

**2012-2013**

**University Attended: University of Hong Kong**

## **FEEDBACK 1**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

It was in the first week, no classes run in that period. Useful because you get time to have all your paperwork done i.e. get student card, gym card, apply for Octopus, HK ID Card, get to learn bus routes and so on.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

Choosing courses was a painful experience in the first semester because of HKU's weird system of allocating places in classes on a ballot-basis. You never knew whether you got into that class until after 3 days of applying. 2nd semester was better though. Depending on what professors you have of course, classes can be exciting or very boring. I recommend going for the ones most exchange students opt for as you get to make friends easier. Assessment is continuous so you always have a group meeting, presentation, tutorial homework or paper due. They all tend to pile up starting from week 6-7 (after reading week).

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

Very useful, whatever questions you have just shoot away, MBS is always prompt.

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

Definitely go to these meetings. You learn vital info about the place you're going to and prepares you psychologically for what's next.

### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

If you have any issues, you need to be patient with the HKU staff. It can get very bureaucratic, but try reminding them to be faster. They get things done in the end.

### **INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER**

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

If you have a HK ID card, medical expenses are covered in HK. The University Health Service is free or dead cheap. For travelling, I recommend purchasing travel insurance. Better safe than sorry. *(MBS comment: The University of Manchester provides a Travel Insurance policy for all students going out on exchange).*

### **INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS**

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

Be prepared to spend money when going out, HK is not the cheapest place on earth (although it pales in comparison to London). Eating out all the time adds up to the cost.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

I stayed in Pokfield Road Residences. 3 people in one room. I had a great experience because I got along very well with the people in my building. We were a dozen who knew each other very well and made life easier. The girl at the office downstairs was a peach also. Security is lax, you get to have a rooftop to predrink, your own kitchen, washing machine, fridge, toilet, shower. Cleaning done once a month. Just behind the gym and aquatics centre. 3 min walk from the Bus terminus. Only thing is that it's an old building, but if you're fine with that, all the better.

### **DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

As I said, I made great friends. I travelled a very lot: Burma, Malaysia, Thailand (3 times), Cambodia (twice), Laos, Vietnam, China and Bali of course. Many people do flash-travelling (3-4 days and then come back) but I find that expensive because of flights. I did it 3 weeks at a time and I backpacked. Much better experience and cheap too. It's South-East Asia, amazing, amazing places.

### **DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

**1 year, miles away from home, only need to pass, in one of the most exciting places on earth - I'll let you figure this one out...**

## **FEEDBACK 2**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

The introduction programme was very brief and it wasn't directly to the point. Although CEDARS offers support to coming students, they are often shy and slow to get back to us when we have enquiries

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

The method of assessment in Hong Kong is very rigorous as it is a lot harder than in the UK to achieve top marks. This is primarily due to the curve grading and also the large coursework load. The teaching itself is great, especially in areas such as Economics. There is a lot of real world applicability brought into the courses and there are many options.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

The MBS support team has been wonderful this year. They were very speedy in getting back to me when I needed documentation or had questions.

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

It would be better to have taken advantage of meeting with those who went to the same University on the previous year. I felt like I had many things to take care of when I got here that I could have been helped with. *(MBS comment: There is a meeting organised during the second year for all outgoing and incoming students who have been on exchange to and from the destinations students are going to.)*

#### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

Towards the end of the year they got better but CEDARS is notoriously slow at replying to emails and offering support. It is often required to go there in person in order to obtain what you want.

#### **INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER**

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

I have not had to use the insurance policy. In Hong Kong I used HKU's health care services many times and they are very affordable and of high quality.

#### **INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS**

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

Small costs relating to the healthcare and dental care offered by HKU. These are very small and do not come to be a problem.

#### **ACCOMMODATION**

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

Pokfield Road residences is a great place to live in for cheap. Although it is very small, uncomfortable and often times dirty, it takes some getting used to before it becomes bearable. The air quality is quite poor, and we often find our clothes going severely mouldy. The toilets and kitchens are small and the three beds in each room are very close together. For the price I pay it is great.

#### **DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

Hong Kong is an amazing city. The transportation system is excellent, travelling from here is very convenient and cheap, and the social life is the best in the world in my opinion. We do not, however, integrate much with the local students. This is because there is such a large population of expats and exchange students that we often do not feel compelled to. Societies are pretty much useless to us as they are mostly for local students who speak Cantonese/ Mandarin.

