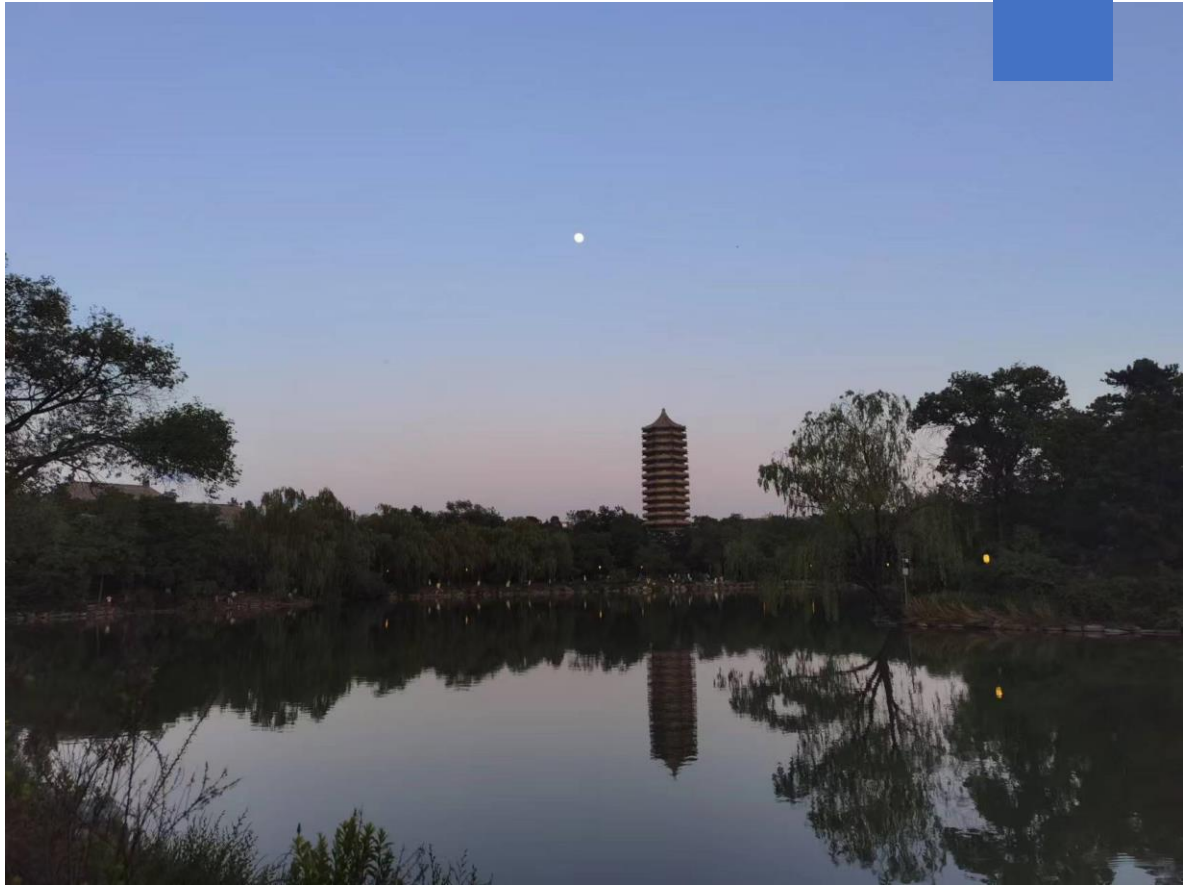




Exchange Report

PEKING UNIVERSITY, CHINA

XIAO Yicong

BSc in Quantitative Finance

Spring, 2022

Table of Contents

Part 1: Monthly Activity Log (February - June 2022)	2
February.....	2
March.....	3
April	5
May.....	7
June.....	8
 Part 2: General Exchange Information	8
Visa Procedures	8
Orientation Activities.....	9
Accommodations.....	9
Course Registration.....	9
Teaching & Assessment Methods.....	9
Sports & Recreation Facilities.....	10
Finance and Banking	10
Social Clubs and Networking Opportunity	10
Health & Safety.....	10
Food	11
Transportation	11
Climate	11
Communication.....	11
 Part 3: Items to Bring	12
 Part 4: Useful Links and Contacts (in Chinese)	12
PKU Office of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan Affairs.....	12
Departments of PKU	12
Metro System of Beijing.....	12
Course Catalog.....	12

Part 1: Monthly Activity Log (February - June 2022)

February

So many famous writers praised the splendid view of Peking University's campus in winter, but I was still amazed when I saw it with my own eyes. It was already 4 days past the last snow when I entered the campus for the first time, but there was still thick snow on the ground and on the roof of the age-old buildings. Under the clear blue sky and sunlight, the white snow, red walls and green tiles glimmered and reflected. Since the founding of PKU in 1898, so many people must have been amazed by this great view.



