

# Staying home for a world class learning experience

**Douglas Parkes**

Whether it's handling international financial transactions or dealing with the huge volume of cargo that moves in and out of the city's port, Hong Kong companies require sophisticated employees who are up to date in the latest business practices and theory.

As one would expect, "Asia's world city" is home to some of the world's top MBA programmes – something that is essential in an era when business is increasingly global rather than just local.

Gone are the days when Hongkongers needed to head abroad for the best teaching. Last year, six institutions from mainland China and Hong Kong ranked in the top 100 in the *Financial Times'* Global MBA Ranking 2019.

One relatively new institution making waves is City University (CityU), which ranked fourth in the QS Top 50 under 50 rankings for 2020, and 15th in the *Times* Higher Education Asia University Rankings in 2019. However, it now aspires to become one of the world's leading global MBA programmes.

As befits a programme with international aspirations, CityU's MBA has increasingly sought to bring into the classroom practical and cutting-edge knowledge tempered with a global perspective. Students have benefited from a broad spectrum of experiential learning opportunities from around the world.



**Kevin Chiang.** Photo: CityU

In the UK, CityU has partnered with Imperial College London for a global brand management workshop, while University of California Berkeley of the United States helped offer a similar workshop focused on fostering entrepreneurship.

"These courses are all projects in which students will have to reach out and work with different organisations," explains professor Kevin Chiang Wei-yu, director of CityU's MBA programme.

"In the global brand management workshop, our MBA students have worked on projects for iconic brands including luxury car maker Bentley, supermarket chain Tesco, and Edwardian Hotels, where students developed branding strategies for the Asian market," Chiang continues.

"At the same time, the entrepreneurship workshop allowed students to learn from Berkeley faculty and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley through workshops and visits to innovative companies such as

Ford and Google. They put what they learn into practice by developing a comprehensive business plan, which they present to venture capitalists for genuine evaluation."

Closer to home, students also have the chance to take part in a diagnostic residential trip in Asia which provides the opportunity to work as part of a consulting team that helps partnering companies tackling business challenges. Although the course originally focused on mainland China, as inter-regional trade has expanded so have students' prospective destinations. Recent students have worked in countries as varied as South Korea, Cambodia and Malaysia.

Chiang is keen to emphasise that it is the hands-on components of CityU's course that are so valuable. Its MBA is designed to prepare student to take on business leadership roles spanning disciplines, industries and regions, providing tailor-made courses that allow students to gain first-hand experience of business and real-world challenges.

"Given the complex nature of the global business environment, and the needs of today's businesses practices, experiential learning or 'learning by doing' enables students to gain practical experience they can apply in real-world situations," says Chiang.

"Importantly, no matter what career they pursue, experiential learning can help students increase their business acumen and develop the cross-functional decision-making skills that are crucial for any profession."