throughout your stay abroad. Generally, the most appropriate forwarding address will be your permanent home address in Hong Kong and you should make arrangements for someone to check your mail from the University for timely follow-up actions on your behalf. As soon as you have settled down at the host university, get in touch with someone at your forwarding address in Hong Kong. Do check your HKU portal email account regularly as offices in HKU will be contacting you through that email.

When you arrive at your host university, ring home or send a text message to your family. Visit the International Office of the host university and seek support from them, if necessary.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE YOUR HOST UNIVERSITY

Upon completion of your study abroad programme, check with the host university about the transcript application procedure.

You are advised to apply for an additional official transcript for all the units that you have studied for your own record. You may either collect it in person before departure or arrange for it to be sent directly to your postal address.

ON YOUR RETURN TO HONG KONG

Please arrange to submit the transcript to your Faculty office for credit transfer purposes. Always consult your Faculty Academic Adviser or Faculty office staff when in doubt.

You are required to submit a post-programme report on your study abroad activities to the International Affairs Office (IAO) and/or Faculty Office within one month of your return to Hong Kong. The respective office will let you know the submission details in due course. In an attempt to connect with people who have participated in the study abroad programmes, IAO and/or Faculty Office will maintain a student database. You will be invited to join various publicity events and functions to share your experience with others.



9 EMOTIONAL PREPARATION

Living and studying abroad means more than leaving your family and friends, familiar food, climate, customs and mother tongue. It presents many new challenges as you experience greater independence and personal responsibilities. Be prepared for these challenges and accomplishments:

- Establish your own lifestyle with increased personal independence and responsibilities.
- Appreciate the opportunities to exercise your judgment and deal with problems independently even though it seems a bit frightening to handle difficult situations alone.
- Make sense of a new culture through listening and observations. Adapt to different attitudes, values, lifestyles and ways of thinking.
- Understand the academic expectations and different learning cultures in your host university.
- It is more appropriate to give neutral comments when being asked about your first impression of your host university/country because you are new to your host university/country and unfamiliar with her traditions and cultures.
- Develop new friendships and social networks.
- Enhance your fluency in the use of a foreign language, especially in your academic work. Do not be afraid of making mistakes. Go for it! What have you got to lose?

Experiencing an initial period of adjustment, of emotional highs and lows is perfectly fine as most students do. If you find yourself confused or disoriented in the initial period, try to remember that this is a natural stage to go through. As you become more familiar with the new surroundings, you will feel more confident and at ease with yourself and others, and the excitement of making new friends and exploring a new way of life will grow. The key to managing new experiences is to be as prepared as possible and expect the unexpected.

If you are feeling low, you should not hesitate to seek support and advice from the International Office or the Student Counselling Centre of your host university. They are highly experienced, and are willing to discuss these issues with you. You may, of course, contact CEDARS-Counselling and Person Enrichment Section (CoPE) for support (Email: cedars-cope@hku.hk / Tel: (852) 3917 8388). Self-help resources are available at CoPE's webpage at <https://www.cedars.hku.hk/cope/pe/self-help>.

STUDENTS WITH PRE-EXISTING PHYSICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

- If you have any pre-existing physical/psychological conditions, you should consult your doctors, counsellors, SEN case manager, and/or mental health professional to discuss your plan and assess your needs.

- In case a supporting document to certify your physical/psychological conditions will be needed, get it before your departure.
- Strengthen your support network and find out how you can keep in contact with your family and friends.
- Check out health support resources (e.g. medical services, counselling support, disability support services, crisis resources, after-hours emergency, etc.) in your host university or area of residence before your departure. Bring along the list with you. Check your insurance coverage for these services.
- There is no harm in checking in with the support services there.
- Be prepared for stress and challenges in the new environment. Give yourself time to adjust to the changes. Coping strategies you have learnt from your doctor or counsellors may be helpful with the transition.

In case you would like to talk to a counsellor, you are advised to contact the Student Counselling Centre of your host university for timely support.

10 WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

Most university students around the world dress casually on campus. For some formal functions (e.g. High Table dinners, graduation ceremonies, etc.), formal attire is required. You may bring the following useful items from home as some of them may be more costly in some countries.

- A suit and tie or evening dress
- A traditional dress and accessories (these are very popular at social events and will add to everyone's enjoyment of the diversity of university life)
- A spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses
- Bring your medications (especially if you have serious health or mental issues)
- Your medical prescriptions (if any)
- An international phone card or a SIM card
- Your personal audio or communications accessories (e.g. notebook, mobile device)
- A portable charger/power bank
- A travel guidebook
- Some souvenirs for your host or overseas buddies

Other than the above, you may like to bring along the following documents in case you need them in your host country.

- Your vaccination and medical records (if needed)
- A photocopy of your offer of admission letter
- Photocopies of your passport/travel document
- Proof of permanent address in your own country (e.g. original bank statements of the past 2 months in English)

11 ARRIVAL ARRANGEMENTS

- Adhere to the relevant boarding, testing and vaccination requirements in the host country.
- Check the date of orientation programmes. If there is no specific programme for incoming students, try to arrive a week in advance of the first day of teaching.
- Try to arrange someone to pick you up at the airport, if possible. Confirm your arrival details, such as airline, flight number and location of airport, with the pick-up person.
- Inform your hall manager or host family of your arrival date and time well in advance.
- Make sure you can check in the hall straight after your landing even if your flight arrives late or outside office hours.
- Bring all necessary hall check in information or host family contact with you. Prepare and bring some local currency with you.

