

# Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Exchange 2019-2020 Handbook

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# Program Information

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## Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

In 1989, the leaders of Hong Kong saw a need to build a new, research-focused university to support the city's future ambitions—to become not just the financial hub of Asia, but also a center of knowledge advancement, economic growth and influence in the Pearl River Delta Region, leveraging Hong Kong's unique status with China who just recently opened to reforms.

The herculean task—building an institution with global ambitions from the ground up—soon attracted a group of high-spirited scholars from around the globe, who embraced the challenge with open arms and started what would become the eventual Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Today, HKUST has risen through the ranks and become a global powerhouse in tertiary education as a result of the university's continuous pursuit of excellence, leaving its mark in life science, engineering, business education, humanities and social science, and much more.

## Program Team

There are a number of different partners and players that make important contributions to your academic, cultural, and personal experience abroad.

At Northwestern, the team in the Global Learning Office (GLO) is available to support you before, during, and after your study abroad experience. GLO plays the following roles:

- **Liaison with Host University:** GLO works with the international office at your host university to pave the way for you to be successful. GLO collaborates with your host university to facilitate your nomination and application processes and to provide ongoing support.
- **Pre-Departure Orientation and Materials:** GLO provides you with important information about your program to help you prepare for your experience. This includes resources, such as this program handbook as well as online modules and in-person meetings related to health and safety, budgeting, travel, and academics.
- **Course Registration:** GLO will register students at Northwestern for the appropriate study abroad course(s) for their program; you will not register yourself for any Northwestern courses during your term(s) abroad.
- **Academic Credit:** GLO will collect and submit your transcript to the Registrar's Office, which will post general study abroad credits.
- **In-Country Support:** Faculty and staff at your host university will provide support for you while abroad and should be your primary resource, but if you need additional assistance or would feel more comfortable speaking to GLO staff, please do not hesitate to contact your GLO adviser (see below).
- **Re-Integration Support:** Upon your return, GLO will provide you with resources to help transition back into campus life at Northwestern, as well as connect you to other study abroad returnees and program alumni.



**Lauren Worth**

**Study Abroad Program Manager**

A native of Illinois, Lauren joined Northwestern after living and working around the US and the world for a number of years. She completed her BA in Political Science at Colorado State University and a MS in Student Affairs in Higher Education at Miami University (Ohio). Before joining the staff, she was a study abroad adviser at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and worked closely with programs in Asia and Eastern Europe. She spent four years living in beautiful Fukushima, Japan and completed a one year round-the-world trip. Lauren loves the adventure of traveling to remote or non-traditional destinations like North Korea, Siberia, Antarctica and the West Bank.

Lauren is your **GLO Adviser** and primary point of contact for any questions you may have about your program, academics, preparing for study abroad, health and safety, or any other exchange-related matters, particularly **before your departure or after your return**.

**HKUST Office of Global Learning**

The staff at the Office of Global Learning can provide you with information, support, and connections to student life at your host university: <https://studyabroad.ust.hk/>

Students are admitted to either the School of Science or the School of Engineering. Each school has dedicated staff to assist you during your time in Hong Kong, especially as it relates to course registration, advising, and other academic concerns.

School of Engineering:

<https://www.seng.ust.hk/web/eng/thirdcat.php?catid=2&subid=42&thirdid=63>

School of Science: <http://advise.science.ust.hk/sfs/exchange>

### Program Schedule

Fall 2019 classes are tentatively scheduled from September 2 to December 19, 2019. Exchange students should expect to arrive in late August. Refer to the university study abroad website or your HKUST school calendar for more details:

<https://studyabroad.ust.hk/inbound/programs/regular-exchange>

### Academics

Refer to the **Academic Planning** section of the GLO website for more information about academic information, expectations, and policies:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/abroad/study-abroad/academic-planning/index.html>

In addition to familiarizing yourself with the information below, it is important that you take some time to learn about the academic culture of your host institution. Speak with past Northwestern students who have studied at your host university, as well as exchange students from your host university who are currently studying at Northwestern.

