A Date with UC and MHIT

A testimonial by an outstanding graduate

*The **University of Canterbury in New Zealand** has always maintained a close partnership with numerous top laboratories worldwide, attracting countless international students who choose to pursue further studies at the University of Canterbury. **Kris Tong**, an exceptional graduate of the Master of Human Interface Technology (MHIT), is one of these students. Today, join me as we delve into Kris's story and his journey with UC.*

Hello, everyone! My name is Kris, and I am a postdoctoral researcher at UC HIT Lab NZ. I pursued both my Master's and Doctoral degrees in Human-Computer Interaction Technology at HIT Lab NZ, graduating earlier this year with a Ph.D. Now, I continue my research work as a postdoctoral researcher.

Hello Kris, tell us the main reasons you chose the University of Canterbury and the MHIT program?

Before coming to New Zealand, I worked at a VR start-up, focusing on the interaction design of VR games and creative tools. Therefore, when it came to choosing my area of specialization, it was only natural for me to gravitate towards VR applications and immersive storytelling.

The reason I chose New Zealand was twofold: I fell in love with the country's natural landscapes during a previous visit, and I was deeply impressed by Christchurch. When I searched online for "New Zealand VR research institutions," UC's HIT Lab NZ and their MHIT program were the first links that caught my attention. After further exploration, I believed that conducting VR-related research in such a laboratory would provide a vastly different and unique experience compared to my previous work

in the industry. Consequently, I decided to apply for UC's MHIT Master's program.

What is HIT Lab NZ?

The Human Interface Technology Lab New Zealand, or HIT Lab NZ for short, is located on the campus of the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. It is the country's only national-level research center for human-computer interface technology.

Established in 2002, this laboratory is the oldest and largest human-computer interaction lab in New Zealand, focusing on the research of emerging technologies such as VR and AR, human-computer interaction, remote collaboration, visualization technology, and immersive game design.

Its aim is to assist and empower humans in problem-solving through the study, research, invention, development, and dissemination of technology.

After years of development and research, the research outcomes of HIT Lab NZ have played a significant role in fields such as medicine, rehabilitation, education and training, entertainment, and business. Not only benefiting humanity as a whole, but also providing broader employment opportunities for the students of the University of Canterbury.

For more information about HIT Lab NZ, please visit these websites:
https://www.hitlabnz.org
https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/hitlab/

About the MHIT Course

Course Duration: 12-14 months   **Academic Level:** 9   **Intake:** February

Entry Requirements

- This program is a research-oriented course, and students are generally advised to have some research experience. Graduates from four-year undergraduate programs in China are eligible to apply. If there is no relevant research experience, the dean of the department will further evaluate the student's background. Relevant backgrounds are computer science, design, psychology, engineering, and other related fields are considered.
- If the student's undergraduate institution and program are accredited by the China Engineering Education Accreditation Association, students can apply directly apply to this course after completing their undergraduate studies. Please refer to the following link for a list of accredited institutions and programs: https://www.ceeaa.org.cn/jyzyrzxh/query_platform/index.html
- Weighted average requirements for third and fourth year of undergraduate studies: 80% for 985/211 institutions; 85% for non-985/211 institutions.
- IELTS overall score of 6.5, with no sub-score below 6; TOEFL overall score of 90, with no sub-score below 19; PTE overall score of 58, with no sub-score below 50.

Course Advantages

- Christchurch is known as the "Silicon Valley of New Zealand" and has the second-largest high-tech industry in the country. Graduates have promising job prospects, and there is a continuous demand for professionals in the field.
- 100% employment rate, with a starting salary of NZD$95,000 for Master's graduates.
- Nearly 30% of graduates choose to pursue a Ph.D. for further studies.
- This program is based at HIT Lab NZ, and its research outcomes have a positive impact on fields such as medicine, sport, education and training, entertainment, and business. It also provided virtual training scenarios and equipment to the New Zealand delegation for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.
- Successful applicants have the opportunity to receive generous scholarships.

What is your biggest takeaway from studying at UC and HIT Lab NZ?

Reflecting on my study experience at UC and HIT Lab NZ, there are two things that have left a deep impression on me.

The first is that my horizons have expanded greatly. During my time at UC, I had access to the latest industry news, cutting-edge knowledge in professional circles, as well as research tools and technologies. Through the internet and the various services and resources provided by the university, I had access to a broader range of resources than when I was working in China, and at the same time, I was exposed to internationalization and diversity. On the UC campus, I also had the opportunity to meet teachers and students from around the world, which was a significant advantage. These experiences allowed me to understand my own situation and shortcomings while quickly utilizing these resources to make up for any deficiencies.

Comparing my previous working state to the experience of studying at the master's and doctoral levels, my self-management skills have been greatly exercised and improved. The learning programs at UC provide students with a great deal of freedom, which is different from the learning and working environments I was familiar with before. During my studies, in addition to the fixed courses, I had the freedom to manage my own spare time. I could decide when to read professional papers and when to learn the specialized skills required for research. The classmates and staff at the university were very friendly and helpful. At the same time, this self-directed learning pace greatly enhanced my ability to manage my own time. It was challenging at first, but with the help of professors in the lab and university staff, I gradually adapted and gained the ability to manage and regulate my daily life.

Looking back, besides the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills, this was one of the most significant gains during my time at UC.

After living and studying in New Zealand and Christchurch for these past few years, how would you describe the lifestyle here?

During my years in New Zealand, I had many interesting and memorable experiences. The mountains, rivers, glaciers, and lakes have all become travel memories and beautiful moments. But what runs through them all is the feeling I had about New Zealand and life in Christchurch - simple and pure. Here, the relationships between people are very straightforward, and everyone leads a spiritually rich life without the pressures of intense competition. Moreover, whether in the city or the outskirts, the living environment in Christchurch gives a sense of limitless openness. There is no stress of traffic congestion when driving, and it is very convenient to go to the mountains or the seaside for weekend outings, without long

queues or restrictions on tourist attractions. By reducing external anxieties and pressures, people become more relaxed, and their attitude towards life becomes more optimistic. In many ways, people tend to be happier and more comfortable.

What advice do you have for younger students who are about to come to Christchurch and study at UC?

For the students who are about to come to Christchurch to study at UC, I would like to give one piece of advice, 'master the skill of proactive communication.' In English-speaking countries, if you don't express your thoughts actively, no one will truly understand your needs and feelings. Therefore, be brave to step out of your comfort zone, communicate with others, and interact with different people.

Try to avoid staying in your familiar small circle, as you will miss out on the diverse and colorful campus life and experiences that are not easily accessible in your home country. At the same time, don't worry too much about your English proficiency or accent, or your English grades. As long as you dare to express yourself, no one will really care about your accent or vocabulary level. What's more important is not to worry about asking too many questions or always bothering others for help. Here, communication is the source of everything.

Has Kris's story ignited your interest in living in Christchurch and studying at UC?
If you meet the requirements, don't hesitate to submit your application and begin your exclusive journey with UC and Christchurch.

Apply at
https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/qualifications-and-courses/masters-degrees/master-of-human-interface-technology/

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/JAo0LshBUvqpWwPyKiZ4EQ?fbclid=IwAR0-mfhVav-RcY0jqLiNDnse4o_1ReVRdifVJXM3B0P5kgg1xAHfIdQ7XOU