

**The University of Hong Kong**

**Faculty of Arts**

**Advisory Handbook for**

**BA Students**

**2017-18**



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## Welcome to the BA Programme!

Our undergraduate curriculum reflects the values of scholarship, creativity, cultural diversity and critical dialog that the Faculty of Arts cherishes. It offers 22 major programmes and 30 minor programmes and brings together a large and international learning community in the Faculty's four Schools of Chinese, English, Humanities, and Modern Languages and Cultures, the Centre for Applied English Studies and the Centre of Buddhist Studies.

If you are new to the Faculty, you may be overwhelmed by the broad spectrum of courses that you can choose from and the diverse learning opportunities that you can take advantage of. The first year allows you to explore the offers of the different Schools and to adapt to the academic learning environment and campus life, before declaring the specialization you will pursue beyond your first year.

Our teachers and the Faculty as a whole strive to make your learning experience challenging, rewarding and enjoyable and to assist you in the formation and pursuit of your academic, personal and career goals. You will find comprehensive information on the structure and content of the curriculum and the facilities and services of the Faculty on our website: <http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/BA>. This advisory handbook is designed to assist you in making the most of your learning experience and choices. Above all, it is intended as a guide to the sources of information and advice that you can call on to meet the challenges of the BA curriculum.

It is hoped that you will find it useful and wish you a successful and fulfilling academic life at HKU.

Faculty of Arts

### 1. Mission Statement

Academic advising provided by the Faculty of Arts aims to help students

- take responsibility for their studies and make the most of their educational opportunities
- set sound academic, career, and personal goals and develop strategies to achieve them
- graduate in a timely manner while complying with relevant regulations and requirements
- find ways to overcome difficulties, both academic and non-academic.

## 2. Advisory Services Provided by the Faculty of Arts

### Why Academic Advising?

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) curriculum consists of a flexible course of studies that is designed to offer you a maximum of choice in courses in the arts, humanities, and languages, while developing your abilities in

- critical intellectual enquiry and life-long learning
- tackling novel situations and ill-defined problems
- critical self-reflection and greater understanding of others
- intercultural understanding and global awareness
- communication and collaboration
- leadership and advocacy for the improvement of the human condition.

In order to successfully develop these capabilities, you have to do more than simply follow models or instructions but must take responsibility for your own learning, i.e. for the attitudes, choices and actions that to a large extent influence the outcome of your studies. For this, you need to recognize the importance of good advice to realistic planning and successful decision-making and learn to make judicious use of the various sources of advice at your disposal. This handbook is intended to introduce you to the advisory services offered by the Faculty of Arts to assist you in planning your studies and making the best choices as you proceed through the curriculum.

### Advisory Services

Academic advising provided by the Faculty of Arts consists of the following four categories:

- **Information** about curriculum content, requirements, and opportunities in order to assist your full integration and participation in the university learning environment
- **Orientation** to allow you to identify your academic interests and strengths and choose the subjects you want to focus on
- **Guidance** in your setting of academic, career and personal goals and adopting a suitable study plan to achieve them
- **Support** in overcoming difficulties and resolving problems that affect your academic progress.

### Two Main Sources of Advisory Services

The Faculty's advisory system offers printed and web-based information and personal consultations that you can rely on to answer your needs for information, orientation, guidance and support. To make the best use of the advisory system, you should draw on both of these components, beginning by consulting the information system and contacting teachers or office staff once you have gathered the information relevant to your situation.

## Advisory Information

In addition to this handbook, your main source of information regarding all aspects of the BA curriculum is the Faculty's website <http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/BA>. It offers detailed information about the courses you can study and their requirements, the regulations you have to follow, the system of assessment, and opportunities to gain scholarships and study abroad. It also includes links to School/Centre websites as well as information and support services in the University.

The **BA Regulations and Syllabuses** are indispensable to your successful planning of your studies. They are available online at the above-mentioned website. In addition, the Faculty also publishes a set of **guidance notes** on course selection at the beginning of the academic year, which are accessible online and were sent in print to all first-year students.

The four Schools, the Centre for Applied English Studies and the Centre of Buddhist Studies of the Faculty of Arts maintain their own **websites with information** on majors/minors and detailed course descriptions and may also publish yearly **handbooks** with information about major/minor requirements and current course offerings.

## Advising in Person

The consultation of available information will in most cases be sufficient for you to know **how** to do what you want or have to do. But in situations where you have to decide **what best** to do, this will only be the first step and you will also need to know **whom to talk to** in order to discuss your options. The following are the most important personal contacts in the Faculty who are available to answer various needs for advice.

