
Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University

Fall 2016/2017 Exchange

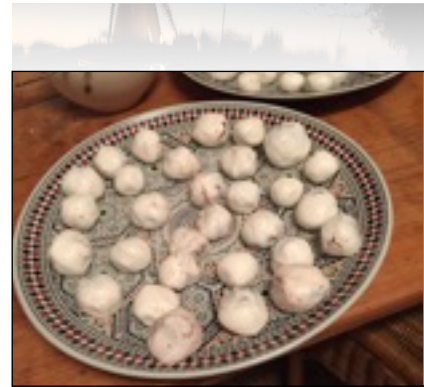


Cheng Hiu Yi
Fall 2016

Monthly Activity Log

August

I arrived in the Netherlands on 25 August, just one day before the orientation day. On that day, we have an activity like city hunting in Hong Kong, walking around Rotterdam to do several tasks. It is a good opportunity to meet some new friends from different countries. After that day, I had a 2-day trip to Amsterdam, a place much more bustling than Rotterdam. I had my first lesson on 29 August.



September

On 4 Sept, I joined an event, Heart Beat Festival, in the campus and met a group of Hong Kong exchange students. In the first month, the workload is not much so I could have some one-day trips to Den Haag and Maastricht in the Netherlands. Other than that, I joined the trip to Munich held by ESN, the student association. At that time, there was an annual event, Oktoberfest. It is indeed a unique experience for me. Also, I travelled to Belgium with friends I met on Heart Beat Festival. I celebrated the Mid-Autumn Festival with a group of exchange students.



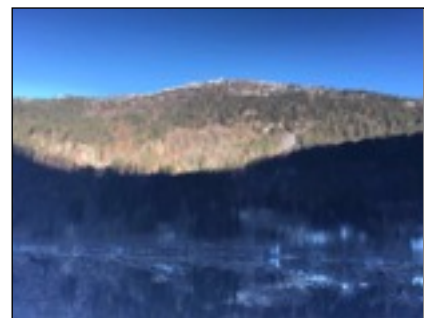
October

There were a few mid-term exams and assignments in October so I spent some time to do revision. During my free time, I went to Nationaal Park De Biesbosch in Rotterdam, which is a nice place I recommend. I also had parties and hang out with other exchange students in Rotterdam. More than that, I travelled to Paris.



November

All of my courses ended in early November. There was a very long holiday before my final examinations so I travelled to quite a lot of countries like Norway (Oslo, Bergen), Sweden (Stockholm), Iceland, UK (London) and Spain (Barcelona). I joined an amazing boat trip in Oslo but the weather was already cold at that time that I thought it would be even more beautiful during summer time. Also, it is a pity that a lot of hiking trips or sightseeing trip would not be held from November because of the weather. I liked Iceland very much as well.



I tried my first snorkeling and saw the northern light in Iceland. I had various experience with different people and in different places in this month. The most unforgettable and horrible experience would be my first skydiving and lost of wallet including identity documents in Spain. After that, I rushed back to Rotterdam to have my final examination on 30 Nov, marked the end of my study in RSM.



December

I had a whole month traveling in Europe. I went to Greece (Athens and Santorini), Bulgaria (Sofia), Slovakia (Bratislava), Austria (Vienna), Czech Republic (Cesky Krumlov and Prague), Germany (Berlin), Finland (Helsinki), Lithuania and Poland (Warsaw and Krakow). It is horrible that I experienced several times of theft again. Yet, fortunately, I discovered and stopped the thieves. There are a lot of Christmas markets from early December. The most unforgettable one for me is the one in Berlin because when I went there on 19 December, it was the first day of re-open after the attack. The atmosphere is same as before but groups of people were praying at the main entrance. On 31 December, I had my favorite count down in my life in Prague. Firework was everywhere, and people celebrated lively everywhere. The atmosphere was really good. After a long and exhausting, but wonderful, trip, I went back Hong Kong from Amsterdam on 3 January.



