

'Physics orientated minor in Hong Kong'

Academic Year: 2018-2019	Study: Chemistry
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Hello, I am Lyan. Currently I am a third year bachelor student doing the Chemistry of Life track. Next to this I am doing the Honours College. I already knew I wanted to go abroad for my minor, so I started early with my research. I talked with the Academic Advisor and looked on the International Office website. I actually got a lot of help from the International Office, so I would recommend dropping by there if you are interested. I attended the information lecture, this is given in November, which is needed because you have to apply for a minor abroad in December.

The reason for going abroad was that I was interested in studying somewhere else and learn about a different culture. The courses I took in Hong Kong were interesting to me, as they are physics orientated. The course descriptions I got were short, so I mailed for the syllabus of the courses. Here I found out that it can be difficult to follow chemistry courses abroad.

As the courses given abroad at the bachelors level already had some overlap with the courses I had already done, therefore it is more likely to be rejected by the Board of Examiners. This makes the possibility of studying chemistry abroad quite hard. This is why I would also recommend you to have backup courses. Instead of choosing the number of courses totaling in 30 ECTS, it is good to choose more courses. As these courses might be rejected by the Board of Examiners or because it cannot fit into your own schedule once you are abroad. Making it important to have a solid backup if something happens.

I was living on a campus in Hong Kong, there were around 400 other exchange students. Lots of activities were organized, where I quickly got to know the other exchange students. I learned to know a lot of students with a lot of different nationalities, it did create an international student bubble. Sadly, it was hard for me to get into contact with the locals, mostly due to the language barrier. I also kept close contact with the International Office as they were willing to help me with any issues I had.

While studying in Hong Kong I had a total of 5 courses, totalling in 32 ECTS. As 4 of these courses were 6 ECTS and 1 was 8 ECTS. It became clear that the planning of the study was different compared to the Netherlands. I had a graded assignment almost every week, every course had lots of tests. However the grade transferred to the RuG only was a pass or fail.

The courses I attended were Neurochemistry, Probability, Optics, Introduction into Stellar Astrophysics and Quantum. I had to do a lot of self-study as I was lacking in some background knowledge. During Neurochemistry we discussed the pathways of the neurons in the brain, sadly the teacher skipped a lot of chemistry. With Probability I got an introduction into statistics. During Optics subjects like the breaking of light and the working of lenses were discussed. The course Introduction into Stellar Astrophysics was as you would expect, an introduction of the physics in space. Lastly, I had the course Quantum, this course built upon your knowledge you got from the second year course Quantum for Chemistry. The Quantum course in Hong Kong was very hard for me.

Looking back I could see I that here I am more focused on my studies, whereas in Hong Kong I was also busy with sightseeing and visiting neighboring countries. Another reason I studied less, was because in Hong Kong I did not get grades, I only got a pass or a fail. So for my average it did not matter if I passed the course barely or with ease.

Some small tips: sublease your room, so when you get back you can get your own room back. If there is any trouble in subleasing you can try to work something out with the International Office. Get vaccinations of the surrounding countries, because when you are there is it easy to visit the neighboring countries. Also if you are interested in doing a minor abroad, I would recommend you to start early in the academic year, as it can take a long time period in arranging a minor abroad. Additionally look into what benefits you get as a student in that specific city, as you can perhaps get free public transport. Lastly do not forget to have fun with your minor!