




MONASH
University

TRANSITION FOR SUCCESS

A GUIDE TO THE HONG KONG
EMPLOYMENT MARKET

MONASH
ALUMNI





Welcome to the Monash alumni network. You've just joined the ranks of over 460,000 graduates of Monash University and you're about to discover the value of this vibrant and diverse community.

Moving back home to start your career can be daunting, which is why this guide has been prepared to make the transition as easy as possible.

We'll help you unlock all you need for successful job seeking. Our summary of major job boards, recruitment firms and graduate employers in Hong Kong will ensure that you start your job search in the right place.

Throughout this guide, Hong Kong alumni will share their personal experiences and lend their expertise as you transition home to the exciting first rung of your career.

We hope it will prove an invaluable resource as you go through the first exciting stages of setting yourself up for success. But whatever part of your career journey you're on, our alumni community will be your Monash family, for life.



THE HONG KONG EMPLOYMENT MARKET

Hong Kong is one of Asia's largest financial hubs and traditionally enjoys strong economic and employment growth.

A significant barrier for organisations looking to recruit high quality graduate talent in Hong Kong is a tight hiring budget. More than half of the graduates returning to Hong Kong after studying abroad believe their skillset entitles them to a higher salary than locally educated peers, which can harm their job prospects.

For graduates like you who are returning to Hong Kong and wish to stand out in a competitive market, it's important for you to leverage your international experience but also set realistic salary expectations.

“The gap between an employee’s salary expectation and an employer’s salary budget is becoming bigger. Although Hong Kong talent typically have international exposure and language skills, many companies now have offices or Asia headquarters located in Mainland China, meaning the demand for HK talent to cover regional responsibilities is diminishing.”

- Jessica Lau, Managing Director, Bó Lè Associates Hong Kong

HONG KONG EMPLOYER INSIGHTS

Hong Kong employers report a shortage of quality talent and a demand for graduates educated abroad. Research indicates employers are not only looking for hard skills such as computer programming, project management and data management, but are also after soft skills, such as stakeholder management, communication and problem solving.

The following table provides a handy checklist for the current talent requirements of Hong Kong employers, underlining the key opportunities for new graduates entering the job market.

EMPLOYER INSIGHT

VALUED SKILLS



Employers are increasingly seeking graduates who complement their technical skills with highly developed enterprise skills. They're particularly interested in communication, commercial acumen, problem solving, and critical and creative thinking. A strong work ethic and the willingness to put in the hours is also highly valued by Hong Kong employers.

"In the knowledge-based economy, the job market requires workers who can think, who can come up with creative solutions to unexpected problems, and who are prepared to be continuously challenged by new innovations."

Professor Joshua Mok Ka-ho, Vice-President, Lingnan University

HIRING INTENTIONS



Organisations see their graduate talent as the next generation of leaders and technical specialists who will future proof their business.

"Graduate hiring intentions remain strong with competition for talent an organisational challenge. This means that strong graduate candidates are likely to achieve multiple offers."

GradConnection

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Industry knowledge and experience is identified as the most important quality for new graduates by employers in Hong Kong. Significant value is also given to international experience, particularly work experience gained while studying in Australia.

"In returning Hong Kong students, we value English speaking and the experience of working with people with different values and backgrounds."

Kevin Chung, APAC Operations Manager, ADP Limited

TECHNOLOGY



Specialist qualifications in IT and fintech are highly sought after in Hong Kong with the Greater Bay Area predicted to become a rival to Silicon Valley in the coming decade. Graduates have the opportunity to lead new ways of working and technology-driven process improvements.

"Demand for IT and fintech talent is stronger than supply."

Sam Lam, Head of Practice, STC SEARCH.

TALENT SHORTAGE



Many businesses in Hong Kong identify a shortage of high-quality talent as a key business challenge. Organisations are seeking graduates with deep industry knowledge, a strong sense of accountability and functional mastery and expertise.

"Do not be afraid of tough work. The working pace in Hong Kong is much faster than that in Australia. Manage your own expectations. The jobs in HK are less relaxing."

Vanessa Leung, Senior HR Business Partner, Recruit Express Hong Kong Limited

Consider this:

- When hiring talent, Hong Kong employers tend to value work expertise, academic achievement and behavioural skills like creativity, persuasiveness, collaboration, adaptability and time management. Be prepared to demonstrate how your work and study experiences abroad have helped you grow these skills.



CAREER CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETURNEES

You're part of an important cohort of young Hong Kong graduates who chose to pursue a high-quality education overseas to expand your career prospects.

Hong Kong employers are actively seeking internationally educated candidates like you who can combine local understanding with a global outlook. They're looking for language and communication skills, cross-cultural awareness and commercial aptitude.