General Exchange information

Visa procedure

Hong Kong students have to apply both a student visa and resident permits. You will receive email about the application method from Erasmus University. You had to follow the instructions and transfer about 400 euro to the university, otherwise, the university may not process your application. Money will be transferred back to your bank account after you arrived Rotterdam. Please remember to check your email regularly and go to the Dutch Embassy in Hong Kong about 1 week before your departure to the Netherlands as the processing time of visa may required about 1 week or more. After your arrival in Rotterdam, you can collect you residence permit (Dutch identity card) at the IND, which is near the Rotterdam Central station after you have received the relevant email. For the registration at the city hall, you may get help from the information day during several days in early September in the campus. It is not necessary to do the registration at City Hall if you are staying for only around four months.

Orientation Activities

There is a mandatory orientation day held by RSM. You have to register and pay (50euro which is not cheap) online before you go to the Netherlands. On that day, students are divided into different groups and it is the first time you meet your exchange buddy (if he/she didn't come to pick you up at airport). Also, you may meet friends from different countries. It is a day mainly to let you get more familiar with the university and Rotterdam. There is a city hunting game that you have to do different tasks.

International Services & Activities

There is a student association called ESN, who organizes various activities and trips regularly for exchange students. Usually, they organized trips to countries nearby like Belgium and cities in the Netherlands.

Accommodations

There are mainly two ways for exchange students to choose their dormitory. The most popular one is the one outsourced to a third party called HousingAnywhere. You may receive email from the university and have the link to apply the on campus dormitory. Please remember to apply as soon as you got the email as the number of dormitory is limited and is easily full. Also, please choose the correct school (RSM) under Erasmus University when you apply the dormitory as different school may have different dormitory and inappropriate information may hinder you from renting the dormitory. For on campus choices, there is a popular choice, Hatta (H building) with fair price and very large single room. You have to share the kitchen and bathroom with two other students. The environment is quite nice. Yet, you have to pay for the washing and drying machines separately each time.

For off campus choices, most students prefer Casa Erasmus, which is also outsourced to HousingAnywhere. It is located 20-minute walk from the campus. Yet, with a bike, it is not really a matter. Also, it is a bit cheaper than Hatta. Apart from the student dormitory, some students choose to rent a shared apartment near the school or city center. I rented a room near the school within 10-minute walk. It is cheaper but the room is smaller and you have to find the accommodations earlier, otherwise, it would be around the same price or even more expensive than the dormitory on campus. You may find the accommodation on Facebook page of RSM or Erasmus University. There would be many posts in April and May but usually you have to contact so frequently and I used about 2 weeks to find a suitable one. Some of my friends chose to rent through Airbnb with several students come from the same home university. It could be another good choice. Other than that, there is another much more expensive choice, Student Hotel. It is near Casa Erasmus and extremely comfortable with many luxury facilities and free bike borrowing. Yet, be prepared that the cost is high.

Course Registration

You will receive email from the university and form to fill in courses you would like to enroll into. They will pre-registered the courses for you if you mentioned in the email. After that, they will sent you back the confirmation email on the courses you are enrolled in. You can add/drop courses by sending them email during the first week of the semester and only drop courses in the second week. However, you cannot change you minor after you get the confirmation. If you want to do courses from other schools, you can just check and register on their website by filling in the form.



Teaching & Assessment Methods

There are large lectures and small classes depending on the courses chosen. However, there are a lot of readings and self-learning. Grades are in a 10-point scale and the passing mark is around 5.5 but varies in different courses. Sometimes, the courses may require 5.5 mark in average AND getting certain mark in both mid-term and exam. You have to look carefully at the course manual. For exchange students, there is a maximum of 30ECTS and a minimum of 15 ECTS.

BKBMIN030-16 Driving digital and social strategy

It is a minor, which has quite a lot workload but not difficult. There is no exam but with several assignments and a project in group. You have to do a lot of presentations in this course. Yet, you will not be stressful and the grading is quite good. I enjoy this small class with relaxing learning atmosphere.

