We are delighted to welcome you to Hong Kong, China. This pre-arrival letter is intended to help you settle into your temporary new home! It will be complemented by a full welcome on arrival.

**WELCOME !!**

Hong Kong, known as Asia’s world city, is a magical and unique place with more than 7 million residents from every corner of the globe. Built from an ancient civilization 5000 years old, this modern city cradles a cocktail of cultures, Chinese heritage, and British colonial history.

Positioned at the mouth of the Pearl River Delta on the coast of southern China, the bustling and beautiful Victoria Harbour of Hong Kong has always been the perfect gateway between the east and west. In fact, the name Hong Kong itself can be directly translated to mean ‘fragrant harbour’. Hong Kong is made up of 3 main territories: Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula that forms its northern shores, and the New Territories which stretch all the way to Mainland China. Hong Kong is also home to more than 200 Outlying Islands, including Lantau Island, where Hong Kong International Airport is located.

Being relatively close to the equator, Hong Kong has a sub-tropical climate with distinct seasons: a warm and rainy spring, hot and humid summer, breezy and pleasant autumn, and cool and dry winter. Starting from early June through to the end of August, Hong Kong can get very hot with day time temperatures sometimes reaching 35°C, and the high humidity level can make it feel ever hotter. Night time temperatures remain around 28°C. There are also occasional showers and thunderstorms, so make sure you carry an umbrella with you at all times.

Autumn is always regarded as the best time of the year to visit Hong Kong climate-wise. Through September to November, there are pleasant breezes, plenty of sunshine and comfortable temperatures as humidity drops.

Winter in Hong Kong is cool, dry, and sometimes unpredictable - you may see temperatures fluctuate from 25°C to 12°C in a matter of hours. Temperatures can drop below 10°C in some urban areas. As Hong Kong is generally warm throughout the year, homes and offices are rarely equipped with radiators – so do make sure you pack some thick jumpers to keep yourself warm on these occasional wintry days. Typhoons regularly occur in the city during summer time. Typhoon season begins in May and ends in November. When a typhoon is approaching, warnings are broadcast on television and radio.
>> Dress

In general, the dress code in Hong Kong is relatively casual and relaxed. Most people dress for comfort during the day especially in the summer due to the hot and humid weather. Sandals and flip flops are quite common although not in a business environment. Coats and jackets are rarely worn except for the occasional cold days in winter. However, one thing to note is that nearly all indoor areas of Hong Kong are air-conditioned, so just be sure you carry some light jumpers with you even in summer time to keep you warm under the cool air-blasts.

>> Dress codes – Evenings

You can find both relaxed or smart bars and clubs in Hong Kong depending on which neighbourhood you are in. If you would like to experience a typical nice night out in a smart contemporary restaurant or bar (there are lots with outdoor areas or roof terraces overlooking the Hong Kong skyline), dress to impress!

>> Dress codes – Work

Depending on the sector, work dress codes can vary between relaxed to full suit and tie. In the more conservative industries such as finance or legal, or when you are out meeting clients, people dress fairly conservatively – suit and tie in dark or muted colours would be your best bet. Also remember, in Chinese business culture, colours can have different meanings. Red is considered a lucky colour while white is a traditional symbol for mourning. This is especially important if you are working or meeting with the more traditional Chinese businessmen. As our Hong Kong team works closely with all the companies we partner with, we will be able to advise you about the appropriate work dress code for your internship.

>> ID

You are NOT required to carry your actual passport while you are in Hong Kong. You MUST, however, carry some sort of identification AT ALL TIMES – a copy of your passport or a driver license will do the trick.

>> Money matters

The local currency is the Hong Kong Dollar (HKD), which is pegged to the US Dollar at a rate of about HKD 7.80 to USD 1.00, although exchange rates may fluctuate slightly. Click on below link to see a real time exchange rate between the HKD and USD

http://www.xe.com

>> How much money do you need?