Multinational corporations in particular see graduates who have been educated abroad and possess these skills as an important means of establishing depth in their leadership talent pool. They actively seek out graduates like you with overseas study experience, often favouring graduates from Australian's Group of Eight universities like Monash.

Consider this:

- Competition for top graduate roles is intense, but Hong Kong employers report a shortage of top talent.
- Overseas study experience is valued, particularly by multinational corporations looking for graduates demonstrating enhanced English language skills and high levels of cross-cultural competence.
- The most in demand segments of the Hong Kong employment market are:
 - » Information Technology
 - » Banking & Financial Services
 - » Engineering & Construction
 - » Accounting & Finance

JACKY YEUNG CHING YIN'S STORY

Jacky was born and raised in Hong Kong and completed his secondary education in Scotland. He started work immediately after finishing high school, but soon realised he needed to further his education to stay competitive. After completing his Bachelor of Business from Monash University, Jacky returned to Hong Kong to work in Human Resources. He is currently the Director of Talent Acquisition for Langham Hospitality Group.

Returning to Hong Kong after so many years abroad was challenging for Jacky and it took him almost six months to land his first job.

“I must have sent over 100 applications and was only invited for an interview for about five of them - it was a tough job market in Hong Kong at the time when it was dealing with SARS.”

After securing his first graduate position, Jacky used the long work hours as an opportunity to build strong friendships and connections within his industry.

“I wanted to mention all of this because your first job after graduation is always the toughest one to land. I hope that this story will help people to understand what the real world is like and for them to know that it becomes much easier after gaining some experience.”

Approaching the job search prepared and with a plan is key according to Jacky. He believes there are three things crucial to achieving your employment goal:

“To know what you want. To stay grounded and humbled. To be prepared. If these three boxes are checked there is a very high chance you will get what you want.”

It's not always easy figuring out what you want but Jacky advises that it's where you should start your job-hunting journey.

“I think it's fundamental to go through a 'self-realisation' journey first. What is your life goal? What is your purpose in life? Move backwards from that: in order to achieve that, what do I need to do and how do I get there? It's almost a research paper about your life.”

Jacky believes one of the greatest barriers for graduates from overseas to overcome is self-expectation.

“Overseas graduates do not necessarily equate as 'superior' to other graduates locally. You still need a lot of dedication and hard work to be competitive. Hong Kong is a highly competitive market for everyone! Be prepared to go through tough times and learn from your mistakes.”

Being prepared is also crucial.



“Research the company, the position, the structure of the organisation, the department, the annual results, its competitors, its leadership team, recent news and potential projects.”

Jacky believes it's also important to research the interviewer - which companies have they worked for, do you have any common interests? – and practice the interview process.

“Look for practice exercises, prepare interview Q&A's, rehearse multiple times and practice your language skills. Make sure you do not arrive too early but definitely do not arrive late!”.

And a final piece of advice for graduates returning home to Hong Kong?

“Know what you want. If you don't see yourself in a corporate career, don't look for an office job. Pursue a profession that you like and accept the difference in careers.”

CHANNELS TO EMPLOYMENT

When looking for a job, it pays to know there is not one single path to take. The open job market refers to the most visible and traditional methods of finding a job, such as through advertising and job listing websites. The hidden job market refers to the opportunities that are not advertised and need to be discovered by yourself. This is where your proactive skills come into play. As a job seeker, you need to be active across both open and hidden markets if you want to increase your chances of finding ideal employment.

MAJOR JOB BOARDS

Job boards are a great source of employment information and graduate opportunities. Most job boards have online job postings, search functionality, the ability for jobseekers to create a profile and resume search services for employers.

Major Hong Kong job boards include:

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is increasingly popular among graduates who have an overseas education background. It provides a platform for job seekers to look for recruitment information and connect with business partners. It is a popular recruitment resource for multinational corporations in Hong Kong.

Indeed

Indeed is available in more than 50 countries and 28 languages, making it one of the largest job sites worldwide. Indeed offers company reviews and salary insights in addition to job advertisements.

Glassdoor

Glassdoor is one of the world's largest job and recruitment sites. As well as the latest job listings, Glassdoor offers a database of company reviews, salary reports, interview reviews and benefit information. Unlike other job sites, all of this information is shared by those who know a company best — the employees.

Recruit.com.hk

Recruit.com.hk is a leading job board in Hong Kong. Founded in 2013, Recruit has grown to become a global online recruitment platform after partnering with The Network, an alliance of 49 independent job boards in more than 125 countries worldwide. The website is available in Chinese and English, attracting international corporations to post job vacancies.

JobsDB

JobsDB is an Asia-wide job portal offering a broad variety of positions. The JobsDB platform doesn't require you to create an account in order to apply for a job.