PKU had a very convenient registration process for exchange students. Within 20 minutes, I got my PKU ID card which could also be used for most on-campus payments, my dormitory key, and guidelines on upcoming course registration. I was

assigned to a 4-persons room with 3 other exchange students, all from Hong Kong.



Each of us had an individual desk and closet. The room has a heater and air conditioner, and a nice balcony.

On the subsequent day, the university held an orientation session for all exchange students to walk us through the course registration process, which was quite different from what we had here at HKUST (to be covered in Part 2). Overall, it was a very smooth landing process.

March

Class starts! I chose 6 courses in total, with 1 about Chinese economics reform and the remaining about time-series analysis, financial mathematics and programming. I was always looking for academic improvement in these areas, and no words could express my excitement for studying these subjects in the best university in China.



I also took a visit to the Palace Museum with my friends in Beijing. It is the world's largest palace and was the working place for over 20 emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasty. Now an ordinary citizen like me only need to pay for 20 CNY to spend a whole day in it. I highly recommend visiting the Palace Museum when it snows.



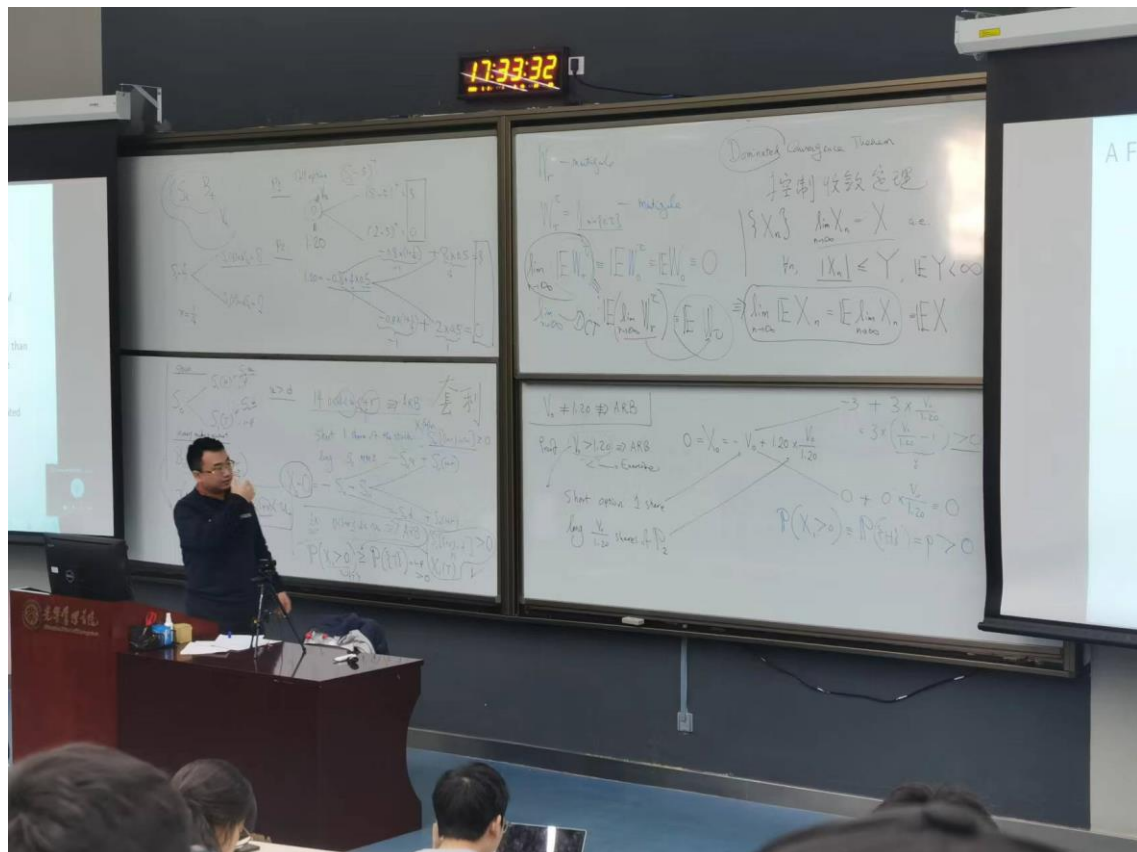
There are many student clubs in PKU, and there is a large O'Week in both Fall and Spring semester. It is very similar to the one in HKUST. All clubs will together host a fair for students to walk through and get to know more about them. I joined the Hedge Fund Society and met a lot of talented members from not only PKU but also many famous universities in China.