### Choosing Courses, Registration, and Enrollment Requirements

For the term(s) that you will be abroad, you will be enrolled at Northwestern in a placeholder course, which corresponds to your program. GLO will register you for your study abroad course(s), so please do not register yourself for any classes.

You are required to indicate your course selection by the time you submit your application to HKUST. Course information is available at the Course Catalog page: <https://prog-crs.ust.hk/ug> Please be flexible in designing your study plan as not all courses stated in the Course Catalog are offered every term. Confirmed courses and class schedules for the forthcoming term are normally finalized until July for Fall Term and late December for Spring Term respectively.

You have priority in taking courses offered by the school to which you are admitted (either the School of Engineering or the School of Science), subject to the course pre-requisites, class quota and approval of the course instructors. In principle, you are allowed to take courses offered by other schools at HKUST. Again, this is subject to the course pre-requisite requirements, class quota and approval of the course instructors. You may be interested to gain some understanding of Chinese as an exchange student in Hong Kong. The Center for Language Education offers Putonghua courses for students with non-Chinese backgrounds every term.

Class enrollment (i.e. registering for courses) is done online in August for Fall Term and January for Spring Term respectively. To familiarize yourself with the class enrollment procedures, please refer to the Guide to Class Enrollment at HKUST:

[http://arr.ust.hk/sis/file/Enrollment\\_final\\_2013.pdf](http://arr.ust.hk/sis/file/Enrollment_final_2013.pdf) and the 'Course Registration (For UG Students)' part of the Academic Records and Registration, Academic Registry's Website: <http://arr.ust.hk/reg/index.html>. Your school at HKUST will send you further details on class enrollment by email close to registration.

The HKUST exchange has a minimum credit enrollment requirement of:

- 12 credits in Fall
- 15 credits in Winter/Spring

- 24 credits for Full Year

For more information about how these local credits will convert to Northwestern units of credit, visit the GLO website: <https://www.northwestern.edu/abroad/study-abroad/academic-planning/registration-credit/exchange-credit-transfer.html>.

### Transcripts and Credit

Following completion of your program, you will be issued a transcript from HKUST, and eligible course credit will be transferred to Northwestern, as long as students follow all rules regarding course transferability and earn course grades of C (or equivalent in the local grading system) or above. For more information about credit transfer, visit these sections of the GLO website:

- Transfer Credit Rules: <https://www.northwestern.edu/abroad/study-abroad/academic-planning/choosing-courses.html>
- Transfer Credit Process: <https://www.northwestern.edu/abroad/study-abroad/return-home/credit-transfer/index.html>

### Accommodations

You will be accommodated on-campus as space allows. To apply for on-campus accommodation, you should fill in the housing application form included in the admission package on the exchange application system by the deadline, normally in mid-May for Fall Term and mid-November for Spring Term respectively.

To know more about on-campus accommodation, please visit the Student Housing and Residential Life Office's website: <http://shrl.ust.hk/eng/detail.php?catid=2&sid=13>, where you may find the details of hall application information for exchange-in UG Students under 'Apply for Housing'.

HKUST provides general assistance and resources for students who will live off-campus. The Off-Campus Housing Section: <http://shrl.ust.hk/eng/detail.php?catid=2&sid=16> provides essential information for living off-campus, from accommodation search to various guides and tips on dealing with property agents and landlords.

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# Hong Kong

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Hong Kong history and culture is both rich and complex. We provide some basic information below, but we encourage you to do some research about the history of your host country as well as general country information, including the political system, geography, the economy, population, culture, and current events. Your ability to take full advantage of your time abroad will be influenced by the amount of preparation and research you do before you go, so read as much as you can! Refer to the list of resources in the **Links & Recommended Reading** section.