CTgoodjobs

With more than 600,000 members, over 1,000,000 daily page views and thousands of corporate openings, CTgoodjobs has become one of the most trusted and successful recruitment portals in Hong Kong. The site is available in English and Chinese.



GradConnection Hong Kong

GradConnection is a website for university students and recent graduates to source career opportunities and jobs. It operates in the Asia-Pacific region, covering Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. In Hong Kong, GradConnection hosts a Returnee Career Fair annually, connecting returnee Hong Kong students and graduates to top employers.

Monster

Monster is one of the lesser known job sites in Hong Kong, but it still lists a range of graduate-appropriate job opportunities. Creating an account includes posting your resume which Monster aligns to the job requirements and suggests recruiters to contact you for potential job opportunities.

CPjobs.com

Cpjobs.com is a relatively new job site in Hong Kong covering a wide range of positions, from recent graduates to experienced professionals across all sectors in the region.

COMPANY CAREERS PAGES

It's important to look at the career page found on the websites of most large local organisations and multinational corporations.

These pages provide information on:

- Organisational purpose, values and strategy
- Hiring intentions and recruitment processes
- Employee benefits and career opportunities
- Advertised job vacancies.

Career pages provide access to both open and hidden opportunities. They advertise roles and allow you to proactively set up a candidate profile within the company's talent portal. Where an organisation's talent portal is strong, generally companies will not advertise; rather they will run an off-market recruitment process with individuals from their database.

Returnee graduates are encouraged to monitor a wide range of career pages for potential employers.

RECRUITMENT FIRMS

Recruitment agencies are an access point to graduate jobs with large organisations. It's important to research the firms operating in your discipline area, but significant recruitment firms include:

Adecco

Adecco is a leading staffing and recruitment firm that works with a large range of Hong Kong and international companies to develop talent management solutions. They also provide career advice and consultation for jobseekers.

Michael Page

Michael Page works across a diverse range of industries, ranging from legal to luxury sales.

Robert Half

Robert Half's operations in Hong Kong primarily recruit for the banking, accounting and IT industries.

Hudson

Hudson Hong Kong specialises in recruitment in accounting and finance, financial services, human resources, sales and marketing, and technology.

Randstad

Randstad Hong Kong specialises in recruitment across a broad range of sectors and business types such as non-profit organisations, startups, small and medium enterprises, public agencies and multinational companies.

Hays

Hays Hong Kong is a leading specialist recruitment company in Hong Kong. They operate across the private and public sector, dealing in permanent, temporary and contracting positions in a broad spectrum of specialisations.

NETWORKING PLATFORMS

LinkedIn is the primary business networking platform in Hong Kong but it's worth considering using all of the following platforms to build your professional connections and get access to networking events:

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's most popular business social network platform. It launched in Hong Kong in 2012 and is continuously growing. LinkedIn now has more than one million users in Hong Kong. It's especially helpful if you're looking for jobs with international companies in Hong Kong.

Meetup

Meetup is a website often used to organise online groups and events, in addition to connecting people with similar interests. Meetup is also used by business professionals for professional networking events.

Eventbrite

Similar to Meetup, Eventbrite is a platform for event organisation. People can post and advertise their networking events and you can also find information about career fairs and employment workshops. This is a good platform to find events and opportunities to network with other professionals and recruiters offline.

LARGE GRADUATE EMPLOYERS

Many large organisations and multinational corporations offer structured graduate programs. Generally, information is available on company career pages regarding the associated selection criteria and recruitment process.

Below are some key employers of graduates sorted by disciplines. They are rated by salary and benefits, development potential, work culture, employee satisfaction and employee locality.

Business and Consulting

1. HKSAR Government	11. Hong Kong Monetary Authority
2. Google	12. Hong Kong Disneyland
3. HSBC	13. Goldman Sachs
4. J.P Morgan	14. Hang Seng Bank
5. EY	15. Swire Group
6. PwC	16. Airport Authority Hong Kong
7. Cathay Pacific Airways	17. McKinsey & Co
8. Deloitte	18. L'Oreal Group
9. Morgan Stanley	19. MTR Corporation
10. Apple	20. The Walt Disney Company

Engineering and Natural Sciences

1. HKSAR Government	11. Hong Kong Disneyland
2. Google	12. AECOM
3. MTR Corporation	13. Facebook
4. Cathay Pacific Airways	14. Hong Kong Airlines
5. Apple	15. HSBC
6. Airport Authority Hong Kong	16. The Hong Kong Jockey Club
7. Ocean Park	17. HAECO
8. Microsoft	18. J.P Morgan
9. HK ASTRI	19. Cathay Dragon
10. Hospital Authority	20. Huawei

