

Non-local Credit-bearing Summer Studies Schemes 2025 – Report

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During the summer of 2025, I had the privilege of participating in the Non-local Credit-bearing Summer Studies Schemes organized by United College of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. My chosen destination was the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley), where I enrolled in a summer course. This opportunity allowed me not only to enhance my academic knowledge but also to immerse myself in a new cultural environment.

My course is called “Contemporary Japanese Society and Culture Through Film”. For three weeks, I studied and discussed my understanding of Japanese culture with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, including the United States, Canada, Japan, China, and India. This course was intellectually stimulating and demanded a high level of critical thinking, independent study, and classroom participation. Professor encouraged us to ask questions and challenge assumptions, which was a refreshing contrast to the more lecture-focused style I was accustomed to back home.

There are restaurants from various countries near the campus, such as Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese, French, and more, where different culinary cultures blend. In my spare time, I enjoy dining with my classmates at Chinese restaurants near the campus.



Figure 1: A Chinese Restaurant near Campus

Berkeley has a long history, a strong academic atmosphere, and a rich culture of scientific research, having produced many Nobel laureates. While I was exploring the physics building, I was surprised to discover Oppenheimer's former office at a corner. History and the present converge at this moment.



Figure 2: Offices of Oppenheimer

The famous bell tower on campus, Sather Tower, is also worth admiring. For over a hundred years, its melodious chimes have accompanied generations of researchers on their journey.



Figure 3: Sather Tower

Beyond academics, the campus itself was a vibrant and dynamic community.

Berkeley is known for its rich history of social movements, intellectual activism, and cultural diversity, and I could feel this energy in everyday interactions. For example, near the North Gate of Berkeley, I saw a sign for the "Center for Independent Journalism," which deeply moved me.



Figure 4: Center for Independent Journalism in UC Berkeley

These experiences broadened my understanding of the role universities play not only in education but also in shaping public discourse.

During weekends, I explored the Bay Area, especially San Francisco. My friends and I went on a city walk through the streets of San Francisco, experiencing the city's unique and diverse culture.



Figure 5: Me in San Francisco

We visited Chinatown to experience the fusion of Chinese and US cultures.

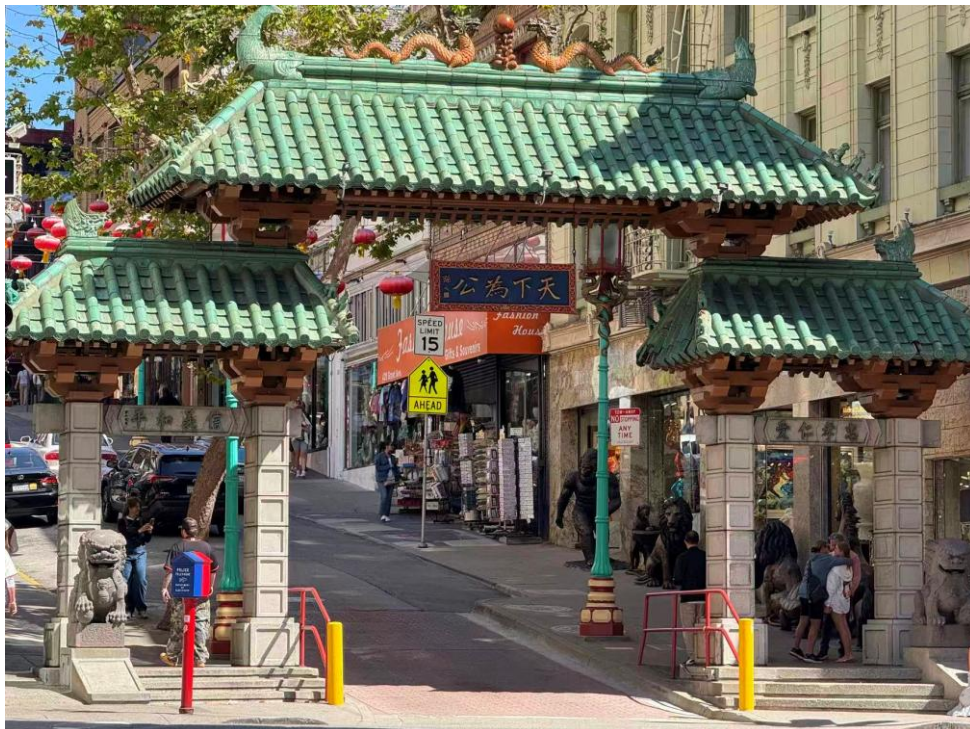


Figure 6: Chinatown in San Francisco

We also went to the northwest part of the city to take in the view from above and enjoy the cityscape.