CHAPTER 2 ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

You should do the following within the first few weeks after your arrival:

- Meet your buddy or the representative from your host university.
- Report your arrival to your hall or host family. Inform them if you have any special accommodation requirements.
- Raise any security concern for accommodation arrangement with your hall manager.
- Report your arrival to the International Office of your host university.
- Report your arrival to HKU International Affairs Office (IAO) and/or Faculty Office.
- Select and register for your courses.
- Familiarise yourself with the campus and the neighbourhood.
- Familiarise yourself with the security system and the location of safety offices and clinics near your residence and on campus.
- Familiarise yourself with the infection control measures / practices in the new environment.
- Ensure your daily commuting route is safe. You can seek help from your buddy or fellow students.
- Get a university e-mail account and apply for the identification documents (e.g. university ID, library card, etc.).
- Attend orientation sessions and activities to make friends and meet with the key staff to obtain up-to-date information.
- Open a bank account and arrange for fund transfers.
- Pay the outstanding bills, if any.

KIND REMINDERS

If you are staying with a host family, make sure you know the 'house rules' of your host family and whether you are expected to abide by them. For example, the use of toilets at peak hours, late-hour returning, television watching hours, tidying up your room and bed, etc. Be ready to resolve the differences between your lifestyle and theirs.

During your stay, you should try to participate in your host family's lives and understand their values even if you have different ones. You may share your values and life in Hong Kong with them. Giving gifts upon your arrival or at the time of your departure is a good way of showing your appreciation for their care. Gifts need not be expensive, try to source some 'meaningful' ones.

Remember: Differences do not necessarily mean problems. Both you and your host family probably need to make adjustments in order to live together comfortably.

CHAPTER 3 SAFETY ISSUES

Personal safety and security issues are major concerns in virtually all countries. Here are some guidelines to minimise the risk of becoming a victim of crime while abroad:

1 CONDITIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO RISK

The situations that place students at the greatest risk are:

- Being out after midnight or in a known high-crime area.
- Being alone at night in a remote area.
- Sleeping in an unlocked or open place.
- Being intoxicated, drunk or on drugs.

2 FACTORS PLACING YOU AT RISK

Being a foreigner may make you more vulnerable to risks, especially if/when you:

- Stand out in a crowd as a tourist with camera, map or phrase book.
- Are new to the neighbourhood and do not speak the local language well.
- Are travelling to new places.
- Are unfamiliar with your new home and culture.
- Have not yet learned the best way to say 'no' in the local culture.
- Have not yet picked up the 'clues' that you are in danger.

3 STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING RISK

Safety is ultimately the responsibility of each individual student and each person should actively develop a personal safety strategy.

URBAN AREA

- Be aware of surroundings and avoid going to high-crime areas.
- Carry a whistle or other personal safety devices.
- Stay in safe hotels or guest houses.
- Note the legal age to purchase and consume alcohol and drink sensibly.
- Wear your backpack on your front in crowded areas.



STREET SENSE

- Beware of snatch theft when crossing busy streets with your smartphone and/or wallet.
- Stay alert, avoid dark or quiet zones and be aware of the people around you.
- Trust your instincts and leave the area if you do not feel safe.
- Never take shortcuts through alleys or cross the street illegally (jaywalk).
- Stay calm and go to a well-lit public area (such as a store or restaurant) to seek help if you think that someone is following you. Call the police, if necessary.
- Do not accept rides from strangers.
- Do not carry large sums of cash. It is a common practice to use debit card or credit card in many countries.

4 SCAMS

- Beware of different kinds of scams: telephone deception, email scams, online romance scams, investment fraud, rental scams, religious fraud, online employment traps, online shopping scams, etc. Scams are constantly changing.
(当你接到自称是某局或某大型机构的陌生人来电时，最好的做法是选择直接忽视。若想了解更多信息，可关注小红书账号“西区警区”，也可浏览警方的官网：<https://www.adcc.gov.hk/zh-cn/home.html>)
- Never transfer money or disclose your bank account information to strangers, regardless of how much personal information they claim to have about you or even if they claim to be government authorities or officials.
- Avoid renting flats online. Always use licensed estate agents to ensure the legitimacy of the transaction.
- Learn the ways to avoid becoming a victim of the above crimes by referring to the information on the webpage of the Anti-Deception Coordination Center of the Hong Kong Police Force (<https://www.adcc.gov.hk/en-hk/home.html>) or the security authorities in your host country/university.

5 CAMPUS SAFETY

The followings are some useful campus safety tips for you:

- Keep the emergency numbers in a handy place.
- Call the campus safety office for an escort service if walking alone at night.
- Stay alert and report any suspicious incidents to the campus security.
- Remember the location of emergency phones.
- Learn the location of emergency exits.
- Always lock your bicycle with a sturdy lock.
- If you are involved in an emergency (e.g. campus shooting), leave the danger zone, find a safe place to hide and call the police, if possible.

6 HOME SAFETY

The following tips are applicable no matter you are living within the campus or not:

- Keep your doors and windows locked at all times especially the balcony door.
- Keep the curtain drawn and leave a light on when you are away.
- If you lose the keys to your residence, have the lock(s) changed. On campus residents should notify the manager immediately.
- Female students living alone should not use prefixes 'Ms' or 'Miss' on the door or mailbox. Use the first initial or last name instead. Do the same for telephone directory listings.
- Report any suspicious activity to the security office.
- Require visitors to identify themselves before opening your door.
- Do not enter the room if you find that it has been intruded; instead, call the security.
- Do not allow strangers to follow you into your residence hall.
- Ensure you have landlord's insurance for your property. If any property is stolen, report it for insurance and recovery purposes.
- Learn the location of fire exits in the building and know your escape route.
- In case of fire, bring your key, a wet towel, and a mobile phone. If the hallway is blocked by smoke or fire, return to your room and inform others of your location.
- Make sure all fire and smoke alarms are in working order.
- Do not overload electrical circuits by using too many extension cords or appliances.

