



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Biotechnology
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	31/01/2023 until 04/06/2023
Country (exchange)	China (Hong Kong SAR)
City (exchange)	
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?

I wanted to do something in data science to complement my program in the Netherlands in biotechnology. This was because the recent advancements in AI and data driven sciences have become so important. The fact that Asia's economy is developing very quickly and is becoming a hub for economic, political, scientific and cultural significance (think pivot to Asia, ASEAN, China's economic miracle as well as India's more recent economic development), made Hong Kong a very good location. I wanted to see the culture, meet people from all over the world and learn at one of the top universities in Asia.

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

I did Chinese as an elective in high school, as mentioned above China's position is becoming ever more relevant and I wanted to see this first hand. Speaking a bit of the language and wanting to see the place where Western and Chinese culture meet in a business environment, Hong Kong was a very good option. Hong Kong is also very known for its developed society and quality of education.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

From the airport use the bus that goes to Hang Hau and then the bus that goes directly to the university. The busses are very cheap and have storage for big luggage. When you are at the uni and don't carry your suitcase, you can use the mini busses as well.

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	Introduction to Java.	6	You learn to code Java and do some projects.	2	It required you to know C++ which I didn't. Later I found out there was another course that was more basic so in hindsight I would have chosen that one.
2	Protein Engineering.	6	You learn how to work with AI to design proteins and how to engineer functional enzymes for all kinds of applications.	5	Post graduate level but worth it. Relevant and it lets you use the latest techniques.
3	Data science for Biology and Medicine.	6	You learn how to analyse data in medicine and biological systems with statistical analysis and machine learning.	3	Very focussed on statistics and computer programs for practical application. A bit boring sometimes however very useful and you learn great skills.
4	Introduction to Biological Physics.	6	You learn about physical phenomenon in biological systems like mechanical stress, electromagnetism, conductivity, statistics, thermodynamics and logic gates.	4	Fun, Great teacher and good to see biology from a different perspective. Biomimicry, modern medicine and challenges are shown and a great physiological perspective is given of organisms.
5					
6					

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

There were lots of little homework assignments and deadlines. There were midterms, lots of assignments and final exams. Quite different from the Netherlands where there is usually only one or two big deadlines. This makes the study a bit stressful as there is not much flexibility, however the final grade is a combination of all the assignments so the final exam doesn't carry that much weight.

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 locals are friendly, but a bit to themselves. My friend group was mostly other exchange students and the locals didn't engage that much. You do have to consider this is like what Delft is for the Netherlands so it's just a different atmosphere.

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

The view is amazing. There is lots of sport facilities including 2 big gyms, a sport track and a football pitch. There is an indoor and outdoor pool (indoor in winter, outdoor in summer), there are 2 big cafeteria, a MC Donald's, 7/11, a grocery store, tennis- basketball- and ping-pong courts, 5 music rooms with pianos and drums sets. There is also 2 restaurants a library, laundry facilities at every dorm, a sailing and rowing club. There is also a beach (not kidding), a hike trail with a waterfall, multiple parks and pagodas in ancient Chinese style. The university is located in the mountains near the water and 15 minutes from a little fishing town. There is also a very big auditorium concert hall where there is classical music every other week to enjoy live.

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?)

Most people live on dorms at the uni as it is quite far from the city (1 hour commute to downtown). There is also a hall in the city in a neighbourhood but its quite boring and impractical there, so I don't suggest it. Also the rents in the city are literally the highest in the world so I also don't recommend looking for a room there.

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

They are very hard working, high pace, friendly, open and confident. There is political unrest as the handback of the territory was only 25 years ago and there are big changes politically and culturally. It's also a very economic unequal place. Hong Kong has the highest amounts of billionaires per capita but 1/4th of the population also lives below the poverty line, so there is Ferrari's and Gucci everywhere, as well as homeless and poverty in the city. The metro is insanely good as well as other public transportation. The city is very very busy (think 5th avenue busy) as some of its neighbourhoods are the most densely populated in the world, but 80% of the islands are also dense forest to chill and walk in. The food is amazing and has all kinds of cuisines from all over the world. There is really much to say but I would summarize it's cosmopolitan, busy, sophisticated and balanced between city and nature.

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

I spend about a €1000 per month. 1800 for rent of the room, 1500 for the flights and the rest was food, going out and transport. That's the basis however, I also saved up money to see some other places in Asia but 1000 euros per month should cover it.

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

It's insanely cheap. Think 1 euro to go from one part of the city to the other. It's fast, efficient, and if you sit in the double decker also fun.

6. Free time

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

Big Buddha on Lantau Island, Dragon's Back hike trail, Sai Kung, Lang Kwai Fong and mister Wong's are super cool. I also travelled to Macau (which is like 3 hour commute). Take the bus or train.

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

Go to mister Wong's (a restaurant catering to exchange students) and Carnegie's (a bar for all the exchange students from all the universities in Hong Kong).

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

Go to sai kung to get breakfast sometimes. The uni can be very stressful and demanding so take time in nature and to do activities.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

My final exams were a big challenge hahaha. Also the high pace is just so different from Wageningen that you have to get used to it. When choosing courses at one point the website is open and then it's first come first serve. Choose easy courses as the level is high and you want to enjoy your trip.

What was your best memory abroad?

Going out and doing fun stuff with Friends in the city, and going camping in a nature reserve.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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