



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Plant Sciences
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	03/02/2023 until 29/05/2023
Country (exchange)	Hong Kong SAR of China
City (exchange)	Hong Kong
University (exchange)	Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Faculty (exchange)	School of Science

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Wageningen was my first experience of studying abroad. I enjoyed studying in a different country and exploring a new culture, thus I chose to further expand this experience and apply for a study exchange.

What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

As I was given the opportunity to apply for universities in Asia, I chose HKUST so I can combine learning in a completely different environment along with the experience of living in a lively city like Hong Kong.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

Moving in Hong Kong is easy. The metro system (MTR) is rather simple to use, the buses and minibuses can get you anywhere from/to university. One can also use a taxi, it is a common practice in Hong Kong.

4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Bioinformatics	6	From alignments, differential gene expression analyses to proteomics and metagenomics, this course was very interesting to follow.	5	Included a workshop for Python.
2	Biostatistics	6	Probabilities, T-test, ANOVA, Linear regression, Bootstrapping , Cross validation	4	Very interesting and informative regarding statistical analysis in biological sciences. R studio knowledge is needed, as well as knowledge of algebra. Includes chapters of machine learning.
3	Microbiology	6	Identification, structure, physiology, and genetics of microorganisms. Second part explores the importance of microorganisms in human health, the environment, and in biotechnology.	4	Focused on human health mostly. The immunity chapter involves cells regarding the human system.
4	Structure and Function of proteins	6	The course is covering topics from amino acids to x-ray crystallography and cryo-em. Alpha fold and other structure prediction methods were also analysed.	5	Included workshops regarding software (like chimera) and a very interesting lab visit to the Cryo EM facility of HKUST!
5					
6					

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

The study contains weekly lectures and most of the times a midterm exam, a final exam and assignments/homework throughout the semester (4 months). The academic level is high, new methods are discussed and the studying material provided is up to date. Exams are at the right level, testing the knowledge taught in the lectures.

What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)

The culture is kind of different than Europe, however all of my lecturers were very approachable. I could ask for recommendations, assistance etc. Sometimes they even responded during out of office hours. One of my professors provided weekly office hours to discuss questions regarding the taught material.

I have engaged with local students only during social activities, as I did not have any group assignments. However, they were happy to help me when asking for direction (e.g., to find an academic building).

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)

The university has many food canteens, a McDonalds, 7/11 and more! Also the sports facilities are plenty, and one can engage in HKUST sports groups (and also participate in competitions). The dorms have common rooms and laundry facilities. The HKUST organizes a lot of seminars weekly, and also some activities like meeting therapy dogs and going for trips organized by the university.

5.Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)

The university provides housing, the rooms are double, and one can stay with a roommate. If somebody wants to live in the city, then the rents are very high as Hong Kong is an expensive region.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)

Of course, there are plenty of differences, however I did not have a hard time adjusting. So many people are living in Hong Kong, but everything is exceptionally tuned. The city is lively and diverse, the food choices are never ending and there is always an art fair/festival etc. going on.

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

Hong Kong is more expensive than Wageningen in terms of groceries, however dining out can be a lot cheaper (or more expensive, depending on where you are going). When living off campus, the wet markets can provide groceries in similar prices as the Saturday market

in Wageningen. Going out for an (alcohol free) beer (of course) can be a bit more expensive.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

I saw somewhere online that the Hong Kong transport system was characterized as the best in the world. I can confirm it is easy and punctual. During rush hours, the metro is coming every 1 minute.

There is one card to use. It is called octopus and one can apply for a student octopus to have fare discount. It can be used to pay at restaurants, convenience stores etc.

If staying in the city and not in campus, it takes approximately 50 minutes, but it is highly variable as there are plenty of areas in Hong Kong one can stay.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

Hong Kong has a lot of must-see regions, from Central, to Mong Kok, Tin Hau, Kennedy Town (and many maaany more!) and nearby islands like Cheung Chau or Lamma island. During summer one can go swimming at Shek O or other beaches that can also be suitable for surfing! In general exploring Hong Kong and trying the food options that it can provide, can be a very fun activity to spend your free time.

Must do, is go hiking! Hong Kong has so many nice, well-maintained trails, providing amazing views of the city or the sea (like Dragon back trail, Sharp peak, Kam Shan etc.).

Common travelling destinations are Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, and Philippines. I chose to travel to South Korea which can be considered a bit more far away as it is 3-4 hours away by plane. Some of my friends also visited Cambodia, and some others Japan!

What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?

Maybe going for dinner at Sai Kung, which is close to the university as well!

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)

I am definitely a city person; thus Hong Kong was the perfect choice for me. During my free time I was taking the tram and I was travelling from one side of the Hong Kong Island to the other. Watching people living their lives under the neon lights of HK was enough to spend a calm weekday night after finishing studying for the university.

My personal favourite food: hand pulled noodles, Malaysian curry, noodle soup (the more Sichuan pepper inside the broth → the better).

Being a vegetarian, I managed to survive! It was difficult, but I can imagine a vegan will have a fairly hard time in Hong Kong. One good tip is to ask a Cantonese-speaking person to help you order if the restaurant personnel does not speak English.

TIP: use sunscreen. Coming from Greece I was confident I know how to protect myself from the sun. But the sun here is kind of extreme. The more the SPF the better.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Maybe the time difference but I got used to it soon.

What was your best memory abroad?

- Photographing sunsets in Hong Kong.
- Going out with friends for dinner and then grabbing a cold beer at a seafront spot.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Katerina.eleftheriadou@wur.nl	