7 IF YOU BECOME A CRIME VICTIM

If you become the victim of a crime, the following may be helpful:

- Remain calm and try to defuse the situation first. Politeness, courtesy, respect and humour can often reduce tensions.
- If an assailant demands your property, give it up. Your safety is more important.
- Create a timely diversion by tossing your wallet in the opposite direction of your exit.
- Carefully note details of the environment around you.
- Note the clothing of the attacker. This can help the police to identify the attacker than a mere description of the face.
- Seek support for post-traumatic stress.

8 REPORTING

If you have become a victim of a crime or an assault, it is important to report the incident to your host university because:

- You may need medical check-up or treatment at the medical centre.
- You may need assistance on legal advice or from professionals who are experienced in working with local authorities.
- The university needs to know whether the trauma affects your academic work.
- Campus police are trained to provide support.

9 PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR OVERSEAS TRAVEL

Some recommendations for you to travel around or in the host country:

- Make a good plan for your trip and travel with friends.
- Leave a travel itinerary with contacts to your roommate, host family, or a trustworthy person.
- Keep in contact with family or friends.
- Carry your passport and all identification documents with you at all times.
- Bring a mobile phone, map, first-aid kit and other necessary accessories.
- Reserve reputable hotels, and be familiarised with the emergency exits in hotels.
- Avoid night travel and shortcuts.
- Take licensed taxis and write down the license plate numbers of your taxi.

10 HANDLING 'ALCOHOL'

Never feel pressured into drinking or drinking more than you want for out of fear of offending someone in another culture. You need to find ways to say 'no' that are not offensive. Usually a friendly but firm 'No, thank you' or hand-over-the-glass gesture does the job. Saying phrases like 'I cannot drink alcohol', 'Alcohol makes me ill' or 'I would like a non-alcoholic drink' is also a standard and straightforward option. Just because a glass is filled does not mean you have to drink it or finish it.

11 GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR NATURAL DISASTER

- Do not place heavy or hard objects on high shelves. If there is an earthquake, get under a sturdy table and stay away from concrete objects that could fall.
- Do not use elevators.
- Follow directions of the personnel in charge especially if you are in a public area.
- Pull over to the side of the road if you are travelling in a car.
- Discuss emergency evacuation sites and routes with your friends or host family members and work out methods of contacting each other.
- Put on a helmet or place a bag over your head for protection from falling objects.
- Place a wet towel across your nose and mouth to prevent smoke inhalation.
- Turn off the main gas valve, all electric and gas cooking appliances.
- Put on your shoes to protect your feet from broken glass.
- Listen to the radio or search for news and instructions.
- Secure an escape by opening a window or door.
- Save the emergency contact numbers of your host university, the travel agency, the Hong Kong Immigration Department 24-hour hotline and the Chinese Embassy in your mobile phone.



CHAPTER 4 TRAVEL ADVICE

1 MONITORING WORLD EVENTS

You can assess your personal risks by asking the following questions:

- How is the political system like in the host country? Is the political environment stable? Are there any issues related to corruption?
- Is there any special concern about economic instability of the country?
- What are the religions being practised in your host country? Are there any issues related to religious intolerance?
- Are there any special concerns about racial/ethnic differences?
- What is the relationship between your country of origin and your host country? What is the history? Are there any specific issues/incidents which may impact you as a visitor?

Given the recent geopolitical conflicts and the fluid international situation, we strongly recommend that all students check the latest travel alerts issued by your government (or the HKSAR Security Bureau if you are travelling to Hong Kong) before departure. Travel conditions can change quickly. Please visit the government's official travel advisory website regularly and ensure you are fully informed before you leave.

Please search and read the local news to stay informed about current events in the area. The following suggested links may assist you in keeping abreast of what is happening in your host country:

BBC News	http://www.bbc.com
CNN News	http://www.cnn.com
Global Times	https://www.globaltimes.cn
Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR	http://hk.ocmfa.gov.cn
Outbound Travel Alert System, Security Bureau of the Government of the HKSAR	https://www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota
Reuters	https://www.reuters.com
South China Morning Post	https://www.scmp.com/hk

2 HANDLING JET LAG

If you suffer from jet lag, below are some advice for you.

WHAT IS JET LAG?

Jet lag refers to physical and physiological symptoms associated with rapid crossing of multiple time zones. These symptoms are primarily caused by the disturbance of the body's natural rhythm and sleep-wake cycle. The time required for re-establishing the body's natural rhythm is generally more with eastward than westward flights.

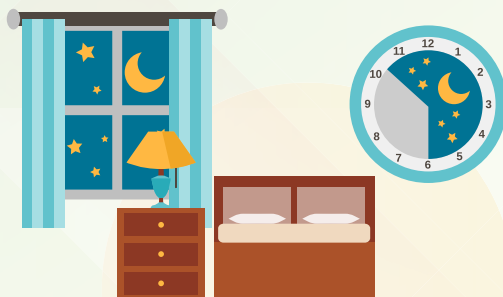
HOW DO YOU RECOGNISE JET LAG?

Symptoms of jet lag include difficulty in sleeping, tiredness, mood disturbance, tummy upset (e.g. loss of appetite). Jet lag can adversely affect performance, such as manual and cognitive skills.

PREVENTION OF JET LAG

- Take a good rest and avoid sleep deprivation at the beginning of a trans-meridian journey.
- If the trip lasts less than 3 days, you should attempt to keep sleeping and activity timetable of your departure city instead of the destination.
- If the trip lasts more than 3 days, you should immediately adopt the sleep/meal times of the destination and synchronise with destination's time as quickly as possible. Take a short nap during the day for the first few days to help your adaptation, if necessary.
- Outdoor light exposure at destination can reduce symptoms of jet lag.
- Avoid too much alcohol and coffee during flight.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids. Limiting alcohol intake can also be beneficial.
- Refrain from taking sleeping pills unless necessary. Discuss the use with your doctor if needed.
- Melatonin is a hormone that has been widely publicised to alleviate jet lag. However, there are uncertainties about its safety and inappropriate timing of dosages may worsen the jet lag. You should consult your doctor for further information.
- Avoid making important decisions or driving immediately on arrival after crossing many time zones.