- A casual lunch may cost you around HKD 50 – 100. A nice 3-course dinner in a fancy restaurant may cost you HKD 200 – 300.
- A beer at a bar / restaurant costs HKD 40-80 but only HKD 10-20 if bought from the supermarket.
- A cinema ticket is around HKD 80-100 an adult but you get a discount with a valid student card.
- Most night clubs charge entry fees, and the most fancy places will cost all the way up to HKD 300.
- ATM machines are all around Hong Kong. Most of them allow overseas cash withdrawals. Some banks might require a small amount of charges. You should check with your own bank before coming to Hong Kong.

There are Travelex counters at the airport for currency exchange. Money exchange is also easy to find in the city, especially in Central, Sheung Wan, Tsim Sha Tsui and Mong Kok. Exchange rates vary but are usually higher than at the airport.
Transport & taxis


Hong Kong claims one of the world’s safest, most efficient and reliable public transport systems.

The MTR (Mass Transit Railway) system will take you anywhere you need to go in Hong Kong, plus an inter-city train service to Mainland China. The stations and trains are all clean and easy-to-use. There are maps in every station, as well as a Customer Service Centre staffed by English speakers to provide you with assistance and information. Buses in Hong Kong are plentiful, clean, comfortable, and most are air-conditioned. Fares are based on distance travelled, with MTR fares starting at HKD 4.6 for those with octopus cards and 4.6 with standard tickets. Bus fares start at HKD 3.40.

Another great transport option is minibuses -small buses that carry 16 people. Green minibuses operate along specific routes at fixed prices, while red minibuses operate along flexible routes and passengers can get on and off anywhere along the route. Once they’re full, minibuses won’t stop for a new passenger until someone gets off and a seat becomes available. The ability to speak a bit of Cantonese and having some familiarity with Hong Kong will be a bonus when travelling on minibuses.

Ferries are a fun way to hop between Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the outlying islands. Services are frequent with a single trip between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island costing only HKD 2.50.

Operating since 1904 on Hong Kong Island, trams remain an all-time travel favourite of the locals. A tram ride costs a flat fare of HKD 2.30 regardless of distance travelled. You need to get on the tram at the back and then pay the exact fare at the front when you are getting off.

There are plenty of taxis in Hong Kong and they can be hailed on the street or called in advance. All taxis are metered, air-conditioned, and cheap. There are 3 types of taxi in HK: Red taxis cover Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, Green taxis service the New Territories, and Blue taxis only operate on Lantau Island. Fares for the first 2 kilometers are fixed at HKD22. You are then charged 1.40 (1.60 for red taxis) for every subsequent 200 metres and every 1 minute waiting time.

All public transport (and some taxis) in Hong Kong accept the extremely convenient Octopus Card. This store-value electronic card can also be used for purchases in convenience stores, fast food shops, supermarkets, bakeries, vending machines and more. As part of your programme fee, you will be provided with a pre-topped up Octopus Card that covers your daily commute and normal weekend travel for approximately your first month on the program. You will need to top up the card if you wish to travel outside of your normal commuting routes or use it for personal purchases.
>> Drinking Water
Even though the water itself might be free of contaminants, the plumbing in some parts of the city and buildings is old with unlined galvanised steel pipes that are prone to rusting. We highly recommend drinking boiled water, or the alternative being buy bottled water for around HKD 8-15.

>> What you may not bring to Hong Kong
There are restrictions on all the usual prohibited items such as weapons, dangerous drugs, and meat. Currently, people aged over 18 can bring into Hong Kong 60 cigarettes, or 15 cigars, or 75 grams of rolling tobacco, and one litre of alcoholic liquor. Alcohol or tobacco in excess of the above concession should be declared at point of entry into Hong Kong. One thing to note is that with effect from March 2013, there are straight regulations prohibiting the export of powdered formula from Hong Kong. Although this law only applies to formulas for children under 36 months, be prepared to answer questions if your luggage contains products like protein shakes powder when you are leaving Hong Kong. Gym fanatics, be prepared!

>> Arrival & Contact Information
When you arrive in Hong Kong, you will need to show the immigration authorities your passport and a completed arrival card. The arrival card should be distributed by your airline during your flight or otherwise can be picked up from the Immigration Hall once you have landed. You will need to fill in your address in Hong Kong on the arrival card - please use 19F, Cityplaza Three, 14 14 Taikoo Wan Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong.