## Fast Facts<sup>1</sup>

- Surface Area: 1,108 sq km (six times the size of Washington D.C.)
- Population: 7,213,338 (July 2018 est.)
- Government type: Presidential limited democracy; a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China
- GDP per capita: \$61,500 (2017 est.)
- Major industries: trading and logistics, financial services, professional services, tourism, cultural and creative, clothing and textiles, shipping, electronics, toys, clocks and watches

## Population

- Religion: Buddhist or Taoist 27.9%, Protestant 6.7%, Roman Catholic 5.3%, Muslim 4.2%, Hindu 1.4%, Sikh 0.2%, other or none 54.3% (2016 est.) note: many people practice Confucianism, regardless of their religion or not having a religious affiliation
- Ethnic Groups: Chinese 92%, Filipino 2.5%, Indonesian 2.1%, other 3.4% (2016 est.)

## Language

Cantonese (official) 88.9%, English (official) 4.3%, Mandarin (official) 1.9%, other Chinese dialects 3.1%, other 1.9% (2016 est.)

## Transportation

There are many modes of transportation in Hong Kong, some of which are safer and more reliable than others. Below is some basic information about how to get around, but also refer to the **Health, Safety, and Security** sections of this Program Handbook for tips about safe travel.

- **Foot:** Central Hong Kong is a relatively small area and getting around on foot is easy. Sidewalks and markets are crowded, but it is a great way to experience the city. You'll find plentiful hiking trails outside the city.
- **Public Transportation:** Public transportation in Hong Kong is safe, clean, and reliable. There are buses, minibuses, trains, subways, trams, and even ferries that you will find yourself utilizing frequently. The Octopus card is Hong Kong's rechargeable/reusable prepaid card used for public transportation, though not all minibuses accept Octopus. You can also use it to purchase items at convenience stores, vending machines, grocery stores, and even some restaurants such as McDonalds.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hk.html> (2019)

- **Bike:** Hong Kong is very hilly/mountainous outside the city center and downtown is very congested, making bicycles an impractical way to commute or travel in most parts of Hong Kong.
- **Taxi/Uber:** Taxis in Hong Kong are cheaper than in many other major cities. There are three colors; red, green, and blue. Costs vary based on taxi type and only operate in designated parts of Hong Kong. Red taxis are usually cheapest and cover the largest area. It's helpful to have your destination written in Cantonese. Uber is available in Hong Kong as well.

### Getting To/From the Airport

You can choose from many options to get from the airport to campus. Visit the Office of Global Learning website for more information:

<https://studyabroad.ust.hk/inbound/arrival/getting-to-hkust>

Be very careful with your belongings at the airport and when boarding a taxi or shuttle. Make sure your bags are in your possession at all times.

### Visas

The Hong Kong Immigration Department requires all non-local students to obtain a student visa in order to study in Hong Kong. In general, if you do not possess the right of abode or the right to land in Hong Kong, or hold a dependent's visa, then you will require a student visa.

After you receive HKUST's confirmation of your exchange placement, you will receive information to assist you with the student visa application process. You should send your application to HKUST and HKUST will submit your student visa application to the Hong Kong Immigration Department on your behalf. When your visa is approved and issued, HKUST will collect it and mail it to you before you depart for Hong Kong.

### Money Matters

Refer to **Appendix I** for cost information for your program. Also reference the Money Matters section of the GLO website and the relevant modules in Canvas for information about billing, financial aid, and budgeting: <https://www.northwestern.edu/abroad/money-matters/index.html>. If you have any questions about billing, financial aid, or scholarships, email Krista Bethel in Undergraduate Financial Aid at [krista@northwestern.edu](mailto:krista@northwestern.edu).

Hong Kong has a reputation as one of the most expensive cities in the world. While this is certainly true when it comes to real estate and housing costs, thrifty students will find they can enjoy Hong Kong on a budget. Public transportation is affordable and local cheap eats foods are readily available.