(Source: Travel Health Service, Department of Health, the Government of the HKSAR)



TRY TO REST FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS AFTER ARRIVAL

You should be getting over the jet lag after a week or so. Adequate rest, exercise without too much exertion, and a balanced diet can help your body adjust to a new country with a new time, weather, food and customs. If you require assistance, you should contact the staff of your host university.

CHAPTER 5 HEALTH ISSUES

1 GENERAL TRAVEL HEALTH TIPS

Travel can be a stressful experience, and may expose you to all kinds of conditions that make you more susceptible to illness. The principle of healthy travel is to identify and minimise the effects of such risks.

BEFORE THE TRIP

PRE-TRAVEL CHECKLIST

You are advised to pay attention to the following:

- Destination and type of accommodation
- Duration of the trip
- Purpose: package tour, business, missionary or backpacking. Exposure to health risks varies with different travel styles
- Hygiene standards of the destination
- Special activities: high-altitude trekking, diving, hunting, camping, etc.

PRE-TRAVEL CONSULTATION

- Pre-travel consultation with your family doctor or a travel health service provider is highly recommended, especially if you are going to places where the standards of hygiene and sanitary control are low.
- If you have any medical conditions, you should discuss with your doctor before travelling.
- Medications that you need to take regularly should be carried in hand-carry/cabin baggage.
- Make a record of medicines that you are using.
- Check with your travel agent, doctor, Travel Health Service of the Department of Health or your host university for the types of vaccines required. These may include vaccination against COVID-19, hepatitis A and B, Yellow Fever (required under the International Health Regulations if you visit certain countries in Africa and South America), Typhoid Fever, etc. Yellow Fever vaccine is ONLY available in the Travel Health Service of the Department of Health, the Government of the HKSAR.
- If vaccination is required, inform the health professional about any allergies you may have before receiving the vaccine.
- Prepare a travel medical kit containing a thermometer, surgical masks, self-test kits, disinfectants such as alcohol swabs and medications as necessary.
- Consider obtaining traveller's health insurance because medical care can be costly or not readily available overseas, and sometimes repatriation may be needed.
- Make sure you take all necessary precautions before you leave.

DURING THE TRIP

Get plenty of sleep and have a well-balanced diet to build up a healthy body. Do not overexert yourself.

Apply sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher when travelling. **Protecting yourself from the sun** is not just for tropical beaches—you can get a sunburn even if it is cloudy or cold.

FOOD AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Always wash your hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food.
- Avoid raw or partially cooked seafood including shellfish.
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet.
- Drink only boiled water, or drinks bottled by reputable companies, and pasteurised milk or dairy products.
- Avoid drinks prepared by ice of unknown origin.
- Avoid peeled fruits and vegetables that are not thoroughly cleaned.
- Do not consume street food from unlicensed hawkers.
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective.
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process.
- Use two sets of chopsticks and eating utensils to handle raw and cooked food separately.

TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA

- Travellers' diarrhoea is a condition characterised by a twofold or greater increase in the frequency of unformed bowel movements. It is quite commonly seen in persons travelling from one country to another. Episodes of travellers' diarrhoea usually begin abruptly during travel or soon after returning home, and are generally self-limiting. It usually subsides spontaneously within 1-5 days; rarely, it lasts 2-3 weeks. Always take the following measures to prevent travellers' diarrhoea:
 - ✓ Observe good personal and food hygiene. Hand washing is essential after defaecation, before preparing and serving food.
 - ✓ Avoid dairy products and all beverages that contain water of questionable quality.
 - ✓ Food should be well cooked and water should be boiled.
 - ✓ Oral fluids like fruit juices should be taken to replace the fluid lost. For severe body fluid loss, an oral rehydration solution could be used. Seek medical attention if the symptoms are severe or do not improve, e.g. when there is a large amount of fluid loss, fever, blood in the stool or severe weakness.
 - ✓ Antibiotics can be very effective. However, they should be taken according to the advice of a medical professional. Medications for relief of diarrhoea and abdominal cramps may be self-administered if the diarrhoea is mild.

AVOIDING MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES

- Mosquitoes can transmit several lethal diseases such as Dengue Fever, Chikungunya Fever, Japanese Encephalitis, Malaria, Yellow Fever and Zika Virus Infection. Personal protection measures are paramount at all times. Always take the following measures to prevent insect bites:
 - ✓ Avoid staying outdoors during mosquito feeding times (between dusk and dawn for Malaria, daytime for Dengue Fever).
 - ✓ Stay in air-conditioned rooms or well-screened rooms.
 - ✓ Wear loose, light-coloured, long-sleeved clothing to cover arms, legs, and particularly ankles.
 - ✓ Apply DEET-containing insect repellents to exposed parts of the body and clothing, in accordance with product instructions on the label. There are many different kinds of insect repellents in the market. N, N-diethylmetatoluamide (DEET)-containing products are generally the most effective. Insect repellents containing picaridin (also known as icaridin) and IR3535 are available for those who prefer not to use DEET-based products.
 - ✓ Use mosquito screens, bed nets or aerosol insecticide when the sleeping areas are not air-conditioned or screened.
 - ✓ If travelling in endemic rural areas, carry a portable bed net and apply permethrin on it as well as to clothes

Information on Dengue Fever, Chikungunya Fever, Japanese Encephalitis, Malaria, Yellow Fever, Zika Virus Infection and other transmissible diseases is available on the webpage of the Centre for Health Protection, the Government of the HKSAR:

<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/24/index.html>

ANIMALS

- In areas where rabies is endemic, you should not pet dogs and cats, even if they are domestic. Avoid contact with wild animals, especially bats, jackals and monkeys.
- In the unfortunate event of being bitten by an animal while you are travelling, you should seek medical attention as soon as possible, especially with regards to the possibility of Rabies. A rabies vaccine is recommended for people after an animal bite if the animal could have rabies.
- Avoid areas of rodent infestation. Do not touch sick rodents like squirrels or prairie dogs.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

- Beware of the dangers of casual sex while you are abroad.
- A single exposure is sufficient to transmit HIV (which causes AIDS) or other sexually transmitted diseases e.g. MPOx if your sexual partner happens to be a carrier.
- Using condoms correctly provides some protection from getting sexually transmitted diseases but the golden rule is to refrain from promiscuity and never have sex with strangers.

ACCIDENTS

- Traffic accidents are the leading cause of death among travellers.
- When hiring vehicles, you should check the insurance coverage carefully as well as the condition of tyres, safety belts, lights, brakes, etc.
- Avoid night driving.
- Do not drive for long distances without intermittent rest.
- Be careful when participating in high-risk activities like sky diving, shooting rapids, high altitude trekking, diving, etc.

SWIMMING

- Avoid bathing in fresh water rivers and lakes in the tropics which may be infested with parasites (schistosomiasis) that can penetrate the skin and cause illness.
- Do not swim in polluted waters which are linked to eye, ear and intestinal infections.
- Swimming in the sea does not in principle involve any risk of communicable diseases. Beware of jellyfish stings which may cause severe pain and skin irritation. Also watch out for currents.
- Do not walk barefoot in watery rice paddies or muddy land.
- Footwear should be worn to protect against parasites and when exploring coral waters.



TEMPERATURE CHANGE

- Exposure to extreme high temperature or low temperature may cause illness.
- In high temperature and humid environment, excessive exercise can lead to loss of body fluid and salt, causing the person to become exhausted. Travellers should prepare enough drinking water for replenishment to avoid heat stroke.
- Overweight people may develop heat rash easily and the heat rash may tend to get worse in hot and humid environment. Take shower every day, put on loose cotton clothes and apply talcum powder will help alleviate the condition.
- Excessive coldness will lead to frostbite, chilblains, and even hypothermia.

The following preventive measures are advised:

1. Put on enough winter clothes (avoid excessively tight-fitting clothing).
2. Cover the head, neck and four limbs.
3. Remove wet clothes as soon as possible.
4. Do not smoke and drink.
5. Do not touch metals with bare hands.

AFTER THE TRIP

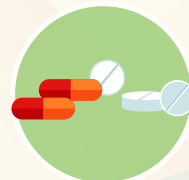
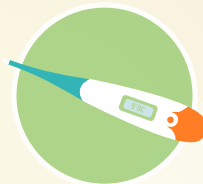
UPON RETURNING, CONSULT A DOCTOR IF YOU

- Have a fever, rash, diarrhoea, vomiting or feel unwell.
- Have been to an area with a recent outbreak of infectious diseases.
- Have been in contact with the local sick people.
- Have travelled to rural or developing areas.

Remember to tell your doctor where you have been, including transit countries.

For more information on travel health, please visit the following webpages:

- University Health Service's webpage on travel health
<https://www.uhs.hku.hk/travel-health-service/>
- Travel Health Service of the Department of Health
<https://www.travelhealth.gov.hk/english/index.html>
- Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health
https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/health_tips_for_travellers_en.pdf



2 ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR PREVENTION OF AVIAN INFLUENZA / CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) / MIDDLE EAST RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (MERS) / MPOX

If you plan to travel outside Hong Kong, you should take heed of the following preventive measures to prevent Avian Influenza / COVID-19 / MERS / Mpx.

BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

Check with the consulate or health authorities for any health advice or travel advisory imposed at the destination.

Check the most updated information related to Avian Influenza / COVID-19 / MERS / Mpx and other infectious diseases. Details of enforced precautions can be found on these websites:

- Centre for Health Protection, the Government of the HKSAR
<http://www.chp.gov.hk>
- HKSAR thematic website on COVID-19
<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>
- Outbound Travel Alerts, Security Bureau
<https://www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota>
- Travel Health Service, Department of Health, HKSAR
<http://www.travelhealth.gov.hk/eindex.html>
- UHS's website on Public Health, Pandemic and Epidemic Diseases Preparedness and Response
<https://phpedpr.hku.hk>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>
- World Health Organization
<https://www.who.int/en>
- The official websites of the country of your destination



People with the following conditions are advised either NOT to travel or seek medical advice before travelling:

- Those who feel unwell, have respiratory symptoms or fever.
- Those who have been in close contact with suspected or confirmed Avian Influenza/ COVID-19/ MERS/ Mpx patients in the last 10-14 days.



AFTER ARRIVAL AT DESTINATION

- Avoid touching animals (including game and camels), poultry (live or dead), birds or their droppings. Avoid going to wet markets, bird parks, live poultry markets, barns, farms and markets with camels. Do not feed pigeons or other birds. Wash hands immediately with soap and water after handling or touching them.
- Avoid going to crowded places with poor ventilation.
- Avoid making close contact with people, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections.
- Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene.
- Observe food hygiene.
- Five keys to food safety:
 1. Choose safe raw materials
 2. Keep hands and utensils clean
 3. Separate raw and cooked food
 4. Cook thoroughly
 5. Keep food at safe temperatures
- Use serving chopsticks and spoons at meal times. Do not share lunch boxes or drinks.
- Avoid consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled.
- Avoid consuming game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth before washing hands.
- Wear a surgical mask especially when taking public transport, staying in crowded places and you or your fellow travellers have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Maintain healthy lifestyle practices throughout the trip by having adequate rest. Do not smoke. Avoid alcohol consumption.
- If you feel unwell, especially with respiratory symptoms or a fever:
 - ✓ Wear a surgical mask.
 - ✓ Inform hotel staff, tour/group leader if applicable.
 - ✓ Consult a doctor promptly.
 - ✓ Do not join group activities. Rest in your room.