>> Airport pickup
You will be picked up by our driver on arrival in Hong Kong. Do not worry if your flights are delayed – we are in constant contact with the airport so this will be taken into account. You will be greeted with your name on a board and driven to your accommodation where a member of our staff will be waiting for you.

PAY ATTENTION
-For local 24/7 emergency support contact +852 62138013
The Official emergency number in Hong Kong is 999
Hong Kong is a unique, magical city where Taoist temples and Edwardian edifices nestle between skyscrapers, where some people trade on international markets and others light incense to bodhisattvas, and where vestiges of Chinese heritage and European colonial history sit side by side. Hong Kong may overwhelm you on your first arrival, but once this first sensory wave has rolled over you, the best advice is to take a deep breath, dive in, swim with the current, and embrace the experience!

>> Safety

Hong Kong is one of the safest cities in the world. It is very well lit at night and there are always cars and people around so it feels very safe. However, as with any big city, be aware of your surroundings and valuables at all times, especially in crowded or heavily touristic areas. In the event of emergency, dial 999 or +852 or +852 62138013 for a TIG member of staff to pick up, from your phone.

>> Housing

The main thing to note about accommodation in Hong Kong is that it is significantly smaller than what you may be used to in your home city. Hong Kong is a very densely populated city and the pressure of housing seven million people in a relatively small space means that the size of apartments and rooms are very small in comparison with other major cities.

Nevertheless, you will be placed in the same kind of accommodation that big corporations place their foreign employees. Housing is located in safe and central locations and no more than 60 minutes commute to your workplace. You will have your own private bedroom and typically be sharing with fellow interns. We can also arrange for you to stay in your own private studio apartment at additional cost. Whether you are sharing or living on your own, please be considerate of your neighbours at all times. You can expect to live in a clean and well-equipped apartment, with all essentials such as basic furniture and bedroom furnishings, as well as a 24 hour phone number for any emergencies related to the accommodation.

Arrival induction & welcome pack

We will pick you up from the airport so look out for the driver holding a signage with your name and flight number on it. The driver has been assigned to take you straight to your accommodation. Please arrive between 12pm-8pm on your program start date (Saturday) to ensure you can be checked in. (This service is not applicable to interns who have arranged their own accommodation in Hong Kong).
>> A quick history lesson

Prior to the arrival of the British, Hong Kong was a small fishing village and a haven for travellers and pirates alike. Following the end of the first Opium War, the Treaty of Nanking ceded the territory to the British in perpetuity. During World War II, Hong Kong was bombed and taken over by Japanese troops. Following Japan’s surrender in 1945, Britain reclaimed the territory.

Taking advantage of its unique geographical location and being a major hub for international trade, the colony developed internal industries with both local and regional resources. The city continued to thrive and grow in terms of its population and economy.

In 1984, Britain and China reached an agreement that Hong Kong would revert back to Chinese authority in 1997.

Under the principle of ‘One Country, Two Systems’, Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People’s Republic of China on 1 July 1997 (which is now also a public holiday in Hong Kong). This arrangement allows the city to enjoy, for the next 50 years (i.e. until 2047), a high degree of autonomy, including retaining its capitalist system, independent judiciary and rule of law, free trade and freedom of speech.

>> Language

Cantonese remains the most widely spoken language in Hong Kong, with 88% of the population speaking this minority dialect of China. Mandarin has however become increasingly popular in recent years after the handover. However, English is still the primary business language. All official signs and public transport announcements, as well as most menus, are bilingual. As a visitor, you can expect to encounter minimal problems communicating in English as most taxi drivers, salespeople, hotel employees and police have reached competent levels of the language. In fact, many locals even pepper their Chinese speech with English words and phrases.

>> Etiquette

Greetings - Handshake is the most common form of greeting in Hong Kong. Hugging and cheek-kissing (even amongst family members) is uncommon and may be considered as overly intimate. When you are introduced to a group of people, greet the most senior member first, whether it is by titles or by age.