### Identity Abroad<sup>2</sup>

The sections below provide some basic information, summarized from Diversity Abroad and reflections from past students. Also refer back to the Identity Abroad section of the GLO website for general guidance and resources: <https://www.northwestern.edu/abroad/student-experiences/identity-diversity/index.html>.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the Diversity Abroad Network (2017): <http://www.diversitynetwork.org/>



### Gender Roles & Identity

Despite the outward appearance that women are equal to men in China, women still struggle to be considered and treated as true equals in the workplace. This bias sometimes extends to some classrooms or campuses too.

Hong Kong and mainland China are usually safe to travel around alone, including for women travelers. However, since women travelers have been more likely to be targets of high risk crimes, it is recommended that travelers are vigilant of their surroundings and make a conscious effort to travel in groups as often as possible.

Some female students in China have experienced “body image” issues relative to the Chinese cultural definition of ideal feminine beauty. Few Western women are small or thin enough to achieve that narrow ideal, which may be frustrating for some students, as is the possibility that their attractiveness may also be defined by this standard.

### Race and Ethnicity

Although China is somewhat ethnically diverse, it is highly racially homogenous. Outside Hong Kong and China’s other global cities, most Chinese are unaccustomed to Westerners of any race. It is difficult to generalize how Chinese may perceive students of color.

Americans of Asian descent will have a very different experience than those of African descent, who will have a very different experience than those of Hispanic descent. However, students on online discussion boards about being black in China do mention experiences of overt and covert racial discrimination, from staring and hair-touching to harboring prejudicial beliefs and derogatory comments. Despite these, most students report that they feel the statements are made without menace and are the product of myth and ignorance. Students of color report having a positive experience of being black in China and look at most interactions as a chance to make a good impression and/or dispel stereotypes.

### Sexual Orientation and Identity

Generally speaking, the Chinese culture does not accept or understand homosexuality or bisexuality and can be extremely prejudicial. Being gay in Hong Kong can mean straddling two worlds: <https://www.1843magazine.com/dispatches/dispatches/being-gay-in-hong-kong-means-straddling-two-worlds> Gay students grapple with the question of whether they can confide in host country friends.

There may or may not be sufficient support for a homosexual or bisexual lifestyle outside of more liberal enclaves like Hong Kong or Beijing, or other coastal cities. Despite the challenges faced by the LGBT community in conservative China, the younger Chinese generations are more liberal, supportive of LGBT rights and a majority report favoring same sex marriage.

### Religion and Spirituality

Students in Mainland China are free to practice their religion but not to proselytize to the Chinese, as it is against Chinese law. Many of the restrictions regarding religious activities that you may have heard of do not apply to Hong Kong. Students of almost any religion can expect to find community and place of worship, though services in English might now always be easy to find.

Do not be surprised if students are assumed to be Christian, but religious travelers should feel encouraged to celebrate their personal religious beliefs.

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# Health, Safety, and Security

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The sections below provide information about health and safety risks and resources in Hong Kong. Refer back to the **Health & Safety** section of the GLO website and the modules in Canvas for more information about preparing for and responding to health, safety, and security concerns.

## Staying Healthy

Good medical facilities are available, and there are many Western-trained physicians in Hong Kong.

Air pollution is an increasing concern in Hong Kong. Congested vehicle traffic and mainland factories pump out ozone, sulfur, and nitrogen oxides, leading to a visible haze in the atmosphere on most days of the year. Average roadside pollution levels exceed WHO guidelines by 200% and continue to deteriorate, creating health risks for those with allergies, asthma, or cardiac problems.

