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UNIVERSITY

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# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS HANDBOOK

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# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>International Students Office.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preparing for Overseas Education.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Settling in.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Living in Malaysia.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Overview.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Weather and Climate in Malaysia.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Malaysian Culture.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Currency .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Insurance.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Entertainment and Social Activities.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Immigration and Visas.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Employment.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Religion.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Driving in Malaysia.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Word of Caution.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>International Student Association.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Students Contact Information Guide.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>International Students Checklist .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Places of Interest in Perak.....</b>	<b>23</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the **Quest International University Perak (QIUP)**.

To you, the decision to study abroad might have been a small one – or, indeed, a rather big step. Either way you won't know what your experience will be like until you are here. This handbook is designed to help you prepare for the adventure of studying in Malaysia. In our experience the better prepared you are the more you will benefit from your time at the University.

While we are trying to answer many of your questions prior to your arrival in the Malaysia, some of your questions will only arise once you are here. The International Student Officer will serve as a resource to you and your parents or guardians throughout the application process and during your stay at QIUP. The Officer will be your

primary contact for any questions or concerns regarding visas and immigration issues, employment, travel and a host of other matters that may arise.

In keeping with the name of the University that carries the word “international”, we hope to have an international mix of staff and students in the University. There will be plenty of opportunities to mix with, and make friends with, fellow students and staff from different countries and cultures and we hope that one thing you will take away from the University is a better understanding of the cultural variation of our world.

This handbook is designed to provide you with information that is more targeted to International Students and should be read in conjunction with the Undergraduate Student Handbook.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE**

The International Students Office (ISO) is located on the second floor of the Administration Building and is staffed at most times during normal office hours. The ISO looks after all aspects of the University's interactions with institutions and students from outside Malaysia. In particular, it is involved with student recruitment, student visas, student exchanges, international student welfare and other issues directly related to international students.

Please ensure that you know the location of the ISO and use its facilities when needed.

During the academic year the ISO sponsors and co-sponsors events designed to promote cross-cultural sharing between the many groups at the University. All international students will be required to attend a special two-day orientation before the regular first year orientation begins. At QIUP, we ask that incoming international students to join us ahead of time as it is a wonderful opportunity

to get acquainted with the new culture, get assimilated with the campus, and provide a forum to answer your questions before the rush of orientation activities begins. At the ISO, we will check to make sure that all your immigration paperwork is in order as well as help you gain a better understanding of what your visa status means and how to maintain it; help to answer any questions that you might have about adjusting to life as a student in Malaysia, specifically life at QIUP; and meet students, staff and faculty members.

### **International Student Support**

The ISO is an integral part of the Student Affairs Division and is there specifically to support international students. Students often have anxieties and problems that are related to living and studying in a foreign country. The ISO provides a confidential point where you can go and seek advice relating to a wide range of issues.

Our International Student Officer will be available five days a week for

international students to discuss any issues that are of concern. At other times students can contact them via their email.

## **PREPARING FOR OVERSEAS EDUCATION**

Before you can board a plane and start your study abroad adventure, there are some formalities you will need to take care of. The earlier you start thinking about the things you need, the smoother your preparations will go. This list will help you consider some of the things you will have to do.

### **Obtaining a Visa**

Visa procedures vary from country to country. Make sure to check the website of the embassy or consulate in your country to find out what documents you need to bring. Documents you certainly need include: (1) a current valid passport; (2) evidence of financial support for the duration of time you will spend in Malaysia; (3) proof that you have a permanent residence outside Malaysia; (4) one or more passport pictures meeting Malaysian

requirements; and (5) a non-immigrant visa application.

### **Medical Insurance**

QIUP requires that all students buy the medical insurance provided by the University. While students are covered by the University medical insurance, you might nevertheless consider buying additional medical coverage.

### **Important Documents**

You need to bring all important documents relating to your legal, medical, and academic history with you. Such documents might include medical and dental records, certificates of immunizations, information about medical conditions and treatments, prescriptions for medication and eyeglasses or contact lenses, and official transcripts from secondary school and college. Make sure you photocopy all documents and leave some copies with a person you trust in your home country. It is also helpful to translate these documents into English before you leave your home country.

