



Exchange Report (Fall 2016)

Thomas, Man Chung Yin | BBA(Acct&Mark)

'One step closer to be a story teller'

Content

- // Monthly activity log
- // General info
- // Packing list
- // Handy hint and contact lists
- // Point of appreciation to host uni.

Now, buckle up and fasten your seatbelt to have this journey with me!

Monthly activity log

September

I arrived in Heathrow on 5/9/16, a week earlier than the commencement of school. I was staying in my cousin's place in London on Baker Street. If you are going to Exeter directly from Heathrow / Gatwick Airport, you could take the National Express (Coach) from airport bus stop to Exeter **OR** if you plan to stay in London a few days before heading to campus, you could take the Heathrow Express to **Paddington Station** to city center and it is the station where you can get direct train to Exeter.

Before semester starts, there would be a freshers' week where loads of student societies and clubs will host a number of taster sessions for like lacrosse / canoeing. I joined the

membership of swimming club and went on several nearby hiking trips organized by expedition society during the week.

You don't have to worry about mingling with other exchange students or finding travel companion because it's always easier than you expect.

October

Daily routine kind of got settled at that time. I started to get familiar with the city like got to know the shortcuts to school and where to get best deal in grocery shopping. I used to have regular cooking night in the studio of my local friend and our potentials in cooking were literally unleashed.

I managed to visit a nearby city every week, including the capital city Plymouth, the world famous Stonehenge in Salisbury and the photogenic Roman Bath located in Bath and many more. I also got back to London several times to visit friend and my cousin. You will know where to visit and what to do in every weekend during your stay in the UK.

November

That was the time where deadline and peak season on course work arrived. A lot of exchange students would request for 'alternative assessment' from their instructor and all exams would be translated into essay/ reports. It varies from different instructors. I did not apply for that but I still got 4 reports to handled in the last 2 weeks of the month. You are expected to receive similar workload that time and don't plan any trip in late November.

December

Here comes the long awaited Euro trip. For uni. of Exeter, we have got one month winter break before the January exam. People would travel at this time or get back to home country. I travelled to Copenhagen, Prague, Barcelona, Paris, Lyon, Rome, Florence and Venice in 27 days.

January

Final exam went from 9-14. I sat for 3 exams and left Exeter to London on 15. I Knew I could not manage that much luggage and I got air parcel from SNOWL in early Jan. Service was great and it had arrived my home before I did. I left UK earlier than other people as I have got another family trip to catch but you can definitely stay longer if you like.

General info

// Visa procedures

If you are permanent HK passport holders, you do not have to apply for student visa to enter UK border, but you have to make sure you are not staying for more than 6 months and you have got your printed acceptance letter from UoE when you arrive in Heathrow. For other passport holders, check if you need to apply for tier 4 visa on UK Border website.

// Orientation Activities

Before semester commences, there would be freshers' week and more than 50 clubs and societies will be hosting taster sessions and member recruitment. Download the **iExeter app** and stay tuned with the timetable of all freshers events and campus general talk, including school based welcoming talk, student card collection and campus tour.

//International service and activities

Before your arrival, as long as you have opened a student account with UoE, you can log an enquiry with the department called SID on whatever concerns you have. They are very attentive and responsive. Just state you are an exchange student and they will prioritize your question.

During Freshers' week, there will be a global village hold in Grand Hall on campus where all the international student societies will have their booth to welcome their home country students. For Hong Kong, we have got 2, one is Hong Kong Society and other is HKPASS in Exeter. I have met a lot of friends from HKPASS as most of them are A&F / LLB/ Psychology students.

// Accommodation

If you wish to receive offer from the campus accommodation, you would need to apply right after you have registered as student with UoE. **Do not procrastinate** till the last moment as application usually close in May or earlier. Apply student status with UoE ASAP and then apply for student hall.

Usually, all exchange participants would be allocated to James Owen Court, which is in a nice location with only 10-15 mins walk to campus and city center. Total charge of stay is around \$22,000 HKD.

If you got rejected, you can go to nearby private student housing at a similar price e.g. Printsworck.

