

Study Abroad Journal

Peking University, China

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Overall Experience

Exchanging at Peking University was quite an eye-opening yet at the same time, challenging experience. When I first started my new life there, to be completely honest, it was far from pleasant. Compared to Hong Kong, the living conditions at the student dormitory were of quite low standard. It was a quadruple room, with two bunk beds on each sides, and the standards of toilet and shower room hygiene were simply poor. In addition, hot water supply starts at 3 pm and ends at 11 pm daily, which made it extremely inconvenient for students who have the habit of showering in the morning or staying out late at night. The poor and even hazardous air quality in Beijing just made the entire situation worse. I have to admit that in the first few weeks at Peking University, I didn't see any way I would be able to will it through the whole semester under such living conditions.

However, the human's inborn nature of adaptability started to kick in after a few weeks. I started to get accustomed to the living standards and adopted a new lifestyle that could more ideally fit me in the schedule at Peking University. Moreover, I even began to appreciate what I experienced there. For instance, the course registration was much more flexible in comparison with HKUST. Although it was a total different registration system which was based on lucky draws, professors had more authority in situations when the quotas in lectures were full. It was common practice for professors to open additional quotas during the add and drop period, and one of my classes even experienced a double in class quota. Apart from the difference in course registration systems, I was also stunned by the ability and knowledge demonstrated by students at Peking University simply in my first lecture. Students at Guanghua School of Management were just more than willing to chime in their opinions in classes, and more importantly, their views were astonishingly

constructive and showed how well-knowledged they were regarding the subjects. Whenever a question was raised, it simply forced the professor to delve into the materials deeper. Attending every lecture at Guanghai School of Management was a whole new mind-blowing experience without any exception and exaggeration. Consequently, after several weeks into the semester, I was totally used to my life and learned to appreciate all the positives this prestigious university had to offer.

General Exchange Information

- 1) Visa Procedures: For Hong Kong/Taiwanese students, no visa is required, and using their Home Visit Permit/Mainland Travel Permit for Taiwan Residents will be accepted.

- 2) Orientation Activities: Hong Kong/Macau/Taiwanese students are considered separate from other international exchange students, and the office in charge of all the orientation and academic affairs is the Hong Kong/Macau/Taiwan Office. As a result, all the orientation activities, including a presentation assisting students to settle in and two field trips to tourist attraction spots around Beijing, were all organized solely by that office.
- 3) International Services & Activities: Upon arrival in Beijing, the Hong Kong/Macau/Taiwan Office arranged all our exchange buddies to pick us up and brought of us to Peking University all together. During the semester, several overnight tours to other cities in China were organized, including a four-day trip to Shanxi, which is a 6-hour train ride from Beijing.
- 4) Accommodations: Mostly all the Hong Kong/Macau/Taiwanese exchange students were arranged in the same dormitory, and quadruple rooms were offered. I don't recall there were any application procedures in particular, and for Hong Kong students, the accommodations were free of charge.
- 5) Course Registration: Course registration was done at elective.pku.edu.cn, and course information could be found at <http://dean.pku.edu.cn/pkudean/course/kcb.php?ll=1>. For courses that the quotas were exceeded, the selection process was based on a lucky draw. However, we were allowed to state our preference through filling out our preference points for each courses, and the lucky draw was conducted based on all applicants' points.
- 6) Teaching & Assessment Methods: Similar to HKUST, class format and assessment methods really varies among classes. The most significant difference was that most courses in Peking University were conducted in

Chinese, and in particular for courses offered by Guanghua School of Management, some courses were instructed in English while others were in Mandarin with English course materials and slides.

- 7) Finance & Banking: Compared to Hong Kong, the regular expense in Beijing was definitely much lower with much friendlier prices. Mobile and online payment platforms, such as Alipay and Wechat Pay, are extremely popular in China, and it is almost a necessity these days.
- 8) Climate: The climate in Beijing was rather extreme, with snowfall and freezing temperatures from February to March, and with temperatures exceeding 35 degrees Celsius starting from April. Compared to Hong Kong, Beijing was quite dry and rainfall occurs normally once a month.
- 9) Health & Safety: There is a university hospital located in Peking University, and safety in Beijing shouldn't be much of a concern since there are basically security checks everywhere in public areas.
- 10) Food: I consider the food in Beijing to be quite oily, but one point to mention is that the food on campus were incredibly cheap with ridiculously low prices.
- 11) Transportation: In Beijing, I normally took the subway or the buses, but during peak hours, subways were a lot more efficient than buses since the congestion situation in Beijing was quite severe. Other than public transportation, DiDi(the Uber in China) was also really convenient with prices normally lower than taxis.
- 12) Communication: Wechat is by far the most dominant social media in China, but unlike Facebook, Whatsapp is still useable without having to use VPN.

- 13) Sports & Recreation Facilities: There are numerous outdoor courts for sports all around the campus. As I recall, there are also two gym rooms, with quite friendly membership fees of around 200 RMB for three months.
- 14) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities: For one weekend in the semester, there was a student society fair on campus, where clubs promoted themselves and tried to draw in new members. As for networking opportunities, since Hong Kong/Macau/Taiwanese students were separately handled with other international exchange students, unless we proactively reached out to other international students, mostly we were hanging out with other Hong Kong/Macau/Taiwanese students.
- 15) Cautionary Measures: To be honest, since the culture background are quite similar between China and Hong Kong, I didn't find anything in particular I had to be caution about. Perhaps it is advisable to be careful about the food, since some food in China are prepared using low quality ingredients and in unsanitary environments.

Items to Bring

- Home Visit Permit/Mainland Travel Permit for Taiwanese Residents
- Acceptance Letter(錄取通知書) from Peking University
- A down jacket
- Face masks (Or can be purchased in Beijing, since it is sold everywhere.)

Useful Links and Contacts

- Peking University Website: <http://www.pku.edu.cn/>

- Peking University Portal:

<https://iaaa.pku.edu.cn/iaaa/oauth.jsp?appId=portal&appName=%E5%8C%97%E4%BA%AC%E5%A4%A7%E5%AD%A6%E6%A0%A1%E5%86%85%E4%BF%A1%E6%81%AF%E9%97%A8%E6%88%B7&redirectUrl=http://portal.pku.edu.cn/portal2013/login.jsp/./ssoLogin.do>

- Peking University Office of Educational Administration:

<http://dean.pku.edu.cn/pkudean/index.html>

- Course Registration Website:

<https://iaaa.pku.edu.cn/iaaa/oauth.jsp?appID=syllabus&appName=%E5%AD%A6%E7%94%9F%E9%80%89%E8%AF%BE%E7%B3%BB%E7%BB%9F&redirectUrl=http://elective.pku.edu.cn:80/elective2008/agent4iaaa.jsp/./ssoLogin.do>

- Course Website: <http://course.pku.edu.cn/>