### **Packing**

Pack as light as possible. Remember that you might have to carry all your things at different times during the journey. If you are studying abroad for only a semester you might not need to bring your entire wardrobe. You might also want to leave room in your suitcase for souvenirs you will buy while in Malaysia. At the same time there might be things you want to bring because they will make you more comfortable and will make your transition to a new environment easier. Some exchange students and international students also like to bring small gifts from their home country to share with new friends abroad. This might be a means for you to share and explain your culture to your new acquaintances. If you have traditional or national clothing consider bringing it to wear at events sponsored by the International Students Association or other cultural events.

### **Travelling Tips**

You can book your flight as soon as you find the University start date for International Student Orientation. At this time, you might have already received the schedule of International Student Orientation. The University provides a complimentary pick-up from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA)/LCCT Airport/ Subang Airport for those international students (with Visa Approval Letter ) coming to the University for the first time. Long-distance traveling can be really exhausting, so try to get a good night's sleep before the trip, eat lightly and drink plenty of water. Label your luggage with both your home address and the address in Malaysia (if you do not have an address yet, use that of the ISO). Keep your passport, important documents, flight tickets, and money or traveller's cheques with you at all times. You might also want to pack everything you need for a one-night emergency stay into your hand luggage in case you get stuck at the airport or your luggage gets lost.

## **Money**

You should carry a small amount of Malaysian Ringgit (RM) with you while traveling so that you can buy some food or other small things you might need. You can change currency and travellers cheques at the banks and money changers. Please be sure that you carry plenty of small bills with you, as many shops and small businesses cannot give change for notes bigger than RM 50.

However, it is not a good idea to carry large sums of money. We recommend that you buy traveller's cheques or get a credit card that allows you to withdraw money from a cash machine when you need to. Upon arrival on campus, the International Students Officer can help you to set up an account with a local bank. It is highly recommended to have a Malaysian bank account because it will make payments so much easier. You are required to produce the following documents to the bank of your choice:

- Passport photocopy
- Original passport

- Bank drafts/travellers cheques/cash
- Complete the required forms

## **SETTLING IN**

For many of you this will be your first time away from home and also your first time living in a foreign country and consequently you may be finding it difficult to settle in to the University. The first thing that you have to do to overcome this problem is to realise that these emotions are quite normal and that you should not feel that you are different from others by feeling homesick or lonely. There are many people to help if you are finding it difficult to settle in but before they can do anything you have to let us know that you are having problems.

### **Adjusting to a New Environment**

For some going abroad for the duration of one's studies is exciting. At times, however, the confrontation with a foreign culture can be challenging. Studying abroad is a learning experience in every sense of the word. Besides your scholastic learning in university courses, you will get to know the Malaysian culture and

how people around you view their world and their lives. By experiencing and understanding a different way of life, you will also learn about things in your own culture you have never thought of before. This is your chance to broaden your view and reflect on and mature your own values. The process of learning about a new culture and finding your own place in the new environment can be confusing and tiring. The best way to deal with a new situation and find out about something you do not understand is to ask questions.

### **Culture Shock and Adjustment**

Culture shock is a normal phenomenon on your way to adjusting to a new environment. For some people, the encounter with a new culture can be shocking, indeed, but for most people culture shock is not as sudden and dramatic as you might expect.

When the excitement about being in a foreign country wears off, cultural

differences can become overwhelming. You might think your language skills are inadequate; you might be struggling with course work; you might be troubled by unfamiliar food; you might have difficulties interpreting other people's behavior; you might be offended by the way people act or dress or by their body language. There are a variety of symptoms of culture shock. Some people feel tired and nervous; some are frustrated with or even hostile toward the Malaysian culture; some get angry and irritated very easily; some isolate themselves or socialize only with other international students and people who speak their language. You might also feel very homesick and question why you decided to go abroad in the first place. A way to prepare yourself to deal with culture shock is to clarify for yourself why you want to study abroad. Knowing your personal expectations and goals will help you overcome periods of doubt.

