



UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Exchange Report



INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT
EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Year 3, BSc ECOF

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2016/17 Fall

Section 1. Monthly Activity Log

Sep 2016

I arrived in Manchester in mid-September. The weather was still pleasant but it was indeed a lot colder than Hong Kong. The first week was an orientation week with registration, student fairs, welcome events for new students and exchange students, and many parties going on. This month was mostly about settling down and meeting new friends. Teaching style in the UK is very different from that of HKUST. Some HKU friends that I met say they find the style similar with that of their home institution, where fewer lectures are held and more time are left for self-study. “Don’t be spoiled by the US system”, that was what the exchange program director said in the welcoming meeting. One must-do in Manchester for sports fans is watching a Man-United football game. Although I am not a big fan of football, I still could not resist the temptation to witness the craze for the world-renowned team. Man-United has such a strong fan base that has been supporting its development for many years. Manchester is not a big city, but it has its appeal to me.



Town Hall, Manchester, UK



Old Trafford, Manchester, UK



International Fair, UoM, UK

Oct 2016

All classes and seminars start in this month. I also took an academic writing course to enhance my essay writing skills. Although the school was getting busier, I still seized the chance to explore the UK. I travelled to the Lake District with the International Society, and went on a self-organized trip with my exchange friends to Cambridge and Stratford-upon-Avon (Shakespeare's birthplace). My birthday was at the end of the month and I had a celebration with my new friends, which was a unforgettable memory.



Lake District, UK



Cambridge, UK

Nov 2016

There are no midterm exams in UoM but there is a study break from the end of October to the beginning of November. The exchange students are encouraged to explore more of Europe and many of us bring our schoolwork to other cities or countries. I went to Italy and Switzerland to visit my UST friends who are also on exchange. The travelling was great fun, after which I buried myself in readings and essays. Some exchange students took Special Assessment so they needed to hand in 5-6 essays in this month. I personally took normal assessment so I only have two.



Switzerland



Venice, Italy

Lavaux,

Dec 2016

I handed in two essays during this month and studied for exams. However, this month is also the most festive month for British people. The Christmas break began in mid-December, and most British students went back home to celebrate the festival. I went to London for a weekend after the teaching period. On Christmas Day, almost no stores were opened so we had a gathering on Christmas Eve and stayed in the hall on Christmas Day. On Boxing Day, I went to Chester for sightseeing and shopping. There are many discounts during the Christmas season, both online and instore.

Jan 2017

In January, I went to Belfast in Northern Ireland and Dublin in Ireland for three days, which was an exotic experience. Northern Ireland is quite different from England, although in the same country. After the trip, I returned to Manchester and studied for the final exams. The learning commons could be very crowded during the month. My exams finished on Jan 25, after which I celebrated the Lunar Chinese New Year with my friends. We prepared a big dinner together and made dumplings. It also took me a while to post some of my stuff home and to pack my luggage. I departed Manchester at the end of January.



Northern Ireland, UK
Dublin, Ireland

Section 2: General Exchange Information

1) Visa Procedures

For Hong Kong Passport holders, no visa is needed to study in the University of Manchester. I am a Chinese Passport holder so I applied for a Short-term Study Visa for my stay which was less than 6 months. I also applied for a Schengen Visa for other European countries.

2) Orientation Activities

There are many orientation activities in the first week where you could meet the other exchange students. Do seize the chance to make some friends so that you could either hang out with them or go on trips together later. Many of the events include drinking so if you are good at it and enjoy it, you are always welcome to join!

3) International Services & Activities

There is an International Society for international university students in Manchester. They organize regular trips to other cities around the UK and frequent gatherings with food and drinks. If you go to the International Society and indicate you are an exchange student, they will only charge you 10 GBP for member fee, whereas the original price is 20 GBP. It is worth to become a member since the trips are good with discounts for members.

4) Accommodations

The university arranges on-campus accommodation for each exchange student. They have many options, some of which are closer to the main campus and some more remote. You would have three choices and popular residences are the Weston Hall, the Denmark Road, the Union State. I personally lived in the Opal Gardens, which was a nice place with comparatively better facilities. The drawback of the Opal Gardens is that it is not so close to the main campus. There are three residential areas: the City Campus, the Victoria Park Campus, and the Fallowfield Campus. I would not recommend the Fallowfield Campus because it is too far away from everything, although the room rates there are lower.

5) Courses Registration

In July or August, the university would send you the full course list, in which all course descriptions and time schedules are available. Exchange students can register for any course without difficulty. The minimum you should take is five courses, and the maximum is six. Please find the courses I took below.