Punctuality - The Chinese are great believers in punctuality and to arrive slightly ahead of the appointed time is considered good manners.

Addressing others - Traditionally, Chinese names are pronounced with surname first followed by their given names. A lot of Hong Kong people have also adopted a Western first name such as ‘David’ or ‘Emily’. However, in business situations or when speaking to a client, always use Mr / Miss / Mrs followed by surname.

Dining – Mostly, invitations will be to dine out at a restaurant rather than at the home of the host. When dining out, the host orders the meal, serves the guests and expects to pay. If you are invited to join in a meal with a Chinese family, do not be alarmed when the more senior members of the family start fighting each other to pay the bill! Chopsticks are traditional but cutlery is an option, although the Chinese do have great respect for foreigners who make a serious attempt to use chopsticks.
WHAT YOU CAN FIND IN HONG KONG

1) Culture & Heritage
From centuries-old wall villages to elegant colonial architecture, a pirate-hiding cave to the Peak, there is always a surprise round the corner when you stroll through the city. There is also a museum for everyone, be it history, sciences, tea wares, or even triad rituals!

2) Harbour views
Explore one of the world’s most stunning harbour views with our Hong Kong programme, which includes a dinner cruise down the Victoria Harbour as well as a trip up the 360° viewing platform in the Sky Terrace on the Peak.

3) Events & Festivals
The biggest, brightest, and most important celebration in Hong Kong is the Chinese New Year, which normally falls in the month of February. Other festivals that Chinese people heavily celebrate include the Tuen-Ng festival with colourful dragon boat races, the mid-Autumn festival where glowing lanterns are seen everywhere in the city, as well as the Cheung Chau Bun festival which is deemed one of the world’s ‘Top 10 Quirky Local Festival’.

4) Great outdoors
Because of its geographical locations, Hong Kong is peppered with beaches that are perfect for sunbathers, swimmers, and windsurfers alike. For those who want to take a diversion from those urban excursions, there are lots of beautiful rural areas perfect for hiking within a stone’s throw of the city centre. There are also a number of city parks and nature parks, where you can get glimpses of the city’s more relaxed side.

5) Theme attractions
Hong Kong hosts one of the 5 Disney Lands in the world. The Ocean Park remains a favourite of local people with lots of thrilling rides, giant pandas, and a world-class aquarium. Other famous themed attractions include the Avenue of Stars, Madame Tussauds, and the Ngong Ping 360 cable cars.

>> Eating and drinking
Hong Kong is home to every type of food and cuisine imaginable, at every price range. From delicious street food at late-night markets or dim sum at local restaurants, to high tea at the 5-star Peninsula hotel or seafood banquets at the famous Aberdeen harbour, there is food for everyone! As part of the Hong Kong programme, we will take you to an exquisite dim sum lunch on the peak, as well as a dinner buffet at the world’s longest buffet line in Macau. We also arrange other meals and drinks within our intern community so keep an eye out for these too! We look forward to welcoming you to this Asian gem.
Some useful tips

- **Electricity**: 220 volts AC / 50Hz, UK type wall fixture
- **Time zone**: UTC + 8
- **Country code**: +852

- **Shopping**: There is never a bad time to shop in Hong Kong. Main sales season starts in late December and really gets going in the run-up to Chinese New Year in February. There are also summer sales during July and August. Shops and malls in Hong Kong are all open late until at least 10pm.

- **Phone & Wi-Fi**: There are phone and 3G signals everywhere in Hong Kong even underground. You can also access Wi-Fi for free in many coffee shops as well as some MTR stations.

- **Legal age**: You must be at least 18 years old to buy cigarettes or alcohol. Bring a form of ID with you on a night out as most bars / clubs do check ID on entrance.

- **Weather**: Dial 1878200 and press 3 from any phone for live weather info broadcasted by the HK Observatory in English. Particularly useful during typhoon season.

- **Taxes**: Other than for alcohol and tobacco, there is no VAT/Sales Tax in Hong Kong.