## LIVING IN MALAYSIA

### Overview



Malaysia is one of the most pleasant, hassle-free countries in Southeast Asia. It is buoyant and wealthy, and has moved towards a pluralist culture based on a vibrant and interesting fusion of Malay, Chinese, Indian and indigenous cultures and customs. Situated at the crossroads of Southeast Asia, Malaysia is easily accessible from most parts of the world by air, land or sea.

Malaysia consists of thirteen states and three federal territories with a total landmass of 329,847 km<sup>2</sup>. The capital city is Kuala Lumpur while Putrajaya is the seat of federal government. The country is separated into two regions Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo by the South China Sea. Malaysia borders Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei and the Philippines. Malaysia is headed by a King referred

to as the Yang diPertuan Agong and politically led by a Prime Minister. The government is closely modeled after the British Westminster parliamentary system. The population of Malaysia is approximately 28 million people.

### Weather and Climate in Malaysia

Located near the equator, the weather is characterised by tropical climate. The country is generally warm throughout the year with temperatures ranging from 21° to 32° Celsius in the lowlands. This can however be as low as 16° Celsius in the highlands. Annual rainfall is heavy at 2,500mm (100 inches). On a rainy day, thunder and lightning often accompany the heavy downpour which normally lasts for about an hour or two. The high humidity level at 80% throughout the year favours light and sweat-absorbent material like cotton for daily dressing.

Generally, Malaysia has two distinct seasons. The dry season occurs during

the south-west monsoon from May and September. The northeast monsoon brings the rainy season to the country during mid-November till March.

## **Malaysian Culture**



Malaysia is a country with a mixture of cultures based around its main varied ethnic groups. Three races dominate West Malaysia i.e. the Malays, Chinese and Indians, along with the ethnic traditions of the Orang Asli and tribes, while in East Malaysia the major ethnic groups are the Ibans in Sarawak and the Kadazan and Muruts in Sabah. These cultural traditions are further enhanced by the influence of the British, Dutch, Portuguese and Thais.

As a visitor to Malaysia you will discover a wide range of customs and practices, some of which may be different from what is practised in your own country. Listed below are a

few of the customs commonly practised in Malaysia that may help your stay in the country:

### ***Introductions***

In Malaysia introductions are normally acknowledged with a handshake. In the Muslim culture, handshakes are generally exchanged between people of the same gender. Some Muslim women may acknowledge an introduction to a man with a nod of her head and smile. A handshake can be reciprocated if the woman offers her hand first to the man.

### ***Addressing a Person***

Malay men and women can be addressed by their first name. For instance, Amirul bin Yusof should be addressed as Mr Amirul and not Mr Yusof, as the latter is his father's name. The term 'bin' means 'son of' and 'binti' means 'daughter of'. Sometimes names are preceded by the terms Encik, Puan or Cik. These are the Malay terms for Mr. Mrs. and Miss respectively.

The Chinese have surnames which precede their given name. For instance, a woman whose name is Chia Wei Li can be addressed as Ms Chia. Some Chinese have English names, such as James Wong. It would be proper to address him as Mr Wong.

Indians can be addressed with their given names. For instance, Anand a/l Ravindran should be addressed as Mr Anand. The abbreviation 'a/l' stands for 'anak lelaki' meaning 'son of' and 'a/p' means 'anak perempuan' or 'daughter of'.

### ***Titles***

A number of Malaysians have been conferred titles by the Malaysian Government. Among these titles are Tun, Tan Sri, Dato and Datuk. It is appropriate to address them by their titles. Political dignitaries are conferred titles such as Yang Berhormat (YB) and Yang Amat Berhormat (YAB). The term Mr or Encik will not be necessary when addressing a person who has been conferred a title.

### ***Gestures***

The right hand is always used when eating with one's fingers or when giving and receiving objects. The right forefinger is not used for pointing at places, objects or persons, the thumb of the right hand with the four fingers folded under is the preferred usage.

### ***Conduct***

Public behaviour is especially important in Malaysian culture. Most Malaysians refrain from displaying affection (i.e. embracing or kissing) in public. As a visitor to Malaysia it would be appropriate for you to do the same.

### ***Places of Worship***

Shoes must be removed when entering places of worship such as mosques and temples. Some mosques provide robes and scarves for female visitors. Taking photographs at places of worship is usually permitted but it is polite to request permission first.