BAP073-16 Methodology

It is a common course for exchange students. There are two assignments, a mid term and a final exam. There are only MC questions in mid term but many students including me found the content abstract. Some students may get a fail in this course. Yet, I found that the summary books sold before midterm and exam are very useful.

BAP071-16 Organisational Behaviour

It is another common course for exchange students. There is one assignment, a mid term and a final exam. The workload of this course is pretty low because content is similar to the course we studied in MGMT course in year 1. The midterm only includes content from 2 workshops and final exam includes only MC questions. The assignment is easy as well.

CM9003-16 Cultural Influences on Communication

It is a course from another school. There is a mid term and an exam with many readings. I think this course is interesting because I learnt quite a lot European cultures and watched quite a lot interesting and meaningful movie to have self learning. In the mid term and exam,

they are open-ended questions and you have to write short essays. The professor is strict that does not allow us to use any electronic device in class but so far it is alright.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

You can apply for a membership, which costs around 70 euro, in the Sports Centre which you can enjoy all facilities in the Sports Centre.

Finance and Banking

In the first week, there would be staff from bank come to the university to help you open the bank account. In Europe, debit card is useful and common that you can use the money directly from your payment account. After you have a bank account, you should send the details to the university to get back the money you paid when you ; ; ~~70~~ for the visa. Yet, it may need around 1 week. So, you had better prepare some cash for the first 1-2 weeks. I think ING bank is a better choice than ABN AMRO because it can open a bank account for you immediately without registration at the city hall. Also, it provides a useful mobile app which can directly transfer money or check the account.

Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

There is a student association called ESN, who organizes various activities and trips regularly for exchange students. There would be social nights in Plan C (a pub near Rotterdam Central) every Tuesday and at that time, there would be only students from Erasmus University inside. You may like the page of ESN and get the latest information about their events or information sharing.

Health and Safety

You had better purchase a travel insurance which covers all European countries as you will travel around. If unfortunately theft really happens, remember to get the police report for insurance claim. I bought IPS insurance as suggested by RSM and finally I can get a reasonable claim after I provided the required documents.

Food

Dining out is not cheap. Cooking by yourself at home is the best choice. PLUS and Albert Heijn are supermarkets students usually go to. Also, there are markets in Blaak every Tuesday and Saturday.

There are some good restaurants in Rotterdam as well. You can have delicious Chinese food in Tai Wu Chinese Restaurant and Italian food in Very Italian Pizza. Also, you can have All You Can Eat sushi in Sumo though sushi there is not very delicious but acceptable. They are all located near Rotterdam Central station.

Transportation

I recommend you to buy a bike, which is the most common and economical transportation tool in the Netherlands. Also, you can get a free OV chipkaart from ESN and then top up for all public transports in the Netherlands. Remember to check out every time before you get off the bus or tram. When you use OV card, the value is deducted according to your traveling distance, which is cheaper than the standard ticket.

Climate

In August and September, it is quite hot like summer in Hong Kong. Yet, it is getting cold from October and usually rainy in autumn. In winter, it is not as cold as other European countries. It is only around 2 °C.

Communication

Majority, if not all, people in the Netherlands can speak English so you don't have to worry about the communication problem. Yet, I still encourage you to learn some Dutch before coming back to Hong Kong. There is non-credit bearing course provided at school.

Cautionary Measures

As it is rainy in the Netherlands and people usually ride the bicycle, it is a good idea to bring a raincoat instead of umbrella out.

Items to Bring

Clothes: T-shirt, down jacket, thick clothes, gloves, socks, scarfs, water-proof boots

Electronic appliances: laptop, chargers, adaptors

Travelling : bag, international student ID card, copies of your identity documents, credit cards

Documents: passport photos, passport, rent agreement, letter of acceptance from RSM and HKUST

Other necessities: medicines

Useful Links and Contacts

<https://www.rsm.nl/bachelor/current-students/current-bachelor-iba-students/bachelor-1/course-manuals/>

<http://9292.nl/>

<http://www.ns.nl/>

I wish you have a wonderful exchange life in RSM!