Figure 7: View from above

This trip allowed me to understand American culture beyond the university setting and gave me a deeper appreciation of the region's history, arts, and natural beauty.

Participating in this scheme has been a great way to achieve my summer goals.

Academically, my courses at UC Berkeley provided me with new insights and analytical skills. The professor not only delivered content but also facilitated discussions that pushed me to think critically and articulate my arguments clearly. I found myself becoming more confident in speaking up in class and engaging in intellectual debates. Culturally, the diversity of Berkeley community surpassed my expectations. I learned how to navigate cultural differences and communicate effectively with people from various backgrounds. Sharing experiences with classmates and roommates helped me develop a stronger sense of global citizenship. On a personal level, living alone in a new environment requires adaptability and resilience. From managing my daily schedule to finding my way around the city, every challenge became an opportunity for growth. By the end of the programme, I felt more independent and capable of handling unfamiliar situations. Overall, the programme not only

met but exceeded my initial goals. It provided me with academic inspiration, cultural insights, and personal development that will continue to shape my future.

One of the most striking aspects of UC Berkeley was its strong commitment to diversity and inclusivity. This commitment was evident in both institutional policies and everyday practices. At the institutional level, UC Berkeley actively promotes diversity through its curriculum, student organizations, and campus events. Many courses incorporated themes of equity, representation, and social justice. Additionally, the university frequently organized workshops and seminars on topics such as racial equality, gender inclusivity, and mental health awareness. What's more, Berkeley often sends me emails promoting diversity and preventing discrimination and sexual harassment, although I'm only a short-term international student.

Dear undergraduate, graduate and professional students,

At Berkeley, we are committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment. Our community values integrity, honesty, and well-being, and we are dedicated to ensuring that all members are free from harm and violence, including sexual violence, stalking, bullying, and hate incidents.

All students must complete multiple required training sessions in order to register for spring semester classes. For clarity, this includes second, third, fourth-year and beyond undergraduates - as opposed to new incoming "freshmen" (i.e. first-year undergraduates), new transfer undergraduates, or new incoming graduate and professional students. It also includes all continuing graduate and professional students.

New students please refer to the following instructions previously shared:

- [First-year undergraduates and new transfer undergraduates.](#)
- [New graduate students.](#)

Required training for all continuing students:

1. **Complete the SHAPE Training (Sexual violence and Harassment, Anti-discrimination, Prevention and Education):** All students are required to complete SHAPE, UC Berkeley's new annual prevention education course. SHAPE provides a comprehensive overview of University policies, campus resources, and strategies for preventing harm and fostering a respectful, inclusive community. The training was **assigned to all continuing students via a [CalCentral task](#) and must be completed by September 19th.**

Figure 8: An Email from UC Berkeley

A specific practice I admired was the way faculty and staff fostered inclusive classroom environments. Professors made a conscious effort to ensure every student's voice was heard. They encouraged students from different cultural

and linguistic backgrounds to share their perspectives, and they valued these contributions as essential to the learning process. This created a classroom culture where students felt respected and empowered to participate. From my perspective as an international student, these practices made me feel welcomed and included. I never felt like an outsider, but rather a valued member of the community. This inclusive environment not only enriched my learning experience but also demonstrated the importance of diversity in higher education.

I believe CUHK and United College can draw inspiration from these practices. While CUHK already values inclusivity, adopting similar approaches such as sending anti-discrimination education emails and promoting dialogue across diverse communities could further enhance student experience.

My study abroad experience at UC Berkeley was a rewarding and transformative journey. It provided me with academic enrichment, cultural immersion, and personal growth, all of which aligned with the goals I set before joining the programme. The exposure to Berkeley's commitment to diversity and inclusivity left a lasting impression on me. I am deeply grateful to United College and CUHK for providing me with this opportunity. The knowledge, experiences, and friendships I gained during this summer will continue to influence my academic and personal path in the years ahead.