### ***Tipping***

Most hotels and restaurants include a 10% service charge and 5% Government sales tax on bills. Tipping is not customary but if you wish to show your appreciation for good service a small tip will be welcomed.

### **Currency**

The Malaysian currency is the Ringgit or RM but is still referred to by some people as 'dollar'. Until recently it was pegged to the US dollar (at 1US\$ = RM3.8) but recently it has been de-pegged and is now free to float within certain limits. The Ringgit comes in denominations of RM1, RM2, RM5, RM10, RM50 and RM100. Coins are 1 sen, 5 sen, 10 sen, 20 sen and 50 sen.

Foreign currencies can only be changed at Banks and licensed Money Changers.

### **Insurance**

It is obligatory that all international students have medical insurance cover and you are also strongly recommended to ensure that you have adequate insurance cover for your personal effects.

### ***Medical Insurance***

International Students are required to take out Health Insurance and information regarding this will have been sent to you prior to registration. The policy is to cover Hospitalisation and Surgery and Outpatient Treatment i.e. the cost of consultations or treatment at a General Practitioner Clinic.

### ***Personal Accident Insurance***

The University has taken out a policy to cover all students for personal accident insurance.

### ***Insurance of Personal Effects***

All students are recommended to take out insurance to cover loss, theft or damage to their personal effects. The University does not advocate any particular Insurance company but if you are in doubt as to how to go about insuring your personal effects please ask for assistance and do not use this as an excuse for not taking out insurance.

## **Entertainment and Social Activities**

Throughout the year the Student Association will be providing a variety of forms of entertainment and social activities, however, for those of you who wish to be more adventurous and seek out entertainment in and around Ipoh, the following will provide a starting point for you.

### ***Cinemas***

There are a number of cinema theatres in Ipoh located in the major shopping complexes.

### ***Clubs***

Anyone venturing into Ipoh for entertainment are reminded that it is not wise to travel alone, especially at night, and you are strongly recommended to travel in groups.

For your safety there are a few basic rules we recommend you to follow:

- Never go out alone. Go with friends who you know and trust.
- Do not let strangers buy you drinks or leave your drinks unattended.

- Make sure that you have a means of getting home if you are intending to stay out till late. Remember taxis may be more difficult to find after midnight.
- Do not accept lifts from strangers
- Make sure that friends know where you are if you are to be out late.

### ***Cafes and Restaurants (Off-Campus)***

As in all Malaysian towns there are plenty of restaurants and cafes in Ipoh and vary in price from very cheap to typical European prices so there should be something to cater for everyone's budget and tastes. Within Ipoh there are KFCs, McDonalds, Domino's Pizza and Pizza Hut outlets in addition to the Kopitiam or 'coffee houses'.

Within the vicinity of the campus there are a number of food outlets managed by private individuals. None of these outlets have any direct links to the University and their quality of service is not controlled by the University. They are just private food outlets like all the cafes and restaurants in Ipoh.

## **Immigration and Visas**

Most of you will have entered Malaysia for the sole purpose of education and will require a valid Student Visa in your passport throughout your stay at the University. The International Students Office (ISO) will have helped you get this far and will continue to help you during your time at the University. Listed below are a few of the situations where you may need to seek the help of the ISO.

**Entering Malaysia with a ‘Single Entry Visa’ applied for by using an ‘Visa Approval Letter for Foreign Student Studying in Malaysia’** – The Student Pass Sticker will be attached in your passport within **two (2) weeks** of arrival by the Malaysian Immigration. If you decided to obtain a Multiple Entry Visa, you will have to submit the fee together with your passport to the ISO.

**Entering Malaysia without a Visa after obtain Visa Approval Letter** – You will be charged the fee for a

‘Journey-Performed Visa’ (cost between RM6.50 to RM50.00 depending on your country of origin). Please take note that this is not a Multiple Entry Visa. This usually applies to Nationals from Indonesia and Bangladesh but is not applicable to holders of passports from most Commonwealth Countries.