AT ALL TIMES

Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene:

- Keep hands clean. Wash hands with soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then, rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80% alcohol-based handrub.
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before wearing and after removing a mask; before touching mouth, nose or eyes; before eating or handling food; after using toilet; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing.
- Cover nose and mouth with tissue paper when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of used tissue and used mask into covered litter bin.
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.
- Do not share towels or personal items.
- Use serving spoons or chopsticks.

(Source: Centre for Health Protection, the Government of the HKSAR, Centre for Food Safety, the Government of the HKSAR and Travel Health Service, Department of Health, the Government of the HKSAR, Security Bureau)

**預防肺炎及
呼吸道傳染病**
Prevention of **肺炎及
呼吸道傳染病**
Pneumonia and Respiratory Tract Infection

健康建議
Health Advice

**經常保持
雙手清潔**
Always keep
hands clean

20
seconds

先蓋廁板再沖廁
Put the lid down
before flushing

**定期
注水入
U型隔氣**
Add water to
the U-traps regularly

**打噴嚏或咳嗽時
用紙巾掩蓋口鼻**
Cover your
mouth and nose
with tissue paper
when
sneezing or
coughing

**如出現病徵，
應立即戴上口罩
及看醫生**
Wear a mask and
seek medical advice
promptly if unwell

**口罩要完全覆蓋
口、鼻和下巴**
Fully cover your nose,
mouth and chin
with mask

更多詳情請向 衛生防護中心查詢
For more information on budding the disease:
衛生防護中心熱線
Health Protection Centre Helpline
www.chp.gov.hk
衛生防護中心Facebook專頁
Health Protection Centre Facebook Page
[fb.com/CentreforHealthProtection](https://www.facebook.com/CentreforHealthProtection)
衛生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection
衛生防護中心
Health Education Institute of the Department of Health
2833 0111
衛生防護中心
Department of Health

CHAPTER 6 MAXIMISE YOUR OVERSEAS LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Here are some suggestions to make the most of your experiences of staying abroad.

1 CHART YOUR JOURNEY

Before you go, set a goal for yourself. Jot down your thoughts and experiences in a journal. Examine it from time to time during your journey. After returning home, organise your thoughts and experiences and take part in sharing sessions. Find out how your perspectives have changed.

2 KNOW YOUR OWN CULTURE

Before you go, grasp a basic understanding of Hong Kong culture and be ready to share it with your new friends. Build on with the list below for your further thoughts:

YOUR IDENTITY

- Identity as a Hong Kong citizen/resident
- Demographic profile of Hong Kong, China

HISTORY

- Basic historical facts of Hong Kong, China

SPORTS AND LEISURE

- Popular sports
- How people spend their spare time
- Major international sports events held in Hong Kong, China

MEDIA

- Major media channels
- Popular social media

EDUCATION

- Basic facts about HKU
- Characteristics of the education system
- Number of publicly-funded and self-funded universities/tertiary institutions in Hong Kong, China
- Percentage of young people having access to tertiary education



GOVERNMENT

- Political structure of Hong Kong, China
- The governing principle of 'one country, two systems'
- Recent hot political topics, e.g. the development of Greater Bay Area and the National Security Law
- Recent infrastructure projects like the Kai Tak Development, the West Kowloon Cultural District, and the expansion of Hong Kong International Airport
- Urban development plans like the Lantau Tomorrow and Northern Metropolis Development Strategy

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION - MAINLAND RELATIONSHIP

- HKSAR – facts about the special administrative region
- HKSAR's relations with The People's Republic of China, e.g. HKSAR is a key gateway to the PRC, and HKSAR has close ties with the Chinese Mainland in terms of the flow of people and goods

SOCIAL ISSUES

- Hot topics, e.g. housing, standard working hours, and minimum wages
- Social welfare system in HKSAR
- Universal retirement protection
- Equal opportunities and social inclusion

ECONOMY

- Common market data such as stock market indexes and Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect
- Pegged currency policy

RELIGION

- Major religious practices
- Freedom of religion in HKSAR

OTHER FACTS

- Tsing Ma Bridge is the longest suspension-bridge span for combined road/railway traffic.
- A Symphony of Lights has been awarded the world's 'Largest Permanent Light and Sound Show' by Guinness World Records.
- Standard of living in HKSAR (e.g. the price of a set meal at fast food chain stores, the price of a concert ticket, the average price and rent of housing in HKSAR).



3 LEARN ANOTHER CULTURE

ATTITUDE

BE OPEN-MINDED

Be ready to open up yourself, which particularly refers to your mindset. Allow your assumptions and values to be challenged. Your assumptions about what is normal and what is unacceptable are largely learned in your original cultural environment. But your original assumptions and values do not necessarily apply in your host country. You need to observe what others do and ask questions without making judgment until you find out more. In this way, you will likely be exposed to some new ideas and prompted to adjust your behaviours in your host country.

Although you may not recognise the differences between the host culture and your original culture immediately, you can start detecting their existence by looking for 'culture shock' and 'red flags', i.e. your spontaneous reactions to the host culture such as 'they are strange', 'they are rude'. These 'red flags' can serve as a sign warning you of the cultural differences that could lead to misunderstanding. When you have a 'red flag' reaction, you may start asking yourself, 'are these people rude or do they have a different rule for politeness?' and 'what have these people done that makes me find them odd?' You can start looking for explanations for what you have noticed to be new or different. This can prevent you from jumping to a conclusion too soon.

