



# The Chinese University of Hong Kong Shaw College Exchange Programmes 2025/26 General Information

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### a. Reasons for Exchange

To go on exchange is to challenge yourself to **see things from a new perspective**, to **rediscover yourself**, your city and your culture from a global stage; and to hopefully, when you return, help end the prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness of the world we live in.

- ✓ Immerse yourself in a foreign culture
- ✓ Expose yourself to a new educational culture at a different university
- ✓ Equip yourself with new academic and interpersonal skills for future career and life
- ✓ Meet new people from different backgrounds
- ✓ Learn how to be more independent
- ✓ Take courses not available at CUHK

#### When should I start planning?

Planning to go on exchange should begin as early as possible. It will take approximately 9 months from the time you start planning, to the time you leave Hong Kong for your exchange destination. To qualify for admission to some exchange programmes and to take full advantage of the experience, you need to achieve certain minimum academic standards and where appropriate, build a foundation in a foreign language. Careful planning will prepare you for your exchange as well as meet the requirements.

#### **\*\*Special Note\*\***

##### **Exchange Before Fulfilling Graduation Requirements**

According to the [Regulations Governing Full-time Undergraduate Studies](#), CUHK students who have satisfied all graduation requirements shall graduate (Regulation 12.1). Students are strongly recommended to plan in advance for their academic studies so as to go on exchange before earning all credit units required for CUHK graduation (i.e. avoid extension of study period for exchange after fulfilling all graduation requirements).

You should check your credit unit requirement and other requirements for graduation and decide how many course units you plan to enroll in each academic term and apply to go on exchange before the course unit requirement is fulfilled. Check [Regulation 5.1 of the Regulations Governing Full-time Undergraduate Studies](#) for course unit requirement of your study.

## **b. Tips for Choosing Exchange Programmes**

### **\*\*Special Note\*\***

- ✓ The finalized list of exchange programmes and associated places might not be available until mid-December 2024 so the current list of exchange programmes and respective admission requirements are for reference only.
- ✓ When applying, you should list your preferred exchange destination(s) in the [Online Application Form \(Part I\)](#). You have to review the most up-to-date exchange programme list and revise your programme choice around mid-December 2024.

Please click [HERE](#) for details of the admission requirements of the exchange programmes. (For reference only)

**\*\*Words in  below refer to columns in the file “Admission Requirements\*\***

### **1) Destinations**

You should read carefully the  and  of the exchange programmes. Some programmes are NOT open to / ONLY open to students of certain disciplines. You also need to pay special attention to the medium of instruction of the courses.

You may check the ranking of various universities in a particular subject here:

<https://www.topuniversities.com/subject-rankings> (For reference only)

### **2) Duration**

You have to decide how long you will go on exchange. The duration of exchange period varies among programmes. You may check the  of the exchange programmes.

Besides, teaching terms of exchange programmes may be different from CUHK. Please scroll through the website of the universities for details.

### **3) GPA Requirement**

Most exchange programmes have set the minimum GPA requirement for students. Most programmes in Europe and the United States require students to have at least 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 GPA scale, while the GPA requirements of Japanese and Korean universities are generally lower.

Please ensure that your cumulative GPA (with NO ROUNDING) fulfills the  of the exchange programmes that you are interested in.

### **4) Language (TOEFL / IELTS and Other Languages)**

Remember to check if the programme you are interested in has any non-English language requirements. Most programmes do not require you to know a language besides English. Universities often require you to submit an official document based on a language test, certifying your language level when you apply. You may check the  of the exchange programmes.

If you intend to apply to an Australian university, you must meet the English Language Test requirement to get an Australian student visa (Go to this [webpage](#) to view the requirement under the “Meet English language requirements” and “English language tests” sections).

## English Language Proficiency Test (TOEFL / IELTS)

**Most Exchange Programmes** require applicants to provide a valid TOEFL/ IELTS score by a specific deadline. Please check the Minimum requirement of TOEFL score (Internet-based) and Minimum requirement of IELTS score of exchange programmes. If you are interested in one of these programmes, you are strongly advised to take a TOEFL/IELTS test **as early as possible**. You **MUST** submit a copy of your TOEFL/ IELTS test report to **Information Counter, LG1, Wen Lan Tang, Shaw College no later than 17:00, 23 December 2024 (Monday)**. Otherwise, you will NOT be considered as an eligible applicant. In this connection, your immediate action of registering and sitting in a TOEFL/ IELTS test is required.

If your preferred programme(s) have English proficiency requirements but submission of TOEFL or IELTS scores is not required for this selection, please arrange to take the language test as soon as possible to ensure you can fulfill the host institution's requirements.

Please ensure that you have inputted the correct information and uploaded a clear image of your TOEFL or IELTS test score report to the online application form (Part I). Your full name, test date and score should be clearly shown on the report; missing or incorrect information will affect your eligibility.