**Extension of Student Pass/Multiple Entry Visa** – You will only be granted a Student Pass for a year or (part of a year), depending on your validity of passport and your examination results. You are personally responsible for the timely submission of the documents for renewal of your Student Pass. You must **submit your passport and other documents to the International Students Office one (1) month before the expiry date of your Student Pass**. There will be a separate charge for the extension of the Student Pass and Multiple Entry Visa. Students will bear the extra charges or compound for late submission of documents.

**Loss of Passport** – Please make sure you lodge a police report immediately after you realize your passport is missing or within **24 to 48 hours** of the incident. You will need to submit a copy of the Police Report to your country’s Embassy/Consulate Office in Malaysia as part of the new passport application. Please submit a copy of the police report to the International Students Office. The International Students Office will apply for the transfer endorsement of the Student Pass to your new passport at the Malaysian State Immigration.

**Carry your passport at all times** – The Malaysian Police and Immigration Enforcement officers conduct random checks at public places. You are expected to carry either your passport or your ‘green card’, if you have been issued with this new student card. If you are not in possession of a ‘green card’, please make sure you carry your original passport and your student ID Card.

**Contact** - For further enquiries please contact Mr Sukri at 05-2490500 or see him at his office situated within the International Students Office on the

second floor of the Administration Building.

## **Employment**

International students who enter Malaysia on a Student Visa have few opportunities to undertake part time paid employment. Although technically there are some legal opportunities for students to work, the limitations placed upon you by the Malaysian Immigration Department make it virtually impossible for you to undertake any form of paid employment whilst studying in Malaysia.

You are only allowed to work during long vacations and then only for up to 20 hours per week in a very restricted category of jobs. If you are interested in undertaking employment at any stage during your studies please first consult either Mr Sukri. Under no circumstances should you undertake unofficial employment as this could result in your Student Visa being revoked.

## **Religion**

Although Malaysia's official religion is Islam; it allows freedom of worship and most of the world's religions are represented in Malaysia. There are mosques, Buddhist temples, Hindu temples and Christian churches in Ipoh and on campus there are prayer rooms for Muslim staff and students in the Administration Building, Examinations Building and Medical Building.

The Quest International University Perak Malaysia Campus respects all religions and expects all students to do the same.

## **Driving in Malaysia**

It is possible to drive in Malaysia on a full, valid, driving licence from most countries. If you intend to drive a lot it may be worth checking to see if you are entitled to obtain a Malaysian Driving Licence. (see <http://www.jpj.gov.my> for details). It is a legal requirement that you carry your driving licence with you at all times when you are driving in Malaysia and failure to produce your

licence when stopped by police may result in the imposition of a fine.

Most foreigners can drive in Malaysia using a valid driving license from their own country. However, your home country's license is only valid for 3 months beginning from the day you arrive in Malaysia. After three months, your home country license is no longer valid.

It is advisable for you to apply for an International Driving Permit issued by your home country prior to coming to Malaysia. The International Driving Permit is not available from the Embassy or High Commission here. The International Driving Permit is valid for a year and states all the countries you can drive in.

Please be careful when driving in Malaysia, the 'rules of the road' may be different from what you are used to and until you have adjusted to the local driving conditions you are even more vulnerable and likely to be involved in an accident. Please ensure that you wear a safety belt at all times and ensure that your passengers also wear safety belts. If riding a

motorcycle please ensure that you wear an approved crash helmet.

### **Word of Caution**

We hope all our students will make maximum benefit of being at the QIUP both academically and socially. However, in order to enjoy life to the full there are a few precautions that you may need to take. These include:

- a) Do not underestimate the power of the sun in Malaysia, especially for those with fair skin it is recommended that you use a high factor 'sun block' and whenever possible cover your skin when the sun is strong. Remember sunburn can be very painful.
- b) If you are new to the tropics you are advised to use an insect repellent to prevent, or at least reduce, mosquito bites.
- c) Take care when crossing roads, cars drive fast and motorbikes can appear without warning!
- d) Smile! Malaysians react very positively to anyone who smiles at them, although they may not smile first.

- e) Respect the cultures and beliefs of others. Malaysia is a multicultural, multiracial society that allows freedom of worship to any religion.
- f) Avoid being a victim of theft – especially when in towns and cities do not carry valuables or large amounts of money and if you have a bag ensure that you keep a tight hold on it. Also we strongly recommend that you do not keep large amounts of cash in your room.
- g) For your personal safety you are recommended not to go out alone, especially at night.