REACHING OUT

Even at home, you still have to put effort into establishing your social circles. You have to work hard to build up your social ties. It takes time to develop friendships and you may have to be the first one to extend an invitation. Observe the friendship groups in your host university or community and let them know you want to befriend them. Try to identify the people whom you would like to have as friends. Who shares your basic values? Who shares your interests? Who seems to be more culturally sensitive? Who is a good listener and who can be confided in? You may feel shy or uneasy about suggesting activities to do together. It is pretty 'normal' for a new person in any group to feel like this, but do not let this discourage you from trying to make new friends. Too much fear of being rejected could prevent you from making any friends at all.

SOME POSSIBLE WAYS TO LEARN ANOTHER CULTURE

Before you leave, you can find out information on a wide range of topics concerning your host country from different sources like the internet, newspapers, magazines, books and television, etc. Your research topics may include but not limited to the following areas:

- Political system and government structure
- Education system
- Economic system

- History and geography
- Culture (e.g. religion, dress, food, leisure activities, arts, language, films, music and media)
- Sports (e.g. major sports activities)
- Social etiquette

During your stay, you can add value to such factual information through experiential learning. Listed below are some suggested cross-cultural activities for your further exploration (you may need to modify them to suit your pragmatic needs):

- What do the TV or radio programmes tell you about your host country's culture and values? How do they differ from the media coverage in HKSAR?
- Go to a market or grocery store and look around the merchandise. In what ways are they different from the Hong Kong market in terms of the physical environment, price, and range of products or services? How do you account for the differences?
- Find out how to open a bank account and transfer money from Hong Kong. Are foreigners permitted to open a bank account? Are there any restrictions? What services do the banks offer? What other options do you have? How do you compare the differences between your host country and HKSAR?
- Tour a museum (it can be in the areas of arts, natural history, archaeology or any other kinds). What does it tell you about the cultural lives of your host country?
- If possible, go to a cinema and watch a local movie. What do you think about it? Does it have a set formula that characterises the movie industry of your host country? Do you like it? Why or why not?
- Attend a sporting event and describe it. What role does this sport play in your host country? Compare this experience with that in Hong Kong.
- Find out several current issues and observe how the locals respond to them. What are the major opposing views? How do the media cover them?

4 CONSOLIDATE YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCES

HAVE A PRIVATE CRITIQUE ON YOUR OWN JOURNAL

- See if you can identify the prominent topics that appear frequently in your entries. Do they surprise you? Why or why not?
- Do you have frustrating moments? Are the issues resolved? If not, how will you manage to resolve them? How has this experience shaped your perception of your host country and yourself?
- What were the eye-opening, fulfilling or intellectually stimulating moments when you were overseas? What have you learned about yourself? How may those moments or experiences help you in the future?

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH OTHERS

After returning home, be ready to share your experiences including your insights, pictures or other memorabilia from your trip with your friends and family. You may act as a buddy of the incoming exchange students from your host country in the forthcoming academic year. You may also take foreign language courses or other related subjects that may not have interested you before.

CHAPTER 7 USEFUL INFORMATION

1 WEBSITES

If you wish to know more about your host country, here are some useful websites:

Country	Link
Australia	https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/
Canada	https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada.html
The People's Republic of China	http://en.moe.gov.cn
Denmark	http://studyindenmark.dk
France	http://www.campusfrance.org/en
Germany	https://hongkong.diplo.de/hk-en
Japan	https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en
Korea	http://www.studyinkorea.go.kr/en/main.do
Malaysia	https://educationmalaysia.gov.my
Netherlands	https://www.studyinnl.org
New Zealand	https://www.studywithnewzealand.govt.nz/en
Singapore	https://www.moe.gov.sg
Spain	https://www.spainexchange.com
Thailand	https://gostudythailand.org/
United Kingdom	http://www.britishcouncil.hk/en/study-uk
USA	https://educationusa.state.gov/

HKU Offices

Office	Link
International Affairs Office	https://intlaffairs.hku.hk
Mainland Affairs Office	https://mainlandaffairs.hku.hk

Other Organisations

Organisation	Link
Immigration Department, the Government of the HKSAR	http://www.immd.gov.hk
Hong Kong Tourism Board	https://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/index.html
Hong Kong Young Ambassador Scheme	https://yas.hkfyg.org.hk
World Health Organization	http://www.who.int/en
Education Bureau, the Government of the HKSAR	https://www.edb.gov.hk
The Commissioner's Office of China's Foreign Ministry in the HKSAR	http://hk.ocmfa.gov.cn/eng