## Safety and Security

In addition to the **Travel Safety** information outlined on the Global Learning and Global Safety and Security websites, you are advised to follow these precautions during your time in Hong Kong:

- Hong Kong has a low crime rate. Even so, you should exercise caution when in congested areas and pay particular attention to personal belongings while in crowded areas and while traveling on public transportation.
- Violent crime, though rare, does occur.
- You should try to avoid areas of demonstrations should they occur and exercise caution if in the vicinity of any large gatherings as even peaceful demonstrations can turn confrontational.
- Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available.
- Refer to the U.S. Department of State Country Information Sheet for safety and security guidelines: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/HongKong.html>

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# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## Packing

### ***Is there anything special that I need to pack for my program?***

Summer weather in Hong Kong is hot and humid. Light, loose fitting clothing will help you stay cool. Some buildings can be over-air conditioned so you may carry a very light sweater if you get cold easily. Winter is mild, especially compared to Chicago! Layering is recommended. Students can expect to dress the same as they do on campus at NU and you may want to bring one nicer outfit for a special occasion or class presentation.

## Food & Water

### ***Can I drink the water?***

Unless specifically advised not to in your housing, you can drink the tap water in Hong Kong.

### ***Is the local cuisine vegetarian friendly?***

It is not difficult to find vegetarian friendly restaurants, but it may be a challenge for vegans. Students should be aware that many traditional Asian foods use fish stock so even if there's no obvious fish or meat in a dish, it might not be animal-free. Students who eat fish will have a easier time while dining out.

## Money

### ***How much does the program cost?***

See **Appendix I** or refer to the program website for a breakdown of program costs.

### ***Are meals included in my Program Fee?***

No. All room and board costs are out-of-pocket costs for students. Students will find that dining on campus is surprisingly affordable while lots of choices.

### ***How much money should I plan to spend?***

Refer to the student budget in **Appendix I** for an estimate of costs for room and board, books, local transportation, and personal expenses. The figures included in the budget represent averages reported by past students spent over the entire duration of the program.

Be aware that your student budget does not include personal travel, and traveling can quickly add up. Travel costs will depend upon the nature of your trips and costs vary widely within the region with Japan and Singapore being the most expensive destinations while most countries in SE Asia have low in-country costs.

### ***How much cash should I bring?***

For safety reasons, you are advised to bring no more than \$200 cash with you, plus a credit card and an ATM or debit card to use for purchases and to access additional funds. It is also recommended that you bring a second credit card in case of emergency. If you choose to bring more U.S. dollars, be sure to pack safely and monitor your belongings while traveling.

## Communications

### ***How do I get a cell phone that works in Hong Kong?***

Most of the world's mobile telecommunications systems operate in Hong Kong, including GSM 900, PCS 1800, CDMA and WCDMA.

If you wish to stay connected immediately upon arrival in Hong Kong, you can purchase a Discover Hong Kong Tourist SIM card or a prepaid SIM card from recognized mobile phone network provider which offers free local calls, free WiFi, bundles of mobile data, as well as affordable international calls and SMS messages. Before purchasing one, you should check carefully the validity of the prepaid cards as it varies from days to months. They are available at the airport as well as at major convenience stores.

Once settled, you may consider subscribing to a monthly plan offered by a local mobile phone network provider to enjoy reasonable rates. Make sure the plan you choose is appropriate for your length of study.

## Transportation & Travel

### ***Will I be picked up from the airport?***

Airport pick-up is offered, but students must register in advance. There are safe and convenient public transportation options as well.

### ***How will I get back to the airport for departure?***

You can utilize the same options for departure, excluding university pick-up, that are available for arrival.

### ***How much free time do I have? What can I expect to do outside of class?***

This is up to you and how you organize your class schedule. There are a wide variety of places for you to explore in and around Hong Kong. Contact the Ambassadors for your program to get suggestions for things to do in your spare time:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/abroad/student-experiences/ambassador-program/student-ambassadors.html>

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# Links & Recommended Reading

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## Program & Country Information

- Program website: <https://www.northwestern.edu/abroad/study-abroad/explore-programs/asia/hong-kong-university-of-science-and-technology-exchange.html>
- Student Blogs: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/studyabroadblogs/>
- Connect with past students: <https://www.northwestern.edu/abroad/student-experiences/connect-with-students/index.html>
- CIA World Factbook Hong Kong: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hk.html>
- U.S. Department of State Country Guide for Hong Kong: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/HongKong.html>
- Discover Hong Kong: <http://www.discoverhongkong.com/us/index.jsp>