And it snowed again in the second half of March!



April

PKU is a wonderful place for people searching for academic improvements. The courses here are rigorous and challenging, and I had to spend 3 to 4 hours every day besides attending classes to keep up with the pace. A lot of classes in Guanghua School of Management were taught in English or bilingual, while many engineering or mathematics courses were taught in Chinese, but we could also submit our homework and exam papers in English.



I spent a lot of time in the huge library of PKU.





Days were getting warmer, and flowers blossomed. Spring in PKU showed a completely different view.



PKU also has a cinema on campus, yet I did not have time to visit.

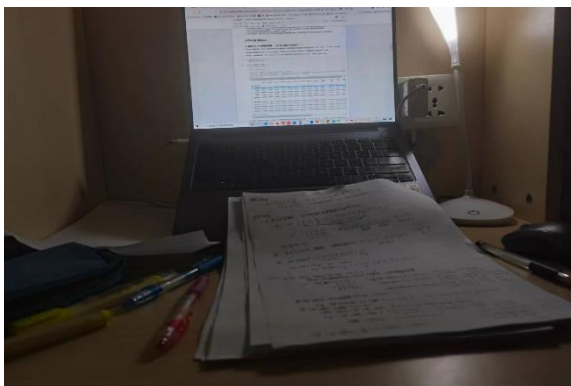


Days pass by in PKU with both stress and beautiful things, like scenery, birds, and food. There are over 10 canteens on campus, serving Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Western, and even Dim Sum. I took a picture before every meal, which added up to over 3 GB.



