

Career Advancement **Hong Kong City Guide:**

How to Prepare for a Successful Summer in Hong Kong

The resources in this guide are for informational purposes only. Career Advancement does not endorse or guarantee any of the services described in this document. Students should exercise their own discretion when planning for their internship. If you have questions about this document, feel free to speak with a Career Advancement adviser. You can make an appointment on UChicago Handshake.

Finding Summer Housing

Things you should consider when looking for housing:

1. *Consider finding a roommate.* You may end up spending a good amount of your summer income paying for rent. If you can find classmates, friends, or relatives willing to room with you, this could be your best option for saving money.
2. *Location is everything.* One strategy is to search for housing that is close to your workplace or near transportation that will get you to work quickly. Hong Kong has a variety of public transportation options, such as the Mass Transit Railway, buses, minibuses, tramways, and even ferries.
3. *Decide what is important to you.* Once you've decided on what area of the city would be convenient for you, it's always helpful to explore the nearby attractions. Whether you love trying new restaurants, shopping, or visiting cultural institutions, try to find a place that will give you the most time to explore your favorite things.
4. *Politely ask your employer about housing resources.* Your employer may have suggestions for where to live or be able to give you the contact information of other interns who are searching for housing so that you can room together or get advice.

Online Housing Resources

There are a variety of online housing resources that provide short-term housing vacancies including the sites below:

<https://www.airbnb.com/hong-kong/stays/monthly>
<https://www.nestpick.com/hong-kong/>
<https://www.nomadtemphousing.com/>
<https://www.okay.com/en/property-search/rent>
<https://www.squarefoot.com.hk/rent>
<https://www.sublet.com/apartments-for-rent/hong-kong>

In addition to the links above, Facebook groups are good places to look for short-term housing or roommates.

Student Housing Organizations

Student Housing Organizations are corporations that own large residential buildings and rent out rooms to students. Sometimes the buildings are set up like dormitories with single rooms and collective bathrooms, and other times the rooms are more like studio or one-bedroom apartments. It is important to look and apply for housing as soon as possible. There are pros and cons to living in Student Housing, just as there are positives and negatives to living in a dorm.

Pros

- Amenities such as security, maintenance, etc.
- Opportunity to meet other students
- Several options ranging from economical setups to ones with more amenities: prices can range between \$1,769 to \$3,333 for the entire summer

Cons

- Possibility you will be matched with a roommate
- There are rules and regulations in most of these places that you will have to abide by

Hong Kong Student Housing:

<https://hongkongstudenthousing.com/>

Offers a wide selection of apartments and rooms to accommodate any budget. All units are fully furnished. Rentals available across Hong Kong for increased transportation convenience. Telephone: +8 (526) 023-2006.

Hong Kong Neighborhoods

The majority of students with summer internships in Hong Kong choose to live in different neighborhoods based on their internship location. Here is a list of affordable neighborhoods that could be suitable housing options:

Happy Valley is in the northern area of Hong Kong Island, making it a perfect location for those commuting to any of the neighborhoods using the MTR Island Line.

Tin Hau is located about two miles northeast of Happy Valley. It is home to both the first boys school and first girls school in Hong Kong, along with two temples.

Wanchai is one of the busiest commercial areas in Hong Kong, hosting the offices of many small and medium-sized companies. International culture is prevalent in Wanchai.

North Point is a mixed-use region on Hong Kong Island. Close in proximity to Causeway Bay and outdoor attractions that border Hong Kong Island's urban area.

Kowloon is positioned on the mainland directly north of Hong Kong Island. This urban area features many different neighborhoods that are home to a variety of universities and is packed with many indoor and outdoor attractions.

New Territories includes all of the neighborhoods that are not located on Hong Kong Island or the Kowloon Peninsula. The New Territories are perfect for those that are commuting to areas outside of Hong Kong Island.