Course Title	Assessment	Course Review
International Finance	100% Essay	Difficult but essay is okay
Managerial Economics	100% Essay	Moderate
Economics of Sport	25% Essay + 75% Exam	Generally easy
International Marketing	100% Exam	Difficult
e-Business and e-Marketing	100% Exam	Generally easy

6) Teaching & Assessment Methods

Most common teaching methods are lectures and seminars. Lectures are held weekly and seminars not necessarily. The university allows you to take Special Assessment (SA) instead of final exams, which is to hand in essays for each course. This would allow you to finish the semester earlier and leave earlier. Most of the exchange students seem to be taking SA.

7) Sports & Recreation Facilities

There are many free sports activities organized by the university and the residences. I took a volleyball class every Friday and Saturday and it was great fun! The coaches are good and the helpers are very helpful too. The gyms and other facility bookings are chargeable, which I did not like much since they are also far from many residences. Sidewalk jogging is popular in Manchester so that was what I often went for.

8) Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

Items	Expenditure (in HKD)
Return Flight Tickets (PEK-MCR+MCR-HK)	9500
Additional Insurance	2000
Accommodation in UoM	24500
Traveling	23000
Food and Miscellaneous*	41000
Total#	100,000

Note:

*I cooked myself most of the times

#The total is an approximation

9) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There was a Student Fair for joining societies at the beginning of the orientation week. You could join some clubs and I would recommend the International Society which organizes many trips around UK. During the first two weeks, it would be best if you could seize the opportunity to meet some exchange students and make good friends with them. There was an International Exchange Fair in Alliance Manchester Business School which I participated in as an ambassador of HKUST. I met some good friends through these activities.

10) Health & Safety

You are supposed to register for a General Practitioner (GP) in Manchester upon arrival. There are ratings and review available on the NHS system. They will provide you with medical services and free vaccinations if needed. If there is any emergency, you should call 999. Please remember to keep your belongings attended as the UK is not as safe as HK.

11) Food

Most students living in self-catered halls cook themselves. I personally cooked myself while at the residence since it was cheaper and healthier. You could also go to canteens on campus. One popular place to go is the KRO BAR near the International Society. They have two-for-one deals almost daily and the food is nice and cheap.

12) Transportation

Many places are of walking distances in Manchester. Students living on the City Campus will find it convenient to take Bus No. 147 which has part of the route free for UoM students. For students on the Fallowfield Campus, Shuttle buses are available at the cost of the university. I personally lived on the Victoria Park Campus where I needed to take a bus in the winter since walking would be too cold. A monthly bus pass would be helpful to save money. The bus passes are available for purchase on System One website (link provided in the last section). The main campus is close to the city center.

For travelling outside of Manchester, you may need to buy bus, train or flight tickets. Recommendations for bookings are through GoEuro, Virgin Train (Domestic), Flixbus (For European countries). A 16-25 Youth Rail Card is worth it for its discount on all domestic train tickets. Many cheap and good airlines are available in Europe. I liked Flybe and Ryanair and you could always go to Expedia or Skyscanner to look at the flight tickets.

13) Climate

The weather in Manchester is colder than that in Hong Kong but it is also not bad. It seldom drops below 0 degree. A coat is needed and a down jacket too. Inside buildings it could be very warm so you may wear a shirt and a heavier outwear. It becomes windy and rainy during winter so please prepare yourself with a good umbrella. You can buy a good one upon arrival in Manchester.

14) Communication

The main carriers in the UK are Three, EE, O2 and Giffgaff. They have different rates for international calls and data. I used Three since it has perfect roaming services in other European countries for no additional fee, which was good for my trips in Europe. However,

Three is also an expensive plan among all. The university Wi-Fi is only good on campus and it is not good enough in dorms. So please choose a good data plan if possible. All SIM cards and top-up vouchers could be purchased in supermarkets and convenient stores like Spar, Tesco and Sainsbury's.

15) Cautionary measures

UK is among the safest countries in Europe. However, do take good care of your personal belongings in the UK and other European countries since robbers may very well take your phone away if you keep playing with it while walking on the street like what many people do in HKUST. Avoid walking alone on the street when it is dark, especially after 8pm when people get drunk. Please hang out with your friends in the evening and at night.

Section 3: Items to Bring

- ✓ Winter clothes (don't take many)
- ✓ Sneakers
- ✓ USB
- ✓ Phone
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ Medicine
- ✓ Beddings (if possible)
- ✓ Cabin suitcase (for travelling)
- ✓ Backpack (for school and travelling)
- ✓ Hair Dryer (if possible)
- ✓ Credit Card/Debit Card/Cash
- ✓ Passport
- ✓ Moisturizer

Note: You could easily get other things in Manchester

Section 4: Useful Links and Contacts

- Short-term Study Visa
<https://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa/overview>
- International Society
<http://internationalsociety.org.uk/>
- Bus Pass
<http://www.systemonetravelcards.co.uk/>
- 16-25 Railcard
<https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>
- University Services
<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/>
- Hotel Booking
<https://www.booking.com/?aid=355028ry>
- Flight Booking
<https://www.expedia.com.hk/?rfr=Redirect.From.www.expedia.com%2F>