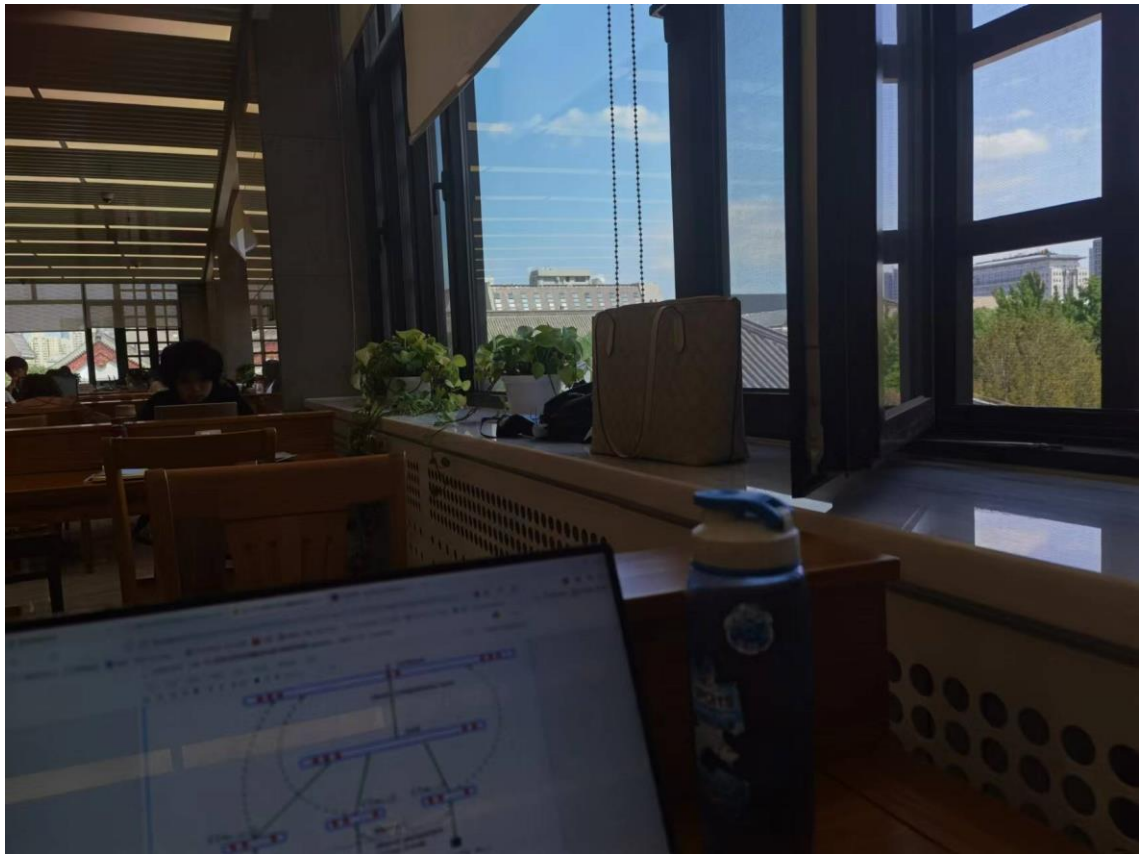
May

COVID-19 rebounded in May, and we switched to hybrid mode. There were stricter regulations on travelling in and out of campus, so I did not have much chance to explore the city since then. But apart from this, life in PKU was not affected by too much. I was busy with my essays, presentations, homework, and exams.



Thankfully, the weather was pleasing as we approached summer. It was a great

source of relaxation to look out of the library window or my dorm's balcony.



June

Final exam lasted for a whole month. I overall did quite satisfactorily, and felt more clear about my future academic and career directions. This is perhaps the biggest reward I got from this semester at PKU.

Part 2: General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

I am a Chinese national, so there wasn't much problem with visa for me. PKU requires Hong Kong and Taiwan students to register with 返乡证 and 台胞证 respectively.

The document submission procedure was done during the application process, which happened in November 2021 for the Spring 2022 intake. The guidelines were very clear on the application page, and PKU only required electronic submissions.

Orientation Activities

PKU organized an orientation on the second day we arrived, which was mostly about the course registration procedure. They also assigned an exchange buddy to each of us, and to my knowledge, they all came from Guangdong, Hong Kong, Macau, or Taiwan, so that they would understand our needs better.

There was a trip to Chengdu planned in March, but canceled due to the pandemic.

Accommodations

We were guaranteed dormitories on campus. We lived together with full-time students, and most rooms are 4-persons rooms with bunk beds. We could either buy a mattress on-campus or bring our own. There is a bathroom on every floor with washing machines and dryers. Bathing was charged based on time length, and we needed to add money into a special card issued by the university to use the bathing facilities.

Course Registration

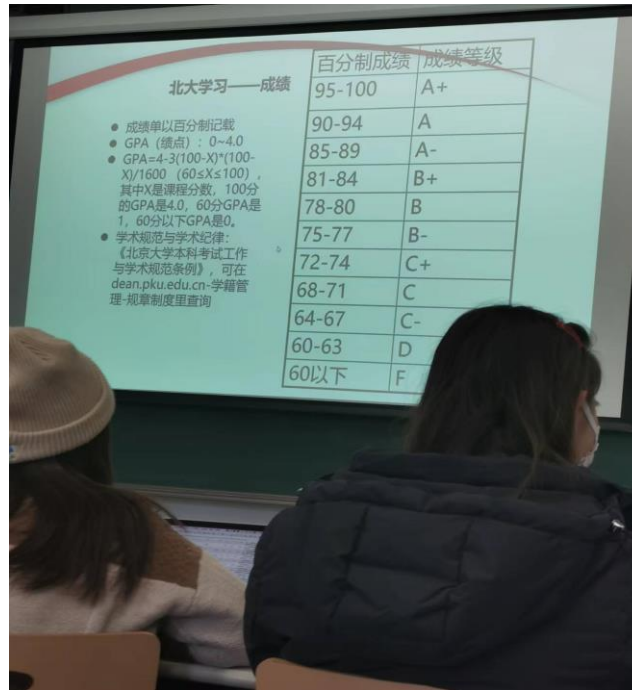
Course registration does not take a "first-come-first-serve" approach as we do in HKUST. There will be around two months for students to browse the course lists and form a portfolio. Each student will be assigned 100 "intention points" that can be distributed to the selected courses to indicate their priority for each course. They can change their point allocation before the semester starts, after which they will be notified of the class enrollment results. Therefore, you won't need to wait in front of the computer to hit the click button at a specific time.

