

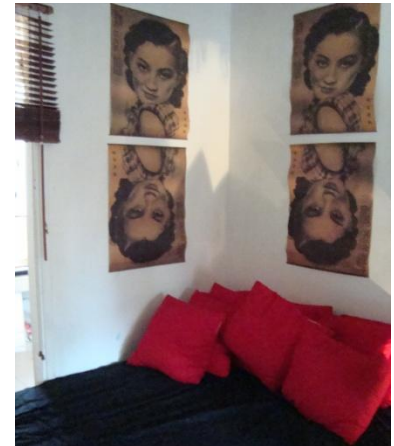
Living in Off-Campus - not the only opportunity

By Robin Blixt (exchange student from Sweden)



Last spring, when the offer from my school came of being an exchange student in Hong Kong, a period of massive researching on internet about everything that had to do with Asia's New York followed. Articles, blogs and forum posts about the civilized and lively city in the east filled my mind about how it could be to spend a year there. One question aroused quickly and had to do with accommodation. I quickly found out that housing prices in Hong Kong are of quite high level compared to those in Sweden, where it is common to have an apartment alone or shared with someone during university studies. So that point, together with the idea that on campus living could make it easier to come into contact with other students got them to decide to apply for dormitory living.

After three months of living in a shared room at Cornwall St I decided to seek other accommodation. To live in residence you have to compromise some features are not regulated in a life living by yourself. Such features are the possibility to bring guests over at any time, as well as having an opportunity to dine and cook when sharing a kitchen with many other students. To be able to regain some of my former social life I went to one of all real estate agencies in Yau Ma Tei, and area I knew before is quite inexpensive to stay in, and being located between the school in Kowloon Tong and Hong Kong Island. Very convenient public transport opportunities provided by MTR and minibus, as well as a touch of 'real' China with outdoor restaurants in Temple St, karaoke bars and other charming features.



A useful source for information on anything in Hong Kong is the website Geoexpat.com, connecting expats from the whole world living in Hong Kong, sharing their experiences and knowledge about more or less everything worth knowing about the city. The flat which I and a school friend later moved into has a monthly rent of 6500 hkd/month approximately 500 hkd/month for electricity, water and internet charges. It is about 35 square meters with two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and a small toilet. Just outside the building you can find a laundry service which are practically everywhere in Hong Kong. Filling the apartment with furniture became one of the easiest and cheapest tasks as online communities such as geoexpat are full of ads with expat trying to get rid of whatever they have filled their apartments with when they are leaving the city for almost nothing.

Student residence living is good if you can compromise your daily life slightly and it is convenient being near school and inexpensive too. But you do meet other students anyway, more than you could even imagine as the exchange student community is quite strong. Living off campus is a great experience to fully embrace the local environment. I strongly recommend it and suggest it as a good alternative for a stay in Hong Kong.