### What is a valid TOEFL or IELTS score?

Your TOEFL or IELTS score is valid for this selection if your score report is issued on or after **1 September 2023**. TOEFL MyBest Scores and the result from IELTS One Skill Retake are not acceptable

### Should I take TOEFL or IELTS test?

You should check the particular English language requirements of your interested programmes before you register for either one of the tests. Some programmes **ONLY** accept either TOEFL or IELTS test. Please make sure that you have taken the right test.

More about TOEFL:

<http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/ipe/toefl/>

More about IELTS:

<http://www.ielts.org/>

## Foreign language requirement (e.g. French and German, etc.)

Some universities offer a limited amount of courses taught in English, thus it is necessary for the students to have adequate language proficiency **BEFORE** submitting the choices to Shaw College.

If you would like to select an exchange programme that requires proficiency in other languages, such as German – Intermediate or Spanish – Intermediate, you **must** indicate in your online application form (Part I) that you have the level of proficiency at least one level lower than the specified requirement (e.g. if the requirement is German – Intermediate, you must indicate that you have the proficiency of elementary German). Otherwise, you will not be considered for that particular exchange programme.

If you have not taken a language test (for French, German, Spanish, Japanese, etc.), please consult your language teacher regarding your level of proficiency. Please note that Shaw College or the Office of Academic Links will not certify your language proficiency under these circumstances.

Your level of language proficiency is often related to the number of hours you have spent learning the language, so students should pay attention to the details of the lessons you have attended rather than their titles. For example, immediate level courses at CUHK are not equivalent to CEFR B1-B2. Please consult your language teacher for further guidance.

For more information about European languages, please refer to the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#).

## 5) Accommodation

Most partner institutions provide on-campus accommodation to exchange students. You will need to pay housing fees to the host institution. Some programmes offer off-campus accommodation only; the host institutions will usually assist students in finding them. Please check **Remarks** for details.

### Community housing

Many students will share room or apartment with other international students off campus during their exchange period.

Renting an apartment abroad can be a real challenge. You should be prepared to spend abundant time looking for a suitable apartment as well as a roommate. Check all the items on the rental contract before you sign it or pay the deposit. Some landlords may request you to provide rental references and financial proofs. Check if utilities such as gas, electricity, water and trash will be included in the monthly rental, and that they are functioning properly before you move in.

### On-campus housing

Some universities offer special housing for international and local students to experience cross-cultural interactions. Check the details about the hostel applications and all other information on the housing website or the information prepared by your host university.

Some of the hostels will close down during the term break. Remember to arrange short term accommodation or other plans during this period or else you will be living nowhere.

Make sure that you have confirmed your accommodation with the host institution or other relevant agencies. If you have not received any information or confirmation before departure, you should contact them and confirm the status immediately.

In case you are not offered a campus residence hostel nor secured a rental apartment prior to your arrival, you need to plan to arrive one to two weeks earlier to settle the accommodation arrangement.

## c. Credit Transfer and Course Load Requirement

### Can I take the courses not in my major during exchange?

You are not limited to courses in your major, but you will have to meet the course requirements, e.g. pre-requisites, in order to get in the courses. You are encouraged to enrich your knowledge on different aspects through the exchange, but it is important for you to consult relevant departments before taking the courses if you wish to transfer the credits back to CUHK.

### How many units of course should I take during exchange?

As an undergraduate student, you must enroll in and pass a required number of courses when you are on exchange. The minimum requirement is nine (9) units and passing at least six (6) of them per term or the equivalent, except for summer exchanges. Failure to comply with the aforementioned requirements may lead to complications in graduation and/or receiving full repayment of any financial support under the CUHK Student Exchange Financial Aid and Scholarship Scheme (FASS).

### How do I get credit from exchange study?

Academically, you should approach relevant CUHK academic departments which have full autonomy to determine which courses taken abroad could transfer credits to CUHK. You are recommended to

approach relevant departments for preliminary assessment on course and unit exemption of particular courses.

Administratively, you should contact the Registration & Examinations Section at CUHK for instructions on transferring credits. Final approval for courses and unit exemption will only be given after the official transcript is received from the host institution with acceptable grade(s) for the course(s) concerned.

### Can I go on exchange at any point during my studies at CUHK?

Undergraduate students should go on exchange in their second or third or fourth (if applicable) year within their normative study period at CUHK. Most students choose to go after their second year at CUHK. If you are a final year student, please refer to [d. Final Year Students](#) for details.

## d. Final Year Students

### Am I a final year student?

You are a final year student if your expected graduation date is 31 July or 31 December 2025 (as shown on CUSIS in October 2024).