The above comments are not meant to scare you as Malaysia is no more dangerous than any other country but are simply listed as sensible precautions that you should take anywhere.

Please feel free to talk to your academic tutor, the Student Counsellor or the International Students Officer if you feel this will help. The Student Counselling Office is located on the third floor of the Administration Building.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

All International Students and any Malaysian student interested in international affairs will be welcome to join this society which will be established for the benefit of the student body. The International

Student Society is a society under the auspices of the International Students Office and further details can be gained from that office.

## STUDENTS CONTACT INFORMATION GUIDE

### International Students Office Staff

Name	Number
Mr Sukri - International Students Officer	012696 0980
Ms. Jeslynder – Student Affair Officer	0126510980

### Important Contacts - On Campus

Name	Number
Student Recruitment Division	605-2490500
Student Counselling Division	605-2490500 Ext 277
Student Accommodation	605-2490500 Ext 257
Student Affair	605-2490500 Ext 245
Maintenance Office	605-2419890
ICT Division	605-2490500 Ext 226

### In Case of Emergency

Name	Number
Police/Ambulance	999
Fire Brigade	994
From any mobile phone	112
Ipoh Police Station	605-2451500
SMS Rakan Cop (POLICE)	32728

### **Clinics & Hospitals**

For a more detailed list on Panel Hospitals covered by your Medical Insurance, please get in touch with your International Students Officer.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number</b>
Hospital Fatimah Ipoh	605-5455777
KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital	605-2418777
Perak Community Specialist Hospital	605-2545594

### **Hotels**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number</b>
Hotel Syuen Ipoh	605-2538889
Heritage Hotel Ipoh	605-2428888
Hotel Impiana Ipoh	605-2555555

### **Mobile Operators**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number</b>
Celcom	603-3630 8888
DiGi	016 221 1800
Maxis	603-7492 2123

### **Lost ATM Cards**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number</b>
CIMB	1 300 88 0900
HSBC	603-2050 7979
Maybank	1 800 88 2828

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CHECKLIST**

Apply to the Malaysian Immigration Department through the International Students Office (Mr Sukri) for an extension of student pass at least **one month** before your student visa expires.

Check that your passport is still valid. If necessary apply to your Embassy or High Commission for a new one.

If you have been issued with a 'green card' by the Malaysian Immigration Department please ensure that you carry it with you at all times. If you are not in possession of a 'green card' carry your original passport.

If you are going abroad for a holiday or going home for the vacation make sure that you have the necessary documentation. You may need to show these to the Immigration Officer at the airport on your return.

A small request from us is that you inform us whenever you change addresses or phone numbers. Just complete a Personal Information Form at International Students Office so that

we can update our records and contact you for any emergencies. The International Students Office is always open to you, and we hope you will drop in to visit periodically, as well as to direct questions of a more urgent nature to us.

Before taking employment as student, ensure that you received permission from Immigration Department through International Students Office with the applicants present at Immigration Office. If approved, Immigration Department will stamp in your passport which says:

“ Permitted to work as part time worker in Restaurant, Petrol Kiosk, Mini Market, Hotel, as long as the Student Pass in valid”.

Attend classes regularly. This is important because when you apply for an extension of student pass, your attendance from previous year must be achieved at least 90% .

If you are absent from the University, inform your lecturer/tutor as to the reason and obtain a medical certificate from government hospital

(Immigration Department not accepted medical certificate from private hospital/clinic) if your absence is health related.

If you are in difficulties, contact your mentor or the International Students

Office. Do not leave it hoping the problem will go away.

Be sure you know what has been stamped in your passport and when your visa expires!

## PLACES OF INTEREST IN PERAK

### GUA TEMPURUNG



You will be awed by five gigantic domes with ceilings resembling tempurung (coconut shells) forming the cave, and giving its name Gua Tempurung. The cave system stretches about 1.5km, and is believed to have sheltered prehistoric communities since 8000 BC.