There are 2 weeks of add-drop periods, too. Noticeably, there is an extra "drop period" after midterm, when students can drop classes given the total credits remain above 12 (but there is no such requirement for exchange students).

Teaching & Assessment Methods

Almost all teachers here have PhD degrees from famous universities (including HKUST). To my knowledge, most courses in the Guanghua School of Management are taught in both Chinese and English. The math and programming courses I took were taught in Chinese, but they allowed English submissions of homework or exam papers.

Course grades were given on a 100 point scale and transferrable to letter grade.



Sports & Recreation Facilities

There are many places for sports on campus, including a big sports ground, over 5 football fields and baseball fields, a gymnasium with a swimming pool, basketball fields and gym equipment.

Finance and Banking

Most payments on campus can be done with the PKU ID card. Students can charge money into their cards through an official app of PKU.

It is nice to open an Alipay account, since most payments are conducted digitally now in China. Even if you are not a Chinese citizen, you can still open up an Alipay account and link your credit/debit card to it to pay almost anywhere.

Social Clubs and Networking Opportunity

There are over 100 student societies in PKU, addressing many areas of interest. It is definitely the No.1 place for meeting new friends. There is an O'Week in every semester, usually taken place within two weeks after the semester starts.

Health & Safety

PKU has an affiliated hospital right beside the campus. Students can also make

appointments with the Zhongguancun Hospital, reachable within 10 minutes walk.

Food

PKU has over 10 canteens and restaurants that cover almost every area of the huge campus, serving almost every type of food you can imagine. This was never a problem to me! I also liked to buy some instant foods from convenient stores on campus such as Family Mart when I was busy.

Transportation

PKU has a vast campus with no shuttle bus, but there are a lot of shared bikes on campus. It is the most convenient transportation method for me. You can also buy a bike for a cheap price on campus and sell it to others upon leaving.

There are two bus stations and a metro station outside campus, which can take you directly to most visitor attractions of the city.

Climate

It is freezing in winter and quite hot in summer, so be prepared if you are visiting Beijing in the Spring Semester!

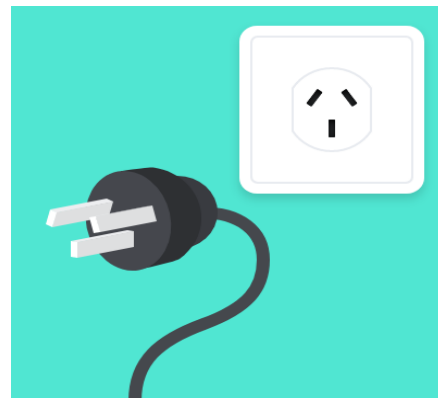
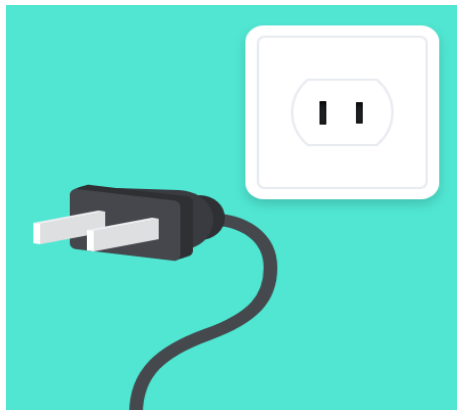
Communication

It is recommended to buy local sim cards on campus, which offer discounts for students. WeChat is the number 1 communication method here, and many classes also use WeChat for communication or announcements instead of Blackboard Learn (btw PKU uses Blackboard instead of Canvas) or email.

Part 3: Items to Bring

These are items that I consider needing special attention.

- Clothes for Summer & Winter: T-shirts, cotton-padded jackets, boots or shoes with thick covering
- Beddings: Quilts, pillows, blankets, mattress (also sold on campus)
- Handcream!!! Beijing is very dry.
- Charging Plug: China supports these two types of plugs.



Part 4: Useful Links and Contacts (in Chinese)

PKU Office of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan Affairs

<https://hmt.pku.edu.cn/index.htm>

This is the PKU office that organizes the exchange

Departments of PKU

<https://www.pku.edu.cn/department.html>

Metro System of Beijing

<https://map.baidu.com/@12959238.56,4825347.47,12z>

Course Catalog

<https://www.pku.edu.cn/education.html#p2>