

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Frequently Asked Questions of Exchange-in Students

A. Before the Exchange

1. I am new to HKU. Is there anyone who can help me settle in?

Of course yes! You will be assigned a Buddy Mentor by the Faculty. The Buddy Mentor will provide you with language support and cultural guidance about Hong Kong, and also the information about learning and campus life at HKU. Your Buddy Mentor will contact you via HKU email before the commencement of a semester.

2. Is there any academic advising for exchange / visiting students?

Yes, you can contact the Programme Coordinator(s) of the major / minor programme(s) who are available for academic advising. Please check [here](#) for their contact information. Alternatively, you can always seek advice from your Buddy Mentor.

B. Getting Started: Course Enrolment

3. Can I complete the Master Registration and Course Selection before coming to Hong Kong?

Yes, you can complete the Master Registration and enroll courses in Student Information System (SIS) online before your arrival. An email about the details of the Master Registration and Course Selection will be sent to you by early August (for students admitted in the first semester) / early January (for students admitted in the second semester).

4. I have selected some courses during the application for admission, have I been enrolled into those courses automatically? Do I still need to enrol courses in SIS myself?

You have not been enrolled into any courses yet and are required to enrol them yourself in SIS during the course selection period (for students admitted in the first semester) and add / drop period. Your course enrolment would be subject to the availability of the courses and approval of the course offering department(s).

5. Can I change my study plan to include courses which were not in my original application?

Yes, you can change your study plan and enrol courses in the SIS during the course selection period. Your final course enrolment is subject to your successful course selection via the SIS. You will not be allowed to make any changes to your course enrolment after the end of add / drop period in each semester.

6. How many courses do I have to enrol in one semester?

The normal credit load at HKU is **30 credits** (i.e. 5 courses because each HKU course carries 6 credits) per semester. The minimum and maximum load are 24 credits and 36 credits respectively. If you wish to take less than 24 credits or more than 36 credits in any given semester, you are required to seek approval from the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Written request with strong justifications and support from your home university should be sent to the Faculty Office at socii@hku.hk with the completed form of [Application for Special Approval](#) by the end of the add / drop period. Late application will not be considered.

7. Can I take courses offered by other Faculties?

Yes, but since you are a Social Sciences incoming exchange / visiting student, courses offered by our Faculty must constitute **at least 50%** of your course load. Available courses are subject to the approval of the courses offering departments before the courses to be shown on the SIS.

If you wish to take courses offered by other Faculties, but are unable to enrol through the Portal by yourself during the course selection or the add / drop period, you should make request to the offering department(s) or subject teacher(s) for endorsement. The supporting documents together with the endorsement / approval email should be sent to socii@hku.hk. The Faculty Office will assist you in adding the course in the SIS.

8. If I take two courses from the Faculty of Social Sciences, two common core courses and one course from another Faculty, does that meet the requirement of selecting 50% of courses from the Faculty of Social Sciences?

Yes, because common core courses are not included in the calculation, so the above course selection meets the 50% requirement.

9. I do not know how to enrol courses via the Student Information System (SIS). What can I do?

You can log into the SIS by using the password that has been sent to you via email. A **quick guide on course selection** can be found [here](#).

10. **I have background in a specialised field (e.g. Psychology) and would like to enrol an advanced level course (e.g. one carrying the course code PSYC2xxx, PSYC3xxx or PSYC4xxxx) that requires pre-requisite(s)), but because I do not have the specified pre-requisite(s) at HKU, I cannot enrol the course through Portal, what should I do?**

You can contact the course offering department (e.g. Department of Psychology) to seek their **written approval** of your enrolment request. Such requests normally require supporting documents (such as course descriptions from your home university of course you have taken that match with the pre-requisite concerned and the academic transcript). After obtaining the approval, forward your enrolment request and the written approval from the course offering department to us at socii@hku.hk. The course will then be manually added to the SIS by the Faculty.

11. **One of the courses I chose in the Portal was disapproved, how can I enquire the reason behind the disapproval? What should I do if I still want to take this course?**

You can contact the course offering department to enquire the reason(s) behind the disapproval. If it was disapproved because the class was full, you may wish to check the course status again during the add / drop period as other students may drop the course which may result in vacancy.

12. **Where can I find the course outline and related course details?**

Please visit the website(s) of the course offering department(s). The websites of our core departments can be accessed via <http://www.socsc.hku.hk/> > “Departments & Centres”. You may check with the course offering department(s) directly if your required information is not available online.

C. During the Exchange

13. **When will be the first day of teaching and assessment period?**

Please visit <http://www.ase.hku.hk/> > “Dates of Semesters” for the detailed academic calendar. The examination timetables will be announced not later than 4 weeks before the start of the respective main assessment periods. There are some examinations which take place outside the main assessment periods or are administered by the departments directly, and the students concerned will be notified separately.

14. **My home university requires me to send a Study Aboard Learning Agreement before or after the exchange, what should I do?**

Please fill in your information on the form and send it in to the Faculty Office in person or by email (to socii@hku.hk). We will process it in due course.

15. **I understand that a Student Octopus Card is a debit card which can be used for transport and as a convenient way to pay in HK. Am I eligible to apply?**

Applicant must meet the following eligibilities set out by the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) Corporation:

- Between the ages of 12 and 25. An applicant's age is determined by the date the application is submitted.
- Currently enrolled in a full-time day course offered by an acceptable institution in Hong Kong for not less than 20 hours of academic instruction each week and for 30 weeks or more in an academic year.

16. **If I am eligible, how can I apply for one?**

You are required to complete an application for the MTR Student Travel Scheme

- **Online Application:** Apply online on the [MTR website](#)
- **Hardcopy Application:** Obtain an application form [online](#) or from any MTR Customer Service Centre. Bring the completed form to the Faculty Office for the authorisation stamp, and then submit to any MTR Customer Service Centre for processing.

17. **Can I take up internships?**

No. However, non-local exchange students of full-time and locally-accredited programmes at undergraduate level or above which necessitate study/curriculum-related internship and whose study period is **not less than one academic year (i.e. 12 months including summer semester)** may take an internship. Please check the website of the [Hong Kong Immigration Department](#) for details.

18. **Can I take part-time on-campus employment or summer jobs?**

No.

D. **After the Exchange**

19. **How can I apply for the transcript after my exchange / visiting period at HKU?**

Official transcript can be applied at the Academic Services Office of the Registry online at <http://www.ase.hku.hk/asoffice/> after the release of the examination result. (Please click "Transcript" > "Application – For graduates or students WITHOUT access to HKU Portal"). The normal processing time is **10 working days** upon receipt of your payment. A nominal administration fee **HK\$40 per copy** is applied.

20. **What is the Grade Point Average (GPA) grading system at HKU?**

Please visit the website of [Academic Advising Office](#) where you can find the GPA Grading scale of HKU under the section "Examination and Assessment".

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