Crawl, scabble and even lower yourself into impossible looking

crevices as you go deep down to uncover the secrets of the largest limestone cave in Peninsula Malaysia.

An underwater river called Sungai Gua Tempurung runs about 1.6 km through the cave which you can indulge in some spelunking activities. An absolute delightful excursion for the adventurous and those who don't mind getting their

hands dirty as they embark on the thrill of caving.

Choose from several guided tours to suit individual preferences and fitness level. The short tours provide basic information of the cave and are suitable for those who don't want to get messy and have little time to spare. A walkway and platforms offer the visitors' convenience and safety.

## LUMUT AND PANGKOR ISLAND



Formally a small fishing town some 84KM from Ipoh, Lumut is well known for its beautiful shell collections and coral handicrafts. It is also frequently visited by tourists travelling to Pangkor Island, being the main departure point to the island. The journey to and

from Pangkor Island takes approximately 30 minutes,



with an interval of 30-45 minutes, and the fee costs about RM10 per return trip.

Pangkor Island is one of the most famous island holiday destinations in Malaysia for its serene beaches, crystalline blue waters and panoramic sunsets dusk after dusk. Once upon a time, in the 17th century, the Dutch built a fort on the island to better oversee the tin trade industry in Perak. Today,



the remains of the Dutch Fort still stands for visiting tourists to stop by.

Derived from the Thai word 'Pang Ko', which means 'beautiful island', Pangkor Island is an ideal getaway for anyone who seeks solitude and peace of mind from hectic city living. There are even bicycles for rent, which you can take a leisurely ride around the island, and partake in a wide range of sun and sea activities such as fishing and snorkelling.

## KUALA KANGSAR – THE ROYAL TOWN



A historical beacon filled with quaint landmarks, the 150-year old town of Kuala Kangsar is an intriguing mixture of heritage, culture and old world charm. Just 30 minutes away from Ipoh, the state's oldest district is also the royal town of Perak where Istana Iskandariah, the Sultan's palace resides.

History buffs can begin their heritage trail by taking a nostalgic walk up Bukit Chandan. Breathe in the clean fresh air and enjoy the scenic views of Sungai Perak while exploring historical buildings such as the Malay College and Clifford School (both over

100 years old), the breathtaking Masjid Ubudiah, the royal palace Istana Iskandariah and the picturesque Galeri Sultan Azlan Shah. Also not to be missed is the oldest rubber tree in Jalan Raja Chulan, which is also one of the two oldest rubber trees in Malaysia. It originated from nine seedlings brought from Brazil by an English botanist in 1877 and is still thriving.

Beyond its rich historical legacy, Kuala Kangsar also showcases the finest crafts in the form of Labu Sayong (gourd-shaped pottery). Take a short boat ride to Kampung Sayong and immerse yourselves in

the traditional art of making labu sayong that keeps water cool even in hot weather. Those interested in traditional weaponry making should pay a visit to the keris and parang maker at Bukit Chandan. The friendly and skilful artisans of Kuala Kangsar will be all too happy to share the art behind their craft with visitors.

For the hungry traveller, Kuala Kangsar offers a gamut of delicious local cuisines. Get a taste of Kuala Kangsar's famous laksa (spicy noodle soup) and cendol (sweet dessert broth) at Medan Selera Sungai Perak by the riverside. The laksa,

which has great texture, is made of special flour and is accompanied by the delicious watery fish and shrimp gravy. For a dose of Hainanese goodness, try the pau (steamed Chinese bun with a choice of beef, chicken and kaya fillings)

at Yat Lai Restaurant at Jalan Kangsar. Word has it that these paus are served to the Perak royal family, so if it's good for the royals, it should be good for you, too.

So, whatever your interest may be, Kuala Kangsar effortlessly mesmerises; casting a spell of history and unadulterated charm to all that graces its path.

## ROYAL BELUM STATE PARK



Older than the Amazon forest, the previously inaccessible 130-million year old Royal Belum rainforest is a literal playground for some of the most exotic wildlife in the world. The 117,500 hectares of land was given the Royal status on 31 July 2003 when it came under the protection of the Perak royal family.