- **Academic Advisers and Teachers:** You will be assigned an academic adviser after registering with HKU and will meet with your adviser once every semester in your first year of study. Your adviser can advise you in the development of your academic interests and study goals and plans (questions about helpful study behaviour, choice and combination of majors and minors, selection and combination of courses, further studies). Your teachers can also advise you on how to deal with difficulties that you encounter while studying a particular course. It's best to make an appointment by email.
- **Undergraduate Coordinators or Programme Directors** are teachers who oversee teaching and student matters in a subject you can study as a major or minor. Like all teachers, they can advise you on questions related to your academic interests and study goals and plans. In addition, they can advise you on the choices you have in fulfilling the requirements of a major or minor. And if you plan to go on exchange studies and transfer credits back to HKU, you should consult any of them of the relevant programme(s) about the courses you intend to take on exchange before you leave. See

the list of Undergraduate Coordinators or Programme Directors in Section 7 of this handbook.

- **School and Centre Office staff** can advise you on questions relating to regulations and syllabuses, especially regarding the requirements of specific majors and minors and exemption from compulsory courses. See the list of offices of the Faculty in Section 7 of this handbook.
- **Faculty Office staff** can advise you on all matters related to the BA Regulations and course selection, especially questions regarding leave of absence, study load, changes to enrolments, credit transfer and graduation requirements. The Faculty Office will also be able to advise you when your studies are affected by unexpected circumstances such as ill health. The Faculty Office is located in Room 405, 4/F, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus (tel. 3917 8977; email: [arts@hku.hk](mailto:arts@hku.hk)).
- **Committees for communication between teachers and students:** The Faculty always treasures students' feedback through communication. There are various Committees which regularly meet student representatives each year.

#### Faculty level

Joint Consultative Committee

- (i) Associate Dean (Undergraduate) (Chairman);
- (ii) 3 members of the teaching staff of the Faculty of Arts, appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Arts;
- (iii) Student members on the Board of the Faculty of Arts; and
- (iv) A member from each of the related student associations appointed by the associations, and the Arts Association.

#### Programme level

Staff-Student Consultative Committees

- (i) Head of the School/Centre/Department/programme;
- (ii) Teaching staff of the School/Centre/Department/programme; and
- (iii) Members of the relevant student association.

**Note:** You benefit most from the advice that teachers and office staff can give you if you meet them well prepared. Therefore, make sure you consult the information available online and in print before making an appointment to discuss your plans or concerns.

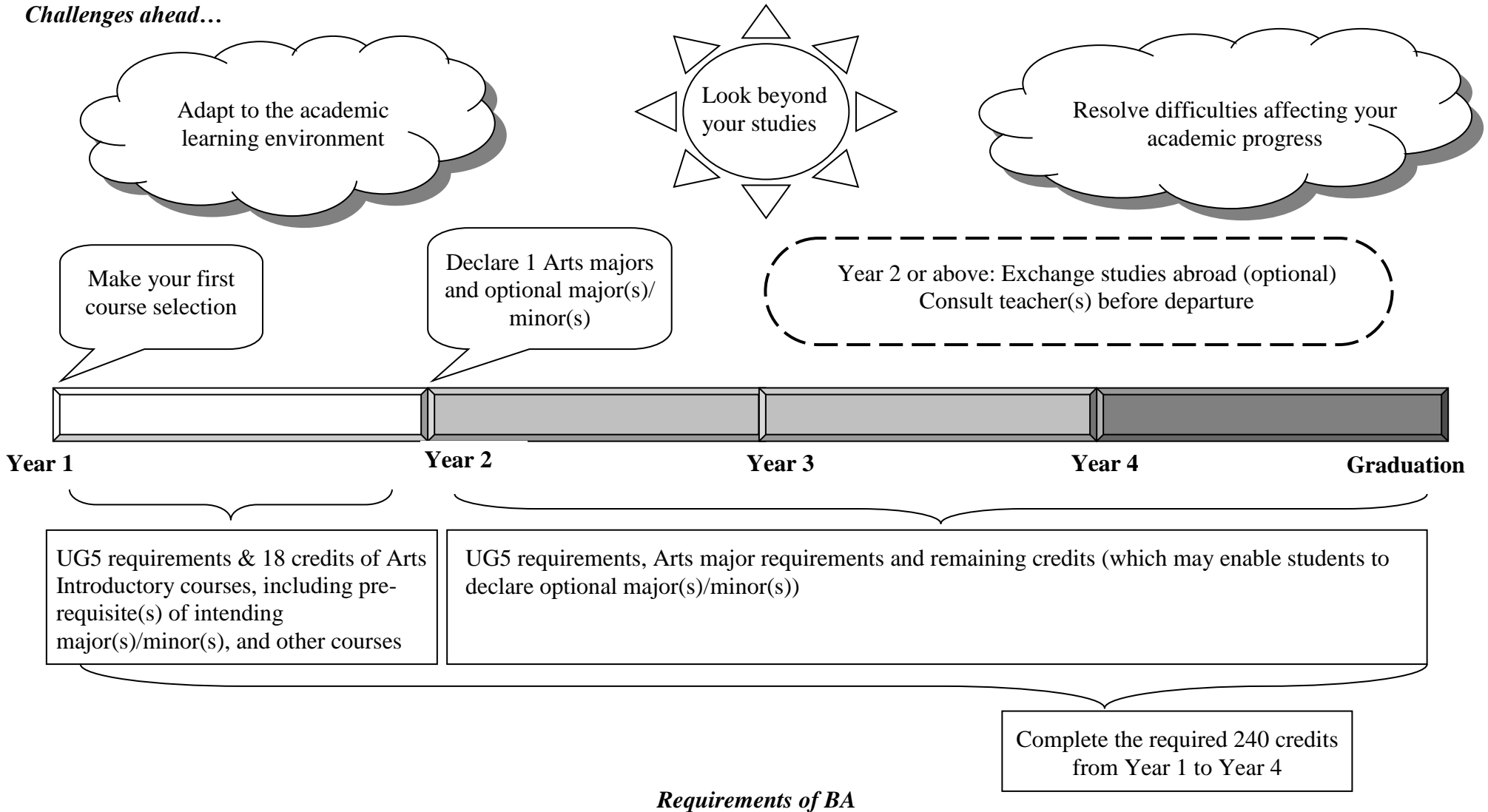
#### What about Peer Advice?