Humanities

1. HKSAR Government	11. The Hong Kong Jockey Club
2. Google	12. Ocean Park
3. Hong Kong Disneyland	13. MTR Corporation
4. United Nations	14. Airbnb
5. Apple	15. L'Oreal Group
6. The Walt Disney Company	16. Hospital Authority
7. Cathay Pacific Airways	17. HK Trade Development Council
8. Facebook	18. HSBC
9. IKEA	19. Bloomberg
10. Airport Authority Hong Kong	20. Swire Group

Plan of attack

- Register on the careers pages of your target employers and monitor their social media pages for hiring activity.
- Large organisations are often the most difficult to get into, so prepare diligently for the recruitment process.
- Companies report receiving applications from up to 500 candidates per role for graduate programs – remember, persistence is key.
- Engage with anybody in your alumni or social network, already employed within your target organisation to get better insight into the selection process.



HOLLIA LAM'S STORY

Hollia was born and raised in Hong Kong and spent a year at Caulfield Grammar School before attending Monash University. She graduated from Monash in 2013 with a Bachelor of Business, majoring in Law and Economics. Hollia did not immediately return home, spending the following two years in Sydney obtaining her Juris Doctor at the University of Sydney. She currently works in Hong Kong as an Associate for Conyers, an international law firm.

For Hollia, returning home was “definitely a steep learning experience.” She didn’t find it easy adapting back to the culture and lifestyle of Hong Kong at first, but having family support helped ease the transition.

“There is someone to pick you up or make you dinner – it helps a lot when you have to work until 3am in the morning on some crazy US deals!”

Hollia planned two months ahead before her official return date, which gave her enough time to catch up with her professional connections to ask them about jobs in Hong Kong. She advises returnees to update their LinkedIn profile before returning home and to contact as many people as possible.

“Having a good LinkedIn profile is quite important these days. You should also try to reach out to as many people as possible, even though it is competitive here. If people see you are willing to learn and try, they will give you a chance. Hong Kong is all about networking. There are heaps of networking events including Monash University’s regular Hong Kong alumni reunions.”

Hong Kong is very fast paced and Hollia was surprised by the efficiency.

“Everyone is very efficient here! You need to be fast and good. Remember, there are around seven million people in Hong Kong and if you say ‘no’ or you cannot perform, there are people waiting in line to take over your position – it’s very competitive.”

In order to stand out in a crowded and competitive job market, Hollia emphasises the importance of focusing on self-improvement.

“It was very challenging moving back and working in Hong Kong, but I would never regret having such a valuable experience. I have learnt so much. Not only about how to deal with different types of people, but also about doing things outside the box.”

Hollia’s final advice is to “be happy and have faith”. And to brush up on your language skills before returning home.

“You are capable of more than you think you are, so just go for it. There are more opportunities in Hong Kong than Australia, but it might also be more challenging. Don’t forget you are expected to speak English, Cantonese and Mandarin. The constant switch between the languages can be crazy sometimes!”



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DARREN TAY'S STORY

Darren was born in Malaysia but has lived and worked in Hong Kong for the last 12 years. He graduated from Monash University in 1999 with a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in Accounting and Finance. After university he worked in his field of study before moving into the tech space. Darren founded his first company in 2003 and his second company two years after that. After four years he closed his companies and moved to Hong Kong where he began his career in recruitment. He is currently responsible for talent acquisition and employer branding at Link REIT.

Darren has more than 10 years' experience in the recruitment sector in Hong Kong and has observed various changes in hiring processes during that time. His main advice for recent graduates? "Be adaptable – things change quickly this day and age and you should be agile not only in your profession but also in your personal life."

Darren believes living and studying abroad can be a great advantage.

"Overseas experience is definitely a plus. We have clients who give extra points for candidates who have had an overseas experience because having the experience of working in a different culture demonstrates a person's adaptability. The more you experience or the more diverse your experience, the better you will be prepared for future uncertainties."

Even so, overseas experience can also lead to high expectations amongst graduates.

"You shouldn't focus on the money, but the experience. Every time you have an opportunity, even if it's not what you expected, see what you can learn from it. If you spend a year looking for your perfect job you are actually waiting a year. Lower your expectations and take that job that maybe doesn't have the highest salary but by the time one year comes about you have gained one full year of experience. And this might lead you to your perfect job. Manage your expectations."

Darren advises doing your homework before applying or interviewing for a job.

"I give a lot of talks at universities and I always tell the students to research the market. What sort of skills sets are demanded in the market? See if you have those skills or if you still need to develop them."

He encourages graduates to simply keep on applying for jobs – and don't give up.

"You can't just apply for two jobs and expect to get one of them. Try to get as many interviews as possible because that is the only way to learn."