### When to go on exchange?

Final year students who wish to go on exchange after the expected graduation date can only go for one academic term (except for students with an expected graduation date on 31 December 2025). The exchange must take place immediately after their last academic term for taking courses for graduation (excludes summer) at CUHK. The table below shows the eligible exchange periods for students with different expected graduation dates.

		Exchange Period		
		Term 1, 2025/26	Term 2, 2025/26	Year, 2025/26
Expected Graduation Date (as of October 2024)	31 December 2024	Not Eligible		
	31 July 2025	Eligible but must apply for extension of study period for Term 1, 2025/26	Not Eligible	
	31 December 2025	Eligible (No need to apply for extension of study period)	Eligible but must apply for extension of study period for Term 2, 2025/26	

### Is exchange after fulfilling all graduation requirements possible?

According to the [General Regulations Governing Full-time Undergraduate Studies](#), CUHK undergraduates who have satisfied all graduation requirements shall graduate (Regulation 12.1). Students are strongly recommended to have good planning of their academic studies to avoid extension of study period after fulfilling all graduation requirements, particularly course unit requirements, to participate in an exchange programme.

If students apply for a term time exchange taking place after their expected graduation date, they would be given a conditional offer (if any) subject to the following conditions: (i) they have not enrolled or completed courses for earning all credit units required for graduation before going on exchange and (ii) their application for extension of study period are approved by the Registration and Examinations Section (RES). Application for extension of study period from students who may/would have earned all credit units required for graduation prior to going on exchange will normally not be approved.

Failure to submit a completed Application for Suspension of Studies and Change of Study Period as instructed by RES or unsuccessful in obtaining the approval will result in cancellation of the exchange nomination. Students take full responsibility for all costs related.

### How to apply for course and unit exemption?

Please refer to [c. Credit Transfer and Course Load Requirement](#) for details.

If graduating students intend to apply for course and unit exemption, please take into consideration that their graduation may possibly be affected should the official transcript not reaching RES by the specific deadline for record and seeking approval for course and unit exemption (if applicable) to meet the degree conferment date. The table below shows the degree conferment dates after 2025-26 and the deadlines for the official transcript reaching RES for record and to seek approval for course and unit exemption.

Degree Conferment Date	Deadline for official transcript reaching RES and/or completion of course and unit exemption procedures*
15 October 2025	Early September 2025
31 March 2026	Mid-February 2026
31 July 2026	Mid-June 2026
15 October 2026	Early September 2026
31 March 2027	Mid-February 2027

\*Actual deadlines will be released by RES in due course.

In general, it takes at least two months for the host institution to issue the official transcripts after the exchange programme ends. An official transcript is an essential document for course and unit exemption.

## e. Cost

**A typical exchange programme would require the following fees generally:**

- ✓ CUHK tuition
- ✓ CUHK and College Student Union Fees (For undergraduate students only; not applicable for summer programmes)
- ✓ Accommodation (CUHK or host university / country)
- ✓ Health and Travel Insurance
- ✓ Meal Plan
- ✓ Student Visa
- ✓ Airfare

**Other costs which might incur during your exchange period include:**

- ✓ Books and stationery
- ✓ Personal expenses
- ✓ Cultural activities
- ✓ Transportation (local and inter-state)
- ✓ Warm clothing for some exchange destinations

### When do I pay?

Before you depart for the exchange programme, you will need to pay the CUHK tuition fee and student union membership fees. Failure to do so will disqualify you from the exchange programme. Other fees are payable either before or during the exchange depending on the programme and the nature of the fee.

## **f. Scholarships and Financial Assistance**

Selected students of exchange programmes would be invited by the College to apply for scholarships for exchange programmes. A total of 57 students were awarded each with a scholarship of HK\$10,000 to participate in an overseas exchange programme in 2024/25.

In 2025/26, 80 scholarships will be awarded to students (HK\$10,000 each). 20 out of 80 scholarships will ONLY be awarded to students participating in College Exchange Programmes.

Selected students with financial difficulties may also apply for the College Loan or Bursary for Exchange Programmes in January/February. The value of each bursary for outgoing exchange students in 2024/25 ranged from around HK\$18,260 to HK\$32,570 depending on the financial need of the applicants.

The College reserves the right to terminate and/or claim repayment of the subsidy, scholarship or any financial aid to students should the students withdraw from the exchange programme, or have failed to complete the exchange programme.

Additionally, the Office of Academic Links provides student exchange financial aid and scholarship scheme (FASS), please visit the OAL website here for details.

## **g. Pre-departure Briefing and Training**

Selected students will be required to join pre-departure briefing and training workshop to facilitate a better preparation for outgoing exchange. Details about the schedule and the contents will be informed to the selected students.

## **h. Enquiries**

Tel: 3943 7362 / 3943 4281

Email: [shaw-ep@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:shaw-ep@cuhk.edu.hk)

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