Your classmates and senior students can be a valuable source of advice as they can share their experience and help you consider options from different perspectives. Senior students may be more familiar with the curriculum and its requirements and opportunities and therefore able to answer some of your questions. But remember, your peers' advice may be based on a narrower interpretation of available information and you should not assume your peers' personal experience will be identical to yours. There have been several changes in the curriculum and their experience may not be up-to-date. Be cautious and double-check any inconsistent information by asking the staff at the Faculty Office.

### 3. BA Studies at a Glance

#### Timeline for degree completion

#### Challenges ahead...





## 4. Six Challenges that a BA Student Will Face

### 4.1 Making Your First Course Selection

You have been waiting a long time for this: at last you are in charge of your own timetable; no one tells you what courses you have to take and when. Well, it is not quite 100% up to you – you do have to follow some rules. But still, the freedom you have in choosing the courses you want to take is likely to be a new experience when you enter the BA curriculum from secondary school. And with so many courses to choose from, you may almost find yourself wishing someone would tell you what to do...

#### **What to do?**

- *Understand the rules.* There are certain courses you must take in your first year and certain requirements you must observe when you select your courses. Some of these rules are set by the University, some by the Faculty, and some by individual majors/minors. It is best to find out about these rules as soon as possible – for instance on the BA Programme website (<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/BA>) – so that you can begin to focus on the choices that stimulate your interest.
- *Consider your options.* Browse the list of introductory courses on the BA Programme website and check out the profiles of the different majors you can choose. Do you want to stick to what seems familiar or try out something new? When selecting your courses, think about what you may want to choose as a major and find out which prerequisite courses you have to take in the first year in order to declare this major later. But take the time to look around as well: there is a lot on offer that is worth discovering.
- *Don't let the system think for you.* You have to make your course selection online and the system, SIS, is designed to alert you to possible time clashes and prerequisite requirements you need to comply with, but it does not think for you. You are advised to read through the SIS Project website for guidelines on course selection:  
[http://inraweb.hku.hk/reserved\\_1/sis\\_student/sis/SIS-reference-materials.html](http://inraweb.hku.hk/reserved_1/sis_student/sis/SIS-reference-materials.html)  
Picking courses online may feel like shopping but it is actually more like signing up for a job: you will have to earn all the credits you pick. And for various reasons, you may not get all the jobs you want to take up. If that happens, SIS cannot help you and you need to talk to a person.
- *You can change your mind* but have to follow the rules. You have to select courses for the whole year at the beginning of the academic year, but you can modify your course selection for any semester during the add/drop period. This means that you can change your selection for the second semester during the add/drop period of the second semester (but you cannot drop a full-year course after the first semester).

## Whom to talk to?

- *Academic Advisers* can help you identify your academic interests and refer you to other relevant people for other advice. Please refer to the “Student’s Guide to the Adviser/Advisee Functions in SIS” via the link: [http://intraweb.hku.hk/reserved\\_1/sis\\_student/sis/SIS-reference-materials.html](http://intraweb.hku.hk/reserved_1/sis_student/sis/SIS-reference-materials.html)
- *Teachers* can answer your questions about individual courses and may be able to help you resolve some time clashes in class groups.
- *Undergraduate Coordinators/Programme Directors* can give you advice on the combination of courses and on planning ahead.
- *School/Centre Office staff* can advise you on prerequisites and major requirements and possible exemptions. They may also be able to help you resolve conflicts in your online course selection.
- *Faculty Office staff* can advise you on how to meet graduation requirements and how to prioritize various requirements.
- *Senior students* can share their experience and give you tips on what to do and what to avoid, but make sure that the advice you follow does not contradict information provided by the Faculty or Schools/Centres.

