

## **Risk Management in International Exchange at HKUST**

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To support the growing population of international and exchange students, HKUST has been running an International Student Office to provide comprehensive support to international students, ensuring them a memorable and fruitful learning experience in Hong Kong.

There are a number of potential risks which, if not mitigate, will adversely affect the University's internationalization effort. The International Office provides support to both incoming and outgoing exchange students to properly manage these risk factors. For incoming exchange students, we will assist them in their visa application. We work closely with the Hong Kong Immigration Department to ensure the application process is smooth and timely. Information about campus life (accommodation, study, catering etc) will also be distributed to students so as to get them ready for their stay in Hong Kong. For those who have financial difficulties, there are a number of scholarships, bursaries, and studentships available for international students.

To assist exchange students to adapt to local society and culture, we arrange a series of activities, ranging from local tour to language workshop to immerse them in local culture and integrating them with local students. A local buddy will also be assigned to each international student in their first semester of study. Insurance is also required to cover personal liability during their study.

We pay special attention to health and safety. Before the departure of outgoing exchange students, we will inform them with precaution measures, e.g. vaccine or travel warning. For incoming students, upon their arrival, they will receive information about campus clinic, nearby hospital and 24-hrs campus emergency contact.

On the academic side, we will monitor students' academic progress to ensure that they can cope with HKUST's workload and activities. We have counselors who are ready to assist them in the Student Affairs Office and academic departments.

To conclude, we are aware of the potential risks that exchange students are facing and the International Office is ready to help them if needed.

# Risk Management in International Exchange

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# The Nature of International Exchange

- International exchange is the meeting of people of:
  - Different citizenship, ethnic, political, religious, socio-cultural, backgrounds
  - Different values, ethics and morals
- This results in the convergence of people with various needs, expectations and behavior. This is the source of most of the risks involved with international exchange.




# Risk Management through Cooperation between Various Parties

- Host institution
- Home institution
- Internal units in host and home institutions, including those involved with academic, food, housing, campus hygiene matters
- Exchange student
- Local students in the host institution
- Consulate offices
- Insurance companies

Topic	Risk	Solutions
<b>Student Visa</b> 	<b>Rejection by Hong Kong Immigration Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School coordinates the applications with students &amp; Immigration to ensure smooth and timely processing of visas</li><li>• Most visa applications are processed by HKUST</li></ul>
<b>Housing</b> 	<b>Accommodation not up to a customized size and standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All international/exchange students are guaranteed on-campus housing</li><li>• Provided hall info/photos well-in advance</li><li>• Off-campus options</li></ul>



Hall 6



Topic	Risk	Solutions
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b> 	<b>Health &amp; safety while travelling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural disasters: SARS, tsunami, earthquakes</li> <li>Political instability</li> </ul> <b>Accidents and Injuries</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An insurance offered thru HKUST has UNLIMITED COVERAGE in case of EMERGENCY EVACUATION.</li> <li>Students are advised to check Travel Warnings for destinations</li> <li>Students are advised to register with the EMBASSY of their home country.</li> <li>On-campus clinic</li> <li>Nearby Hospital</li> <li>24-hr campus emergency/security line</li> <li>Insurance with medical/illness/accident coverage is a requirement before coming</li> </ul>
	 <small>Teung Kwan O Hospital</small>	

Topic	Risk	Solutions
<b>Student conduct</b> 	<b>Student misconduct</b>  <small>Exchange handbook</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reminders at Orientation and in EXCHANGE HANDBOOK</li> <li>Students are strictly reminded to be responsible for their conduct and are subject to HK laws</li> <li>Misconduct may lead to appropriate disciplinary actions</li> </ul>
<b>Negligence</b> 	<b>Harmful acts resulting in legal liability to 3<sup>rd</sup> party</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The required insurance plan also has coverage PERSONAL LIABILITY of up to HK\$1.5 million</li> </ul>

Topic	Risk	Solutions
<b>Adaptation</b>   	<b>Culture shock &amp; adjustment</b>   	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing preparation/orientation activities</li> <li>Buddy program</li> <li>Airport reception</li> <li>Local tours</li> <li>Orientation program</li> <li>Activities throughout semester (i.e. hiking, dinners etc.)</li> <li>Providing more western 'hang-out' places on campus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uni-bar</li> <li>McDonald</li> <li>Coffee shop</li> <li>Bistro</li> </ul> </li> <li>Family program</li> <li>SAO counselors are also available for counseling</li> </ul>

Topic	Risk	Solutions
<b>Integration</b>   <small>Culture Fiesta</small> <small>Exchange fair</small>	<b>Segregation amongst local and international students</b>  <small>Tablet shown by MAUTY</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing more interactive activities with local students</li> <li>One-on-one buddy program</li> <li>Full-day orientation tour with 100+ local buddies</li> <li>Participation in on-campus exchange fairs to promote to local students</li> </ul>
<b>Language barrier</b>	<b>Communication problem</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize English conversational workshops for international &amp; local students to converse</li> <li>Non-Chinese students can take LANG 11.3/11.4 to learn Putonghua</li> </ul>

Topic	Risk	Solutions
<b>Courses</b>	<p><b>Not getting enrollment in transferrable courses</b></p>  <p><b>Unsatisfactory academic performance</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide course offering list with detailed outlines well in advance to students to get approval from their home institutions</li> <li>Facilitating course registration with students &amp; professors</li> <li>Student applications are screened to ensure they are able to cope with HKUST academic workload and activities. Those with low grades will be given <i>conditional acceptance</i>.</li> <li>Add / drop period for students to change courses to suit their requirements</li> </ul>

Topic	Risk	Solutions
<b>Financial Difficulties</b>	<p><b>Not enough money</b></p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some organizations / donors have provided scholarship &amp; awards in the past for exchange students, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Council</li> <li>Ringo Scholarship</li> <li>Cheung Kong Scholarship</li> <li>UBC Scholarship, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Conclusion

- Risks in international exchange stem from the convergence of people of different backgrounds, expectations and behavior
- Understanding these differences are crucial
- By identifying clear roles for each involved party and cooperating, universities can avoid or reduce risks in international exchange