Rich in biodiversity, 3 out of the 20 known species of the Rafflesia flower can be found in Royal Belum. And all the 10 species of hornbills in Malaysia also reside there.

It is one of the remaining places where you can view the animals roaming freely in their natural habitat. Avid nature lovers can get their fill of wildlife sightings from the



observation shelters known as bumbun stationed near the salt licks located on the north and south part of Sungai Papan.

The estimated 60 salt lick locations in Royal Belum are natural salt deposits which animals regularly lick to get their much-needed mineral sustenance. Many wildlife species including elephants, the Sambar Deer, mouse deer, tapirs, wild boars, the Sumatran Rhino, seladang,

bears and tigers visit the salt licks after dark.

Your Royal Belum experience would not be complete without a stopover at the Orang Asli (aborigines) village. The gummy smiles of the Jahai people of the Negrito tribe and their ancient song of welcome done to the rhythmic beats of bamboo shoots (Sewang) will warm your heart. You can also try your hand at popping

balloons with the blowpipe. For the Orang Asli, the blowpipe is the single most essential tool for hunting and self-defence.

Take a tour around the village that comprises of thatched huts, some vegetation like banana trees and very little else. Cute little girls clad in colourful sarongs peeped at visitors shyly from afar.

On sale are lovely handmade products like bangles and wooden combs. Rafting is also one of water sports that you can indulge in during your stay at Royal Belum. The aborigines made it look so easy, gliding gracefully over the lake waters on their main mode of transportation surrounded by the lush verdant rainforest that is Royal Belum.

## BUKIT MERAH LAKETOWN



Bukit Merah Laketown has much to offer as it is one of Malaysia's premier eco-tourism destinations in the northern region. It is an exciting place with its

Water Park being the main attraction.

Anyone who has paid a visit here will have enlightening stories about fun and exciting activities they had there, particularly

one on the water theme park.

There are also shops to hunt for souvenirs and among other things at very reasonable prices as well

as restaurants to feast your senses.

A one day trip may not be enough as you will be

tempted to spend at least another day at one of the 174 rooms available for guests at the resort. The

facilities available include in-room fridge, amenities and movie channels.

## SUNGAI KLAH HOT SPRINGS



Reputed to be one of the best managed hot springs in Malaysia, Sungai Klah Hot Springs has about 6,000 visitors every weekend. Nestled within the FELDA plantation, it is located 200 feet above the sea level at the foothill of the Titiwangsa Range, the backbone range of Peninsular Malaysia. Upon arrival, visitors will encounter serene and lush forest patches, and clear cold mountain streams that surround the vicinity.

Sungai Klah is also one of the hottest points in Malaysia with a hot spring temperature that reaches 102°C. This hotspot has been converted into an Egg Boiling Pool, where visitors can swing by with baskets of raw eggs to boil. It has been said that the boiled eggs taste different as they absorb the mineral properties of the hot springs. In 2006, they also achieved the world's egg-boiling record having

boiled 50,480 eggs within in 43 hours.

There are private Jacuzzis for quiet rejuvenating sessions, as well as a water reflexology feature, where the jutting stones under water can help in the body's blood circulation. Visitors can also visit the water theme park surrounding the hot springs, which is a surefire hit with the children.

Opening hours: 8AM-7PM

## ZOO TAIPING AND NIGHT SAFARI



Located within the Taiping Lake Gardens and by the foot of Maxwell Hill, Taiping Zoo houses both local and exotic wildlife in excellent lush surroundings, making it a popular spot for family outings. Established in 1961, it is oldest zoo in the country and the only Zoo in northern Peninsular Malaysia.

Enjoy the exotic sights and sounds of some of



Malaysia's wild animals in an enclave of natural settings with streams, lakes and abundance of flora.

More than 180 species of fauna totalling 1300 individuals including birds, reptiles and mammals can be observed within the new "Open Concept" animal enclosures. These enclosures are closely modelled after the natural habitat of the respective animal and has well-



received by the public. Among the wildlife here are the endangered species such as the whitehead eagle (Brahmini Kita/Halistur Indus), honey bears (Helactus Malayanus), black panthers, Orang Utans, the Malaysian elephants and tigers. There are also a host of animals from foreign lands including the African lions.