## Where to look?

- The website (<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/BA>) on the BA Programme offers detailed information on the curriculum and online copies of the BA regulations and syllabuses as well as links to Schools/Centre websites, where you will find up-to-date descriptions of courses offered.

## 4.2 Adapting to the Academic Learning Environment

Students often describe the transition from secondary school to university as more of a leap than a step — from relatively passive assimilation of knowledge to more active learning, from learning the right answers to recognizing diverse perspectives, from following instructions to identifying your own interests, from learning in class to developing independently. The difference of the university learning environment presents a challenge, but it does not mean that secondary school did not prepare you well. The challenge relates more to your learning attitude than your abilities.

### **What to do?**

- *Make a study plan and follow it.* Compared to secondary school, your timetable at university may seem light. As a full-time student, you may be attending classes for only about 15 to 20 hours per week. However, this means that you are expected to spend at least the same amount of time and often twice that amount of time on independent reading and study. Your weekly planner should therefore not only include the hours of your classes but also the hours you have set aside to read and to work on each of your courses.
- *Set yourself goals.* In many of your courses, you will not have regular homework but will have to complete a small number of assignments that will be graded. Your grade will depend on what you are able to make of your assignments, so it is important that you plan ahead, begin to work on your assignments early and think about how to use and build on what you learn in class and self-study.
- *Take the first step.* It is important that you take an active interest in your studies and direct your own learning. Your teachers may not always tell you what to do but expect you to be proactive in responding to opportunities for learning and asking questions. Do not rely only on handouts, but keep files or notebooks for your weekly classes and reading notes to develop assignments and reflect on feedback from teachers.
- *Participate.* Make use of opportunities to learn with others. Prepare yourself for participation in class and tutorial discussions. Contribute to or initiate email or online discussions for your courses. Forming a reading group with others to plan and discuss your reading over a semester may help you manage your workload and profit more from it.
- *Integrate.* Look for opportunities to broaden your academic learning experience by participating in the university community, joining a student society, club or activity or participating in events. Balancing your academic studies with other aspects of your student life is a key to maintaining high motivation and allows you to make the most of your learning experience.

### **Whom to talk to?**

- Your *academic adviser* will be willing to advise on how to adapt to the university life and perceive BA curriculum as a whole.

- Your *teachers* will be happy to see your interest in learning. So do not hesitate to approach them to discuss your observations, readings, assignments, or how to learn more. You should not expect your teachers to simply tell you what to think and say, but you can expect them to assist and encourage you in your learning and to give you feedback on your progress.
- Your *classmates* can not only help you when you have missed a class but can also be your learning partners. Meeting regularly to discuss readings, class discussions and assignments can help you keep up with the workload and make the most of your assignments.
- *CEDARS* (the Centre of Development and Resources for Students) can advise you on how to manage your time, learn well, and cope with a heavy study load. Visit the Centre or its website for more tips on adjusting successfully to university life.

### **Where to look?**

- Course materials and websites not only include important information about assignments and deadlines but also serve as a guide to resources for further study.
- The website of CEDARS (<http://cedars.hku.hk/>) offers you a guide to campus life, services and activities, study skills, time management and adjustment to the academic environment.

### 4.3 Declaring Majors and Minors

Having explored the options in your first year, you will have to decide on the specialization you are interested in pursuing in your second to fourth years of study: you have to declare at least one Arts major, which requires at least 72 – 78 credits in total. For the remaining credits required by the BA degree, you are free to choose additional major(s) and/or minor(s) or simply a combination of courses according to your interests and goals. You are looking at dozens of Arts and non-Arts majors and minors to choose from. Obviously, your course selection in the first year will have narrowed down your choice a little, but you are likely to have taken the prerequisite courses for more majors than you can declare. Perhaps you have always known what you want, or perhaps you are tempted by various subjects and are not sure how to decide.