// Course registration

UoE will require you to submit a module request form. You can view their course catalogue by googling 'university of exeter modules 2017'

Unlike HK, adding, dropping, swapping could not be done on our own but we have to queue up in business school and let the officer do it on our behalf. It is a bit annoying and inefficient. But we can't do anything to change so just accept the rule and make the best out of it.

// Teaching and assessment

One good case practice of UoE is they have lecture recording for all modules. Like UST canvas, their teaching software is called ELE. Usually, each module would just have one 2 hours lecture each week. Thus, time table is really relaxing. Yet, the school still don't recommend exchange student skill too many classes as they may report to immigration and disembark student back to their home country.

The passing grade of modules are at 40%. Getting a passing grade is for sure not a problem. If you wish to waive the final exam and switch to alternative assessment like essay / report type, you may approach the course instructor at the start of semester and see what can they do for you.

// Sports and Recreational

Notwithstanding the variety of clubs and society, membership fee could be be exorbitant. I paid 60 pound for swimming club to use their pool. UoE is the university of sport for several years and they have got a state of the art sports park, However, admission to it is not complimentary for student. I would recommend student to resort to private providers as a cheaper option.

//Finance

Option 1: I have a saving account with HSBC and BOC in HK and I activated the foreign withdrawal function before I leave. I would recommend you to get an HSBC account or any bank withdrawal card with ' **PLUS**' sign behind it esp. When you are travelling in Europe . Union pay is not widely applicable in EU so do not rely on it.

Options 2: Open a local bank account with HSBC/ Santander upon arrival with UK residential and academic document. In this way, you can save the \$20HKD admin fee charged on every withdrawal if you are doing option 1.

I spent around \$120,000 HKD for my exchange including air ticket, student hall, living expense and Euro trip. On a daily basis, I try to keep my expense not to exceed 20 pound

on average but I almost fail to do it within the limit every month. For travelling, including local and cross county, there is different budget for everyone. For your reference, I spent \$30,000 for the euro trip including shopping.

// Food

If you don't feel like proficient in cooking, don't worry. You will be fine learning by doing. Exeter houses 3 large supermarkets and several smaller one scattered in the town. For last resort, people usually get pre-made food in M&S or nearby fast food like KFC and cantonese style noodle stall which will cost you less than 5-6 pound. I did not cook very often, but when I do, I do it with two other schoolmates and we made absolutely stunning dishes like lobster meal / bibimbap.

If you are finding nice food on campus, 'La Touch' in Business Building would be your first choice. Outstanding quality at really reasonable price for lunch / tea time. There are also quite a number of grab and go diner like 'Pret A Manger', Costa Cafe, and some nice bar with traditional English bar food at no more than 4-5 pound.

// Transportation

Heathrow to London:

Heathrow Express takes you to Paddington station in 15 Minutes at 15-22 pound. Early bird discount in 14 days / 30 days is available.

Within London:

London Underground, also known as tube. 2.4 pound per journey.

London bus. 1.2 pound per journey.

You will need an Oyster card to top on. No changes and coins is accepted on vehicle.

Heathrow to Exeter:

National Express (UK Coach) at 8-10 pound in 3.5 hrs.

London to Exeter:

Direct train from Paddington Station to Exeter St. Davis Station in 2 Hours 20 min. Ticket can cost from 30 pound round trip to 80 pound, depends on how long you make your purchase in advance. Usually, I buy my tickets at least 1 month beforehand.

Train in UK is super safe and you don't have to worry about theft and people stealing luggage.

You may want to purchase a **Railcard** at 30 pound which allows you to have 30% off later in all your train tickets.

Within Exeter:

There are coaches running in the city but usually people would just walk as all the essentials and campus are just in walking distance. Even in late night, you will feel crimeless in the city so please feel comfortable to walk.

Packing list

- Umbrella
- Sweater
- Notebook(Charger and adapter if travel to other EU countries)
- Camera
- Phone
- Clothes (both summer and winter)
- Cash (pounds)
- Passport & ID card & Passport size photos (3-4)
- Acceptance letter, Address of Accommodation

Points of Appreciation

For enquires logging, they have got a system called SID, you can find it in the iExeter iphone app. For whatever concerns you have in mind, the officer would reply you within a day and refer you to a specific party for better explanation if needed.

UoE usually do one class per week for each modules and they would empty up your Wednesday afternoon for either sports club training for city travelling.

