IT University Travel Report

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Host University: City University of Hong Kong

Study Programme at IT University: DS

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad:

Exchange Agreement

Courses studied abroad:

- Cantonese

- Java Programming

- Operating Systems

- Computer Vision for interactivity

- Software Engineering Practice

- Information Security and

   Management

Exchange Period: semester (autumn/spring) <u>autumn</u>   year <u>2019</u>

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: Feel free to send me an email. I'll be happy to answer any questions! agmo@itu.dk

Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at City University of Hong Kong (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?

It was amazing to study at CityU! The university is first of all much larger than ITU. Both in terms of amount of students and the campus size. That implies that the study environment is much different from ITU. The university has many different student driven organizations that you can join. I personally played for the schools handball team. However joining different clubs or get access to facilities (like the fitness) is somehow a more formal process than what is normal in Denmark. For the handball team I had to fill applications and other forms to be invited to a practice. For the gym you have to apply formally and attach a letter that states your proficiency in a gym (annoying process!!!). But that is just the way they do it. Given the schools zero-alcohol policy on campus, which implies NO friday bars or parties, the social life is somewhat different from ITU. The

city itself is amazing, so for social stuff go out in the city (my recommendation).

My choices of courses were more or less fixed, since I had to take 4 specific courses at ITU, and since their credit system is different (one course is 3 credits corresponding to 6 ECTS), I had to take 5 courses at CItyU. The maximum amount of courses you are allowed to take at CityU is 6, so I had the option to take 1 extra (not mandatory though!). I decided to take a class in cantonese for beginners. I had one course from ITU that was not offered at CityU at the given semester, hence I had to use my elective. I chose "Computer Vision for Interactivity", by far my most interesting course!

Since the courses at CityU correspond to 6 ECTS, which is a bit lower than the standard 7.5 in Denmark, the workload per course is a bit lower than at ITU. However, given the fact that I had more courses than I would have in Denmark, the total workload probably evens out. Many of my courses were more focused on software development rather than data science, which implied that I was exposed to a lot of new material in which I had no previous experience. Hence my entrance to several of the courses were a bit tough. I imagine a SWU student would have an easier entrance to the courses.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

My motivation for studying abroad, and especially going to Asia, was mainly to get a cultural experience that was as different as possible to Denmark, and to get to know how people live and study. Secondly, I was very interested to see how technologically developed they were, and how their approach to computer and data science were compared to Denmark. My stay in Hong Kong certainly met my expectations, and way beyond. I did not only gained academical knowledge, but I got an opportunity to meet people from all over the world.

Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?

Both academically and personally I gained a lot. Since many of my courses were software development related, I learned different aspects of how to apply my work in data science to more software related approaches. The only course that I think directly was applicable to my further studies and interests as data scientist was "Computer Vision for Interactivity". The other courses did more give me a broader perspective of the field of computer science.

Personally was probably where I gained the most. Being on exchange is an amazing experience. First of all do you get to learn a lot of the new people. Meeting people from all over the world and get to learn about their lives and cultures gives a great perspective to the way we live in Denmark. Secondly do you get to know yourself better, since you always have to make choices. Choices about what to do, who to be together with, where to go, what to eat, so on and so forth. So in that way you learn what it is you want to spend time on. And since the options are endless and time limited, it is all about making decisions.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:

I did not get a spot at the student residence, so I had to get a place to stay at my own. The housing prices in Hong Kong are generally very high (higher than Copenhagen), so getting a room in a shared flat is definitely the best option. Living at student residence is very cheap, VERY cheap (7.000kr-10.000kr pr. semester), so there are a lot of money to save. I personally had a room in a shared apartment with 6 other people in Prince Edward. My monthly rent was 6000HK$ (5200kr), which is pretty normal for a room in Hong Kong, maybe even a bit in the low end.

Looking back I am very glad I didn't get a spot at the student residence, because if you both live and study the same place, many people tend to only stay in the campus area (Lyngby Syndromet). And since the city has so many different things to offer, living off campus is a great opportunity to explore.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?

I personally used facebook to find different housing groups and agents. I got contact to an agency called "Wingkong Holding Ltd" which was where I got my room. They had many different options throughout the whole city. They were very legit, and I never had any problems with them at all. I paid my rent monthly in cash at their office.

Having contact with agents through WhatsApp is very normal over there. WhatsApp is used for EVERYTHING! So don't be nervous if they ask you to contact them through WhatsApp.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

As explained above I got in contact with a housing agent through Facebook. He showed me different room options through WhatsApp. Once I decided my room I had to pay some of the deposit by bank transfer. The rest I had to pay when I arrived in Hong Kong.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

Living abroad is VERY expensive! Especially the housing took about a half of my budget. I think my monthly expenses, including food, trips, transportation, events was approximately 6.000kr (excluding rent). However I tried to participate in as many trips and events as I could, and by cutting that down and eat a little cheaper, I think I could've saved a couple of thousands per month.

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?

I did not apply any scholarships. However, if you're good at any sports, I would definitely suggest to make an application for a scholarship. The worst you can get is a no.

Recommendations for other students:

To make this document less boring, I'll try to stick to the key recommendations. I'd love to give more recommendations, so just send me an email or we can arrange a meeting!

- Being on exchange is all about getting out of your comfort zone!
- DON'T COOK YOURSELF AT HOME! **Eating out** is so delicious and cheap, almost the same price as if you had to buy and make it yourself, so go use that opportunity! I cooked at home 3 times (!!!!!) during my exchange.

- When you see long lines outside a restaurant it is because the locals like it and worth waiting a bit for. Unlike Denmark, eating out is something that's fast and easy, hence you'll probably only wait 5-10 minutes. Sometimes you need to go in and get a number.
- Try to make friends with **locals**! Many exchange students tend to stick together, and in some way it is impossible to avoid. But really try to make an effort to meet locals, because they are amazing people, and they know their city the best. All the good spots and restaurants are not the ones in the tourist books.
- Get **WHATSAPP**. Just get it, you'll use it every day. Period.
- Make sure to get your **student octopus card** (rejsekort), which gives you 50% discount on the metro. You have to apply for it in the beginning of the semester, and it's only in a few days, so make sure to get it. AND YOU CAN HAVE A TEMPORARY ONE WHILE WAITING FOR THE ACTUAL CARD. The octopus card is somewhat universal and can be used almost everywhere (supermarkets, metro, convenience store, restaurants).
- Try to get a group of people (20-30) and go on a **junk boat trip**. It's a 6-8hrs on a boat where you swim, drink and have fun. Usually the price is 250-300kr and absolutely worth it!
- Go on **hikes**. Even though Hong Kong is a big city, there are many options to go hiking, and the views are amazing.
- If you are looking for housing, and want the most local experience of a neighborhood (which is also cheaper in most cases), find a place at the Kowloon side (not Hong Kong Island), mainly in the areas Mong Kok, Prince Edward or Sham Shui Po. They are also VERY close to the university campus, and has the best and cheapest restaurants.