## Health & Safety

- Northwestern Office of Global Safety and Security: <http://www.northwestern.edu/global-safety-security/index.html>
- Northwestern Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>
- Northwestern Center for Awareness, Response, and Education (CARE): <http://www.northwestern.edu/care/>
- Northwestern Travel Health Services: <http://www.northwestern.edu/healthservice-evanston/medical-services/travel-health-services/index.html>
- World Health Organization: China: <https://www.who.int/countries/chn/en/>
- CDC: Health Information for Hong Kong: [https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/extended\\_student/hong-kong-sar?s\\_cid=ncezid-dgmg-travel-single-001](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/extended_student/hong-kong-sar?s_cid=ncezid-dgmg-travel-single-001)
- GeoBlue Health Insurance: <https://www.geo-blue.com/>
- Smart Traveler Enrollment Program: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

# Appendix I: Cost Breakdown

## 2019-2020 Program Cost Information Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Exchange (Hong Kong)

| <b>FEES CHARGED BY NORTHWESTERN</b>   |                                  |                                   |                                     |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|   | <b>Fall 2019</b>                 | <b>Full Year 2019-20</b>          | <b>Winter/ Spring 2020</b>          |
| <b>Program Fee</b><br>Students are charged a program fee equivalent to the Northwestern University tuition rate. The program fee covers program expenses, including academic fees, program administration, and orientation (if applicable). It also includes GeoBlue Global Health Insurance, which is purchased by GLO on students' behalf for the full length of the program. | \$18,744<br>1 quarter of tuition | \$56,232<br>3 quarters of tuition | \$28,116<br>1.5 quarters of tuition |
| <b>Study Abroad Administrative Fee</b><br>Students are exempt from the Study Abroad Administrative Fee.   | \$0                              | \$0                               | \$0                                 |
| <b>TOTAL FEES CHARGED BY NORTHWESTERN</b>   | <b>\$18,744</b>                  | <b>\$56,232</b>                   | <b>\$28,116</b>                     |

| <b>ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COSTS</b>   |                |                 |                |
|---|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>International Airfare</b><br>Students are responsible for making arrangements to fly round-trip to their host city. International airfares vary greatly based on the point of departure, carrier, and type of ticket purchased as well as volatility of airline industry pricing. Students may choose to take advantage of frequent flyer or other airline awards available to them, which could significantly lower their travel costs. | \$1,500        | \$1,500         | \$1,500        |
| <b>Room &amp; Board</b><br>Students are responsible for making their own accommodations arrangements, based on suggestions from GLO and the host institution (if applicable). Costs can vary by housing type. Housing and meal costs provided here represent expected averages.   | \$4,800        | \$9,600         | \$4,800        |
| <b>Visa Fees</b>  | \$150          | \$150           | \$150          |
| <b>HKUST Compulsory Insurance Plan</b>  | \$150          | \$300           | \$150          |
| <b>Books &amp; Supplies</b>   | \$100          | \$200           | \$100          |
| <b>Local Transportation</b>   | \$300          | \$600           | \$300          |
| <b>Personal Expenses</b><br>Personal expenses vary based on individual spending habits and budgets. Figures represent student-reported averages and include incidentals and living expenses, such as clothing, toiletries, entertainment, and communication expenses. Students who plan to travel outside of their program location should estimate an additional \$500-\$2,000.  | \$800          | \$1,600         | \$800          |
| <b>TOTAL ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COSTS</b>   | <b>\$7,800</b> | <b>\$13,950</b> | <b>\$7,800</b> |

|   |                 |                 |                 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>TOTAL STUDENT BUDGET (Fees + Estimated Additional Costs)</b> | <b>\$26,544</b> | <b>\$70,182</b> | <b>\$35,916</b> |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|