#### **What to do?**

- *Learn about the subjects that interest you.* In addition to taking the relevant prerequisite courses in the first year, take the time to browse the curricula of the various majors in the syllabuses and on the web. Look at course descriptions and try to understand what the different majors require and what they offer.
- *Clarify your interests and plan ahead.* Think about what you want from your studies, academically, personally and professionally, and how different majors fit into your aspirations. Make a list of the courses you would want to take in your second to fourth years and consider whether and how they match the requirements of particular majors. Defining your interests in relation to the courses on offer one of the keys to success because it will allow you to set yourself goals and strengthen your motivation to study.
- *Assess your strengths and limitations.* Test your aptitude for the majors that interest you by taking the relevant introductory courses, some of which may be prerequisites. Find out whether you enjoy the study activities involved and how you respond to the learning challenges the courses pose and whether you are satisfied with the results you achieve. You may want to discuss your self-assessment and interests with teachers of your introductory courses. If at the end of the first year you find that you want to study a major for which you have not yet taken the necessary prerequisite, you need to apply to take the relevant course in your second year.
- *Know the rules and follow them.* Find out about prerequisites and other requirements of the majors that attract you from your first semester and plan your course selection accordingly. You can change your selection at the beginning of every semester during the designated add/drop period but not later. At the beginning of the second year of study you have to declare your major(s) and any minor(s) on SIS. You can change your declared major(s)/minor(s) during the course selection period in subsequent semesters but will have to ensure that you have fulfilled the necessary prerequisites and can complete the required credits in the remaining period of study. Finally, you need to indicate your course selection for

major(s)/minor(s) after the add/drop period from your third semester onwards.

### **Whom to talk to?**

- *Teachers of introductory courses* can advise you on the expectations of various majors and how best to prepare yourself for a certain major.
- *Academic Advisers and Undergraduate Coordinators/Programme Directors* can give you advice in the development of your academic interests and goals and the formation of a study plan. But you may of course also discuss this with the teacher of any course that captures your interest.
- *School/Centre office staff* can advise you on prerequisites and the curricular requirements of different majors and minors and how to fulfil them.
- *Faculty Office staff* can advise you in situations that require special requests, for instance you may need to apply for taking an introductory course in a later year.

### **Where to look?**

- The website (<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/BA>) on the BA Programme offers a brief description, an overview of the curriculum structure and information on the prerequisites of each Arts major as well as links to Arts School websites, where you can get more detailed information on the course offerings and learning opportunities available.
- BA regulations and syllabuses include detailed information on the curriculum requirements of every Arts major and minor you may choose.
- All Schools in the Arts Faculty maintain websites and some produce handbooks with information on the requirements of the majors and minors they offer, the opportunities for experiential learning (field trips, workshops, studying abroad, internships) and awards they present, and up-to-date lists of the courses offered every academic year. Application forms for special requests are available on the website on the BA Programme and have to be submitted to the Faculty Office.

#### 4.4 Studying Abroad

If you are looking for ways to enrich your learning experience, to widen your horizon and to enhance your graduate profile, you should strongly consider taking advantage of one of the many opportunities to study abroad. HKU has over 300 partner institutions in more than 30 countries. There are three levels of exchange opportunities for a semester, a year or during summer:

1. University-level exchange: HKU Worldwide Exchange Programme is administered by the International Affairs Office (IAO) Website: <http://www.als.hku.hk/admission/exchange/outgoing>
2. Faculty-level exchange: Arts Faculty Exchange Programme Website: <http://arts.hku.hk/teaching-and-learning/student-exchange-programmes>
3. Programme-level exchange: For instance, if you are studying in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, you can also participate in summer programmes organized for students studying various languages. Some courses even incorporate a short period of overseas fieldtrip or internship as part of learning and assessment.

Studying abroad is an exciting and life-changing (ad)venture, but it is also a test of your capability to adapt to another culture and environment and therefore worth some preparation, especially if you intend to transfer credits back to HKU. Scholarships or subsidies are awarded to selected candidates.

#### **What to do?**

- *Explore the opportunities available.* Visit the IAO and its websites for information on the countries and universities you may visit. Find out about course offerings, semester dates and other aspects of student life at different host universities. Ask your School about any study abroad opportunities that they may offer and their selection criteria. The Faculty Office will announce details of the Arts Faculty Exchange Programme in November each year.
- *Consider your priorities and preparedness.* What is your motivation to go abroad? Are you looking for an opportunity to improve your language skills, a cultural experience or an academic challenge? Assess your preparedness for a stay abroad and how long you want to go away and consider how the exchange stay will fit into your study plan. It is a good idea to discuss your plans and expectations with some of your teachers, most of whom have extensive international experience.
- *Know the rules and follow them.* You have to observe the application procedures and deadlines as specified by the IAO or the Faculty (including applying for a scholarship for exchange).
- *Apply for leave of absence:* After you have been formally admitted by the host institution, remember to apply for leave of absence (with the relevant supporting documents) via the Faculty Office (form available on the BA website).
- *Apply for credit transfer:* Go through the Faculty's policy on credit transfer in details and note the Faculty's guidelines on application for credit transfer for exchange studies. This information is available at

<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/experiential-learning/credit-transfer>

### **Whom to talk to?**

- *Office staff at the IAO and the Faculty* can advise you on the application procedures, fulfilment of requirements, and related arrangements (student visa, insurance, overseas accommodation, application for scholarship, etc.).
- *Undergraduate Coordinators/Programme Directors* can give you advice on the transferability of courses offered by the host institution and on the compatibility of your study plan with the requirements for your declared major/minor. Talk to the relevant coordinators before you go on leave and contact them by email while you are abroad, if necessary.
- *Senior students* can share with you their study abroad experience and things to be aware of during your period of exchange.

