

The more you know about the industry in which you're interested in working, the easier your job hunt will be:

- Local business magazines are readily available on newsstands
- The Canadian, Australian, American, and British Chambers of Commerce publish directories of their countries' businesses in Hong Kong
- The Hong Kong Trade Development Council carries annual reports for a large number of companies, extensive information on Hong Kong's business relations with other countries, industry-specific publications and a computerized information system.

Work Permits

Hong Kong Immigration discourages people from coming to Hong Kong as tourists and looking for work. Job seekers are supposed to find a job from overseas and apply for a work permit from a British visa office in their own country. In order to get a work visa from within Hong Kong, the employer must demonstrate that the position cannot be filled locally and that there is an urgent need for the worker.

In practice, there is little problem in getting a work permit in Hong Kong once you are offered a job by an employer. However, there are signs that the Hong Kong government is getting more strict with work permits, especially where it is difficult for an employer to demonstrate that an overseas employee can do the job better than a local resident who may have worked or studied in the West.

It normally takes from four to six weeks to get a work permit.

Salary Expectations

Most companies ask job applicants to indicate their salary expectations. Bear in mind that the cost of living in Hong Kong is approximately 40 per cent higher than in Canadian cities. But your tax will bill would only be about 15 per cent in Hong Kong if you're no longer a Canadian resident.

Salaries vary widely, but Cantonese speaking expatriates usually command a higher

salary than non-Cantonese speakers. Generally, Hong Kong salaries for Cantonese-speaking expatriates are 25 per cent higher than in Canada.

It's important to be flexible in your salary demands and not miss a potential opportunity. If you can prove yourself, rewards will come quickly. However, while you don't want to scare off an employer with salary expectations that are too high, you have to be careful not to make an employer think there is something wrong with you if your salary expectations are too low.



ACCOUNTING/FINANCE

There is great demand for all types of accountants in Hong Kong, with priority given to job seekers who speak Cantonese.

The greatest demand in accounting for non-Cantonese speaking job-seekers is in audit. CA, CMA and CGA designations are recognized, although a CA qualification will provide the best prospects. Accountants who wish to be professionally certified in Hong Kong have to take additional courses and exams in order to be qualified. An accountant with five years of experience can expect to earn HK\$30,000 to HK\$40,000 monthly.

Although an accounting designation is not as important for work as a controller or accountant in local companies, it's more difficult to get these types of jobs without speaking Cantonese. However, some employment agencies report that an experienced non-Cantonese speaking expatriate will do well in the multinational corporation job market. Experience with one of the big accounting firms is also a way to open doors to industry later.

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Most analysts predict that the strong demand for accountants and auditors will continue. The greatest need will be for accountants with knowledge of accounting procedures in China and Mandarin-language ability and who are prepared to travel into China or be based in China.

BANKING/FINANCE

There is strong demand for occupations in this area, including positions in retail and corporate banking, corporate finance, investment banking and securities.

Cantonese language ability is especially important in retail banking, and Mandarin is an asset. Competition for the best jobs in investment banking is fierce, and experience and an MBA from a well-known university are essential. Although experience and technical skills are the most important requirements in investment banking, prospective employees who speak Cantonese or Mandarin and are knowledgeable about Asian business and culture have the best prospects.

Many banks recruit internally, so it may be difficult to get a job in banking at the middle management level. At higher levels, foreign banks often transfer employees from overseas. However, those seeking a senior management position may be able to convince a foreign bank to hire them on local terms rather than someone from overseas on an expatriate package.

At the management training level, prospects are quite good for recent graduates in commerce and economics who speak Cantonese or Mandarin. For recent graduates who are non-Chinese speakers, the job market in Hong Kong is difficult, except for those from the top business schools who are very aggressive in their job hunt.

For non-Cantonese speakers with experience, jobs in corporate finance, securities trading, financial analysis and back-room operations of retail banks hold the best prospects. Canadian banks are small non-retail operations in Hong Kong and are most likely to hire Cantonese-speaking employees locally.

Salaries vary widely. Credit officers with