All in all it is my favourite place in the world.

#### **DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

**Living in Hong Kong opens your eyes towards the eastern world while keeping you firmly grounded in a highly diversified culture that is very welcoming to Westerners and offers vast potential for personal growth and the developing friendships.**

## **FEEDBACK 3**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

The actual orientation organized by the university was a 3 hours gathering in the main hall where they talked about safety issues, psychological support available and very basic information about things available on campus. It wasn't utterly informative, but good to attend to meet fellow exchange students and even freshers.

More useful was the information we got in our welcome package when going to register as a student.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

The teaching style here is quite different than the one at MBS because of various reasons. Firstly, there are more assignments and coursework than you would have at MBS. Most of the courses have weekly homework, which is checked, weekly tutorials, at least one report/essay/presentation (usually in a team) and an exam, so I would say it is quite demanding quantity wise. However, the tasks are not particularly more difficult than at MBS; it just takes more time. Most of the lecturers speak very good English and are always very willing to help students understand the concepts.

The only particularly challenging part is getting the courses you want. First of all it is a first come first served basis on which they say they assign the courses; you apply for courses in this add/drop period which is the first two weeks of school; the process happens online, however, many times at least exchange students who could not get courses that were compulsory for them or that they really wanted and the class was not full yet, have to go and talk to the staff in person. And that is when things get messy, because the process is transferred offline (completing form etc). Sometimes, if they have an overflow of applications for a course that is very popular (example Beginners Chinese for exchange students) every student who selects that class comes to class for the first two weeks until he finds out whether he is accepted or not. Classes may get really full and teachers might get confused (because you also submit a hard copy of your application for the language courses) and then the whole first come first served basis does not hold anymore.

As an exchange student, you will be asked prior to coming to HKU, when you first enrol online to choose your courses. I would say even if this happens in early May and it's more than half a year left until you are suppose to arrive to Hong Kong, take the time and choose your courses wisely. More precisely make sure you choose the courses you meet the requirements for, so that you do not have to go through the hassle of Add/Drop period.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

The MBS International Team was absolutely great. The replies to all of my queries were really fast and useful.

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

I would say the information was sufficient and quite clear and useful.

### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

They do make efforts to welcome you and accommodate your needs, but the whole process of solving an issue can sometimes be extremely bureaucratic and thus lengthy.

**INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER**

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

The insurance from MBS covered everything. Didn't use it though.

**INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS**

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

N/A

**ACCOMMODATION**

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

First of all accommodation is extremely cheap here and the conditions are alright. Up until this year (2012-2013) the halls where most exchange students were accommodated were Patrick Manson or Student Flats. These are further away from the campus (10 min bus ride), a little older but do not have the strict rules and the culture of the other halls. However, this year was the one they inaugurated a new set of halls (Residential Colleges) which looks really nice, are brand new and are closer to the university. However, the rules there are much much stricter specifically because they are new (no visitors after 11pm- and they really mean it- non residents got kicked out from there on Christmas Eve because of that, so there are no exceptions). The hall you choose really depends on your personality. I stayed in Patrick Manson and I liked it cause it wasn't that strict and it was full of exchange students with whom I could connect easier especially at the beginning when everything is new. In the other halls you are very likely to get a mainland Chinese room mate (most of the halls have shared rooms) and then the cultural barrier can be a bit overwhelming at the beginning.

**DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

It was interesting working with local students who have a truly different way of studying. They are really keen on getting good grades and work really hard. They have a different learning style though (eg: when delivering presentations they would learn their part by heart). I joined the Dragon Boat Society (which is a local sport) and I had very much fun as this activity is very different than anything else I did. However, they can get very intense in training and it can be physically challenging especially if you are here for the competitions (early June) and want to make the team.

As a city, Hong Kong is absolutely amazing! You get the feeling of a very busy city, but If you take an half a hour ferry to one of the islands you find yourself in a very natural, sound free place. It's quite conveniently located as it's easy to get to most countries in South East Asia and also not that expensive to go up north. The city itself has a great transportation system. The campus is extremely conveniently located, very close to the city centre and to most of the big social destinations for that matter.

**DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

**One of the most insightful experiences I ever had.**