### **Where to look?**

- The website of the IAO at <http://www.als.hku.hk/admission/exchange/outgoing> offers information on the exchange opportunities available, application procedures and requirements.
- Arts Faculty Exchange Programme: <http://arts.hku.hk/teaching-and-learning/student-exchange-programmes>
- The School of Modern Languages and Cultures offers information on study abroad programmes on its website at <http://www.smlc.hku.hk/study/>.
- You should also consult the websites of potential host institutions to learn more about the learning environment and the courses you are interested in.
- The website on the BA programme at <http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/experiential-learning/credit-transfer> provides information on the Faculty policy on credit transfer and the forms for application for credit transfer and leave of absence for download.



#### 4.5 Resolving Difficulties that Affect Your Academic Progress

Studying at university is naturally challenging because its main purpose is to stretch and sharpen your intellectual, critical and expressive capabilities. It is also challenging because you are responsible for your own learning and are given a lot of freedom and opportunities in your student life. The challenge is largely a matter of balance and problems tend to arise from overloading, poor time management or unrealistic study plans that fail to take into account non-academic activities. No student can avoid the pressure of deadlines that tend to come in clusters at certain periods of the semester, so this is something you must prepare for. However, occasionally you may face additional pressure, for instance from a family situation or poor health, that threatens to push you off-balance. No matter what difficulty you may encounter, it is not likely to go away if you ignore it or withdraw from it, so it is best to look for ways to deal with it and make use of the support that the university can offer you.

##### **Academic standard and discontinuation of studies**

Students with poor academic results may face discontinuation. Students shall be recommended for discontinuation of their studies if they have:

- ❖ failed to complete successfully 36 or more credits in two consecutive semesters (not including the summer semester), except where they are not required to take such a number of credits in the two given semesters; or
- ❖ failed to achieve an average Semester GPA of 1.0 or higher [out of 4.3] for two consecutive semesters (not including the summer semester); or
- ❖ exceeded the maximum period of registration (i.e. 6 years) without the approval of the Board of the Faculty.

**(Reference: BA Regulations, provision A13)**

##### **What to do?**

- *Be prepared and prioritize.* Prepare yourself for challenges ahead by identifying in advance the tasks you have to complete and planning your time accordingly. Make a realistic study plan, prioritizing your studies but taking into account other activities and commitments (in campus life, part-time job, time with family and friends) that you intend to undertake. Try to maintain a steady pace in your study activities rather than relying on night-shifts before deadlines. A proactive attitude and balanced working style can prevent occasional difficulties from snowballing into major problems and prepare you better to respond to unexpected situations.

- *Address difficulties as learning opportunities.* Recognize difficult tasks, questions and topics in your courses as the areas where you can learn most and set your personal study goals in relation to such challenges. Discuss questions and ways of addressing the difficulties of individual courses with your teachers.
- *Tackle problems as they arise.* Notice when you seem to lose motivation, are avoiding your studies, or feel you cannot concentrate, which are signs that you need to reassess your study plan. Try to focus your interest and adjust your working style, but if the difficulties persist, talk to your teachers and classmates about how to stay on track. When other commitments or emergencies begin to encroach on your studies, respond promptly and talk to your teachers to avoid falling behind.
- *Make use of available support.* Problems tend to get bigger if you withdraw from them, whereas if you address them, you may begin to see them as a set of distinct but manageable challenges. It is important to remember that as a student you belong to a community and that there are people in your School, in the Faculty, and in the university, who can help you make sense of difficulties and advise you on how to overcome them. Seeking advice is the most sensible thing to do when you do not know how to solve a problem.

### **Whom to talk to?**

- Your *academic adviser* can advise you on how to cope with the changes in university and they can refer you to other relevant office(s) for assistance.
- Your *teachers* care about your progress and are concerned if you do not come to class or do not submit your coursework. They can advise you on how to catch up with a particular course or completing an assignment. Do not wait for them to contact you but consult them early if you find it difficult to keep up with the course or have trouble meeting deadlines.
- *Faculty Office staff* can advise you on how to deal with personal or medical problems that affect your studies. They can help you get in touch with support services in the university and make an application for temporary leave of absence if your difficulties prevent you from attending classes. Make sure to approach the Faculty Office early because you cannot expect your leave application to be approved retrospectively.
- *CEDARS* can advise you on applying for financial assistance, how to develop good time management skills and deal with study-related stress. Professional counsellors at CEDARS can help you handle personal and family difficulties.
- When you are feeling unwell or are unable to attend classes or an examination because of illness, consult the *University Health Service*.
- Your *peers and family members* can offer emotional support and encouragement during your difficult times.