Rental Tips and Expectations

Applying for a Rental Unit

Most landlords will ask you to complete a rental application form. The application will typically ask for the following:

- Name, address, and telephone number
- Current and past landlords
- Financial information regarding your ability to pay the rent, like monthly or annual income
- Names of people who will be living in the unit

Cost of Living

A few notes to remember while considering housing costs:

- The average monthly rent for a studio or 1-bedroom apartment ranges from \$1,500 to \$2,500 per month or \$3,331 to \$5,509 per month for a 2-bedroom or 3-bedroom apartment.
- While researching for apartments to rent, be aware of scammers on rental websites. A common tactic used by the seller is stating that they will be out of the city for months, limiting their accessibility. According to two students trying to find housing over the summer, “[they] also noticed that a lot of the scam responses were the same, someone leaving the city for 3 to 9 months for a job.”
- Be sure to get in contact (via phone, Zoom, etc.) with your landlord or leaser before agreeing to rent the vacancy. Whenever possible, you should visit the space or do a video tour before signing a lease.

Hong Kong Transportation

Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway

The Mass Transit Railway covers all major districts in the territory, including stops at the boundary with Mainland China. The MTR also operates a light rail system that runs between the Yuen Long and Tuen Mun territories.

Buses and Minibusses: Kowloon Motor Bus, New World First Bus, Citybus, New Lantao Bus, and Long Win Bus Fares are paid upon boarding and depend on how far you travel. Exact change is required for cash fare. Minibusses are small buses that carry up to 19 passengers. Some of these operate along specific routes at fixed prices.

Hong Kong Island Tram System

Street trams operate in the north corridor of Hong Kong Island through Western District, Wan Chai, Happy Valley, Causeway Bay, and North Point. Each tram costs the same flat fare. Exact change is required for cash fare.

Taxis and Shared Ride Options

All taxis are metered, air-conditioned, and clean. Taxis in Hong Kong are categorized by three colors, each indicating a geographical area. Red taxis operate throughout most of Hong Kong except for Lantau Island, green taxis only service the New Territories, and blue taxis only operate on Lantau Island. You can also download the Uber mobile app and electronically hail a taxi (<https://www.uber.com/>).

Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Ferries

As a coastal city, ferry routes connect Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the Outlying Islands. Fares vary between the upper and lower decks, as well as between weekdays and weekends. Cash is accepted as a form of payment.

Hong Kong Water Taxi

Officially approved water tourism route of the harbor, passing by famous attractions such as the Hong Kong Observation Wheel, the International Financial Center, the Avenue of Stars, the West Kowloon Cultural District, and more. Water taxis offer both viewing cabins and open decks.

Monthly Transportation Cost

- Tourist Octopus and On-Loan Octopus

This add-value card allows you to travel cash-free on all major transport systems, and can also be used at convenience stores and some shops. There are two types of cards. The Tourist Octopus can be purchased for a minimum of \$5 and can be

reused when you come back to Hong Kong in the future. On-Loan Octopus includes a refundable deposit of \$6.50 that is refunded back to you if you return the card less than 90 days from the original date of issue.

For more information, visit the Octopus Card website: <https://www.octopus.com.hk/en/consumer/index.html>

Hong Kong Safety

After living in Chicago for school, you should be well-versed in safety precautions for a big city. However, here are some basic tips you should be reminded of before your internship in Hong Kong. Using common sense is good advice and you should read the following tips for a quick refresher.

General Safety Tips:

- Always remember that there is safety in numbers. Walk with friends, or take populated routes when going places. Be especially careful at night.
- Plan your route in advance, walk with a purpose, and be alert at all times, especially when talking on a cell phone or using headphones.
- Avoid deserted areas such as parks and alleys.
- If you think you are being followed, cross the street, change direction, or go to a public place.
- Never display large amounts of cash or other valuables in public. If you need to organize your wallet, duck into a store or wait until you're home.
- Don't keep your wallet in the back pocket of your pants or backpack, and be aware of your wallet or purse in commotions. Pickpockets often employ helpers to create disturbances nearby.
- Avoid empty railway cars. Ride with many people or in the conductor's car if it is at all possible.

Connect with Alumni

While you're in Hong Kong this summer, take advantage of the opportunity to connect with another great resource: University of Chicago alumni! Whether you're interested in working in Hong Kong after graduation, or you wish to find out more about certain career paths, networking with alumni may be one of the most beneficial things you do during your summer. Research alumni who are currently working in Hong Kong, through the UChicagoWiser Network, an alumni mentoring platform: <https://uchicago.wiser.io/signup> and the online alumni directory: <http://www.uchicagoalumni.org>.