2 CONSULATES IN HONG KONG

<p>Australia</p> <p>23/F, Harbour Centre, 25 Harbour Road, Wan Chai Tel: 2827 8881 Fax: 2585 4457</p> <p>Website: https://hongkong.consulate.gov.au</p> <p>Email: enquiries.hongkong@dfat.gov.au</p>	<p>Austria</p> <p>Room 2201 Chinachem Tower, 34-37 Connaught Road, Central Tel: 2522 8086 Fax: N/A</p> <p>Website: https://www.bmeia.gv.at/hongkong</p> <p>Email: hongkong-gk@bmeia.gv.at</p>
<p>Canada</p> <p>9/F, Berkshire House, 25 Westlands Road, Taikoo Place, Quarry Bay Tel: 3719 4700 Fax: 2847 7561</p> <p>Website: http://canada.ca/Canada-And-Hong-Kong</p> <p>Email: hkong@international.gc.ca</p>	<p>France</p> <p>25/F & 26/F, Tower II, Admiralty Centre, 18 Harcourt Road, Central Tel: 3752 9900 Fax: 3752 9901</p> <p>Website: https://hongkong.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en</p> <p>Email: informations.hong-kong-cslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr</p>
<p>Germany</p> <p>21/F, United Centre, 95 Queensway, Admiralty Tel: 2105 8777 Fax: 2865 2033</p> <p>Website: https://www.hongkong.diplo.de</p> <p>Email: info@hongkong.diplo.de</p>	<p>Japan</p> <p>46-47/F, One Exchange Square, 8 Connaught Place, Central Tel: 2522 1184 Fax: 2868 0156</p> <p>Website: https://www.hk.emb-japan.go.jp</p> <p>Email: infojp@hn.mofa.go.jp</p>
<p>Korea</p> <p>5/F, Far East Finance Centre, 16 Harcourt Road, Admiralty Tel: 2529 4141 Fax: 2861 3699</p> <p>Website: https://hkg.mofa.go.kr</p> <p>Email: hkg-info@mofa.go.kr</p>	<p>Malaysia</p> <p>24/F, Malaysia Building, 47-50 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai Tel: 2821 0800 Fax: 2865 1628</p> <p>Website: https://www.kln.gov.my/web/chn_hong-kong</p> <p>Email: mwhongkong@kln.gov.my</p>

Netherlands

Suite 3001, 30/F Central Plaza
18 Harbour Road, Wan Chai
Tel : 2599 9200
Fax: 2868 5388

Website:
<https://www.netherlandsworldwide.nl>

Email:
hon@minbuza.nl

New Zealand

Suite 6501, 65/F Central Plaza,
18 Harbour Road, Wan Chai
Tel : 2525 5044
Fax: 2845 2915

Website:
<https://www.mfat.govt.nz/hongkong>

Email:
hongkong.enquiries@mft.net.nz

Singapore

Unit 901-2, 9/F,
Admiralty Centre Tower 1,
18 Harcourt Road, Admiralty
Tel : 2527 2212
Fax: 2861 3595

Website:
<https://www.mfa.gov.sg/hongkong>

Email:
singcg_hkg@mfa.sg

Spain

Suite 5303, 53/F,
Central Plaza,
18 Harbour Road, Wan Chai
Tel : 2525 3041
Fax: 2877 2407

Website:
<https://www.exteriores.gob.es/Consulados/hongkong/es/Paginas/index.aspx>

Email:
cog.hongkong@maec.es

Sweden

Room 2501, 25/F,
Bank of East Asia Harbour View Centre,
56 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai
Tel : 2521 1212
Fax: 2596 0308

Website:
<https://www.swedenabroad.se/hongkong>

Email:
generalkonsulat.hongkong@gov.se

United Kingdom

1 Supreme Court Road,
Admiralty
Tel : 2901 3000
Fax: N/A

Website:
<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-consulate-general-hong-kong>

Email:
<https://www.contact.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/posts/hong-kong/british-consulate-general-hong-kong>

United States of America

26 Garden Road, Central
Tel : 2523 9011
Fax: 2845 1598

Website:
<https://hk.usconsulate.gov>

Email:
hkmacau@state.gov



For a full listing, please refer to <https://www.protocol.gov.hk/en/posts.html>

3 OFFSHORE ALUMNI GROUPS

For the list of Offshore Alumni Groups, please visit <https://www.alumni.hku.hk/offshore-alumni-groups>.

4 OVERSEAS CHINESE CONSULATES

You can find the locations and contacts of overseas Chinese diplomatic or consular missions on the one-stop portal of the HKSAR Government (GovHK). The information is listed under 'Finding an Embassy, Consulate or Mission' section at https://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/Assistance_Outside_Hong_Kong.html#c.

5 SERVICES PROVIDED BY HKSAR GOVERNMENT: 'ASSISTANCE TO HONG KONG RESIDENTS UNIT'

You are advised to familiarise yourself with the services provided by the 'Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit'. You can read more information on the website of GovHK at <https://www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/outsidehk>.

- Assistance to Hong Kong Residents 24-Hour Hotline
- Assistance to Hong Kong Residents in the Mainland
- Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Travelling Outside Chinese Territory
- Travel Tips and Advice
- Registration of Outbound Travel Information

When you are travelling outside the Chinese Territory, it is important to know that you are under consular protection and the assistance that you can get when needed. For details, please visit

https://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/Assistance_Outside_Hong_Kong.html#c.

6 HKU AT A GLANCE

This section gives you some basic facts about HKU. You may find them useful when exchanging information with your new friends.

Vision & Mission: <https://www.hku.hk/about/vision.html>

History: <https://www.hku.hk/about/university-history/the-early-years.html>

Today: <https://www.hku.hk/about/university-today/today.html>

Quick Statistics: <https://www.cpaohku.hk/firstandforemost>

7 TROUBLE SHOOTING: SOURCES OF SUPPORT

In the unfortunate event of natural disasters or any other crisis threatening your personal safety, you should:

- Contact the local emergency authorities for assistance (make sure you know the emergency phone number in your host country).
- Speak with the contact person of your host university.
- Contact the local Chinese Embassy for assistance. For the full list, please visit <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn>
- Call the HK Immigration Department 24-hour hotline (香港入境事務處求助熱線電話): **(852) 1868**
- Inform your parents/relatives/friends in Hong Kong.
- Inform the HKU International Affairs Office at goabroad@hku.hk, your HKU Faculty office or your trip organizing office.

In case you need to leave the host university during your study abroad period due to academic, financial or family problems, please seek advice and approval from the International Office at your host university as well as the HKU International Affairs Office or HKU Faculty Office before you make your plans.

If you need assistance or support during your study abroad period, you may find some important contacts here: <https://www.cedars.hku.hk/overseasemergencyassistance>.





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