## Where to look?

- The counselling service of CEDARS can be found at <http://wp.cedars.hku.hk/web/cope/>.
- The website of the University Health Service is at <http://www.uhs.hku.hk/>. You can book an appointment via HKU Portal or by telephone: 2549 4686.

## 4.6 Looking Beyond Your Studies

The best preparation for your future career is a good degree. It is important that you give priority to your studies over other things. However, four years pass quickly and once you have adjusted to university life, you do well to consider how to make the most of the opportunities of student life and how your choices as a student can influence your options as a graduate. Apart from the necessary qualification for further studies or good employment prospects, your studies offer you opportunities to explore your fields of interest, to get to know your strengths and hone your skills, to learn about different career paths, and to become acquainted with the community of alumni to which you will soon belong.

## What to do?

- *Keep an open mind.* Get to know what motivates you - apart from your GPA. Make use of the opportunities to extend your knowledge and nourish your interests that your courses offer. Define your goals in relation to the courses you choose and ask yourself why they matter to you. Look for opportunities to engage with the relevance of what you study not only in the classroom (in discussions and assignments) but also outside the classroom in the community. Consider your learning and development in the context of your whole university life and think about how extracurricular activities and opportunities during the summer break fit into your longer-term plan.
- *Try to find out whether you are interested in postgraduate studies* by looking for opportunities to develop research questions and experience the kind of work involved in research. Choose courses with assignments that involve research tasks and projects and find out whether you enjoy analysing issues and texts and reading critical literature. Attend seminars organized in the areas of your interests and discuss your interests with your teachers.
- *Learn about job and career expectations* by making use of opportunities for career exposure, meetings with alumni, participation in mentorship schemes, internships, and summer programmes. Discuss your career goals and plans with your teachers and make use of the career advice provided by CEDARS.
- *Prepare in time.* Do not wait until the last semester but begin to look ahead early, so that you can make use of the summer months for your plans. If you are interested in postgraduate studies, inform yourself about options

and requirements as early as the middle of your second year of study because preparing an application will take time and must be coordinated with your normal study load. Here too, the key to success is balance and you can best pursue your aspirations by managing your time well.

### Whom to talk to?

- Consult *your teachers* to discuss your interests when working on essays and term papers. Knowing your strengths, limitations and interests, they can advise you on how to hone your skills and prepare for postgraduate studies.
- Ask the *Undergraduate Coordinator(s)/Programme Director(s)* of your major(s) about opportunities for internships, summer programmes, and opportunities for research training.
- The *Faculty and School/Centre Offices* can give you information on career talks, outreach events, and mentorship programmes. Consult the Development and Alumni Affairs Office (DAAO) of the University on the HKU Mentorship programme.
- Attend the *Arts Distinguished Alumni Lecture*, hosted by the Faculty at the beginning of the academic year, and *talks by alumni* organized by the student societies of the Arts Faculty, which will broaden your vision of the value of your studies and what you can achieve after graduation.
- Contact the *Careers and Placement Centre* at CEDARS for advice on how to optimize your career options.

### Where to look?

- The Faculty's website (<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/postgraduate>) includes a guide to the postgraduate programmes of the Faculty of Arts at HKU.
- The website of the Graduate School at HKU (<http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/>) gives information about the MA, MPhil and PhD programmes at HKU, postgraduate studentships, and how to apply for admission.
- The website of the Careers and Placement Centre of CEDARS at <http://www.cedars.hku.hk/sections/careersplacement/> provides information about career planning and preparation.
- The website of the Development and Alumni Affairs Office (<http://www.alumni.hku.hk/>) provides information about alumni services and activities, mentorship and alumni groups.
- Visit the website of the HKU Arts Alumni Association ([www.alumni.hku.hk/hkuaaa/](http://www.alumni.hku.hk/hkuaaa/)) to find out about its mission and activities and how to become a member yourself.
- Information on postgraduate opportunities worldwide (<http://www.internationalgraduate.net/>).
- For more information and tips about postgraduate studies and career options, see also this UK website, Graduate Prospects (<http://www.prospects.ac.uk>).

## **5. Student Responsibilities**

Academic advising offered by the Faculty of Arts will help you meet the challenges of your studies, take advantage of opportunities and avoid mistakes, but it is your responsibility to seek advice and follow it. If you adopt the following good practices, you will benefit most from the Faculty's advisory services:

- Inform yourself about policies, procedures, important dates and requirements and follow them in your course selection and other academic activities.
- Make full use of available information (regulations and syllabuses, handbooks, websites).
- Contact your academic adviser, your teachers, the Faculty or School Office staff when you need advice, keep appointments and come well-prepared to meetings.
- Keep abreast of your academic progress and seek advice proactively when you encounter difficulties or are uncertain what to do.
- Keep your contact details in your student record up-to-date and maintain your university email account so you can receive important messages that require your attention.
- Check your university email box regularly, read and respond promptly to messages sent to you by your academic adviser, your teachers or by Faculty or School Offices.

## 6. Plagiarism (剽竊) – A Disciplinary Offence

Plagiarism is defined as the **unacknowledged** use, as one's own, of work of another person, whether or not such work has been published.

Plagiarism is **strictly prohibited** in all assignments and examinations. Students are reminded to use proper citations and provide sources if necessary.

### Useful links

- ❑ Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) provides excellent guidelines on research and citations:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>
- ❑ HKU, "What is Plagiarism?" <http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/>
- ❑ Faculty of Arts of HKU, "Assessment and Plagiarism",  
<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism>

**The University takes plagiarism very seriously and any student who commits the offence is liable to DISCIPLINARY ACTION.**

## 7. Contact and Resources

### Faculty, School and Centre Offices

Office	Location (Centennial Campus)	Email and Phone No.	Website
Faculty of Arts	Room 405, Run Run Shaw Tower	<a href="mailto:arts@hku.hk">arts@hku.hk</a> tel: 3917 8977	<a href="http://arts.hku.hk">http://arts.hku.hk</a>
School of Chinese	Room 801, Run Run Shaw Tower	<a href="mailto:chinese@hku.hk">chinese@hku.hk</a> tel: 3917 1199	<a href="http://web.chinese.hku.hk">http://web.chinese.hku.hk</a>
School of English	Room 735, Run Run Shaw Tower	<a href="mailto:english@hku.hk">english@hku.hk</a> tel: 3917 2749	<a href="http://www.english.hku.hk">http://www.english.hku.hk</a>
School of Humanities	Room 901, Run Run Shaw Tower	<a href="mailto:scohug@hku.hk">scohug@hku.hk</a> tel: 3917 8276	<a href="http://www.soh.hku.hk">http://www.soh.hku.hk</a>
School of Modern Languages and Cultures	Room 501, Run Run Shaw Tower	<a href="mailto:smlc@hku.hk">smlc@hku.hk</a> tel: 3917 2000	<a href="http://www.smlc.hku.hk">http://www.smlc.hku.hk</a>
Centre for Applied English Studies	Room 660, Run Run Shaw Tower	<a href="mailto:caes@hku.hk">caes@hku.hk</a> tel: 3917 2004	<a href="http://caes.hku.hk">http://caes.hku.hk</a>
Centre of Buddhist Studies	Room 415, Jockey Club Tower	<a href="mailto:buddhism@hku.hk">buddhism@hku.hk</a> tel: 3917 5019	<a href="http://www.buddhism.hku.hk">http://www.buddhism.hku.hk</a>

### Undergraduate Coordinators/ Programme Directors

Please refer to the Faculty's website at <http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/BA/UG-coordinators> for the most updated information.

## 8. Important Dates for the Academic Year 2017-18

You are advised to read through the Important Dates for 2017-18 on the Faculty's website at <http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/notices>. This will facilitate your overall planning in course selection.

## 9. Other Useful Websites

### **Exchange Opportunities**

International Affairs Office

<http://www.als.hku.hk/admission/exchange/outgoing>

### **Alumni Connections**

Development and Alumni Affairs Office

<http://www.alumni.hku.hk/>

HKU Arts Alumni Association

<http://www.alumni.hku.hk/hkuaaa/>

### **Student Services and Facilities**

Academic Advising Office

<http://aao.hku.hk/>

Academic Support and Examinations Section,  
the Registry

<http://www.ase.hku.hk/asoffice/>

⇒ applications for testimonial, certification, etc

Centre of Development and Resources for  
Students (CEDARS)

<http://cedars.hku.hk/>

Common Core Curriculum

<http://commoncore.hku.hk/>

HKU Portal

<https://hkuportal.hku.hk/>

⇒ Login to the Student Information System,  
SIS

Information Technology Services

<http://www.its.hku.hk/services/students>

Reference material of SIS

[http://intraweb.hku.hk/reserved\\_1/sis\\_student/sis/SIS-reference-materials.html](http://intraweb.hku.hk/reserved_1/sis_student/sis/SIS-reference-materials.html)

Examinations Office

<http://www.exam.hku.hk/>

General Education Unit

<http://beta.gened.hku.hk/>

Graduate School

<http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/>

Institute of Human Performance

<http://www.ihp.hku.hk/>

Library

<http://lib.hku.hk/>

University Health Service

<http://www.uhs.hku.hk/>