



2017 Spring Exchange

Cass Business School, City University London

Cheng Sze Wing, Vivian

Finance and Information Systems (Year 3)

PART I - Monthly Activity Log

January UK – Oxford

I arrived London in mid-January, a week before the orientation, I checked into Liberty Hall once I have arrived. I spent my first week to get myself familiar with the area around the dormitory and purchase some daily necessities. The registration day was 5 days before the start of semester, thus I went to Oxford and Harry Potter Studio during weekends with other exchange students from HKUST. I met my neighbors and found that majority of them are Hong Kong exchange students, we had a moving-in hotpot at dorm and a reunion meal to celebrate Chinese New Year.



February UK – Birmingham / Netherlands – Amsterdam

Workload was relatively light at the beginning of the semester, thus I went to Amsterdam with my dorm neighbors. It was snowing heavily in Amsterdam and streets are covered by snow. The temperature was around -2°C - 3°C , which was extremely cold, some canals were frozen and the view of frozen Zaanse Schans is remarkable. After coming back from Amsterdam, I had some meetings with my classmates regarding to our coming presentations and group course work.



March **UK – Cambridge, Highland, York / Belgium – Brussels, Bruges**

There were a presentation, a mid-term and some course assignments due in mid- March, so I went to Highland right after my midterm and Belgium after finishing my assignments. Although we could not see aurora in Highland, it was still an awesome experience that we went to some natural attractions, like cliffs and waterfall.



April **Ireland – Dublin / France – Paris / Czech Republic - Prague**

I was busy finishing my alternative assessments and studying my Historic London exam in early April. Some professors would only release your assessment topic a week before the due date, and I had 3 assessments due in a week, so I mainly stayed at dorm to finish my work. After my last assessment, I went to Dublin, Paris and Prague.



May **Spain – Barcelona, Ibiza, Majorca / Portugal – Lisbon / Italy – Venice, Rome**

I went on 2 trips in May to Spain, Portugal and Italy. The weather in Europe is warm in May, a simple long-sleeve t-shirt would be enough (I could even wear a vest in Italy,) yet the diurnal range of temperature is quite large, jackets should be prepared to cope with the cool evenings. I love the relaxing vibe in Spain very much, and I enjoyed the sunsets in the Spain beaches. My parents went

to London visit me in late May, and I brought them to some London attractions.



PART II - General Exchange Information

1. Visa Procedures

Being a Hong Kong passport holder, I do not have to apply for a visa as I am not staying in the UK for more than 6 months. Yet, you must show your study visa application letter provided by your university, university admission letter, as well as the return flight ticket (sometimes the UK Broader will require it) to the UK Broader every time you enter the UK.

2. Orientation Activities

Before the start of the semester, the school has organized some orientation activities for us. Information like city and school overview could be obtained in these seminars. Cass has provided different opportunities for the exchange students to meet new friends at school by organizing gatherings and orientation and end-of-semester parties.

3. International Services & Activities

There is an exchange office in Cass who organized orientation activities and helped exchange students coping with all course registration and assessment matters.

4. Accommodations

The university offered me a place in a student housing called Liberty Hall which is only 7-minute walk from campus. Liberty Hall provides single rooms with private bathrooms and kitchens shared by 6-10 students. Although the rent was quite pricy, which was 4335 pounds for one semester, the dormitory is in a great location that it is near to the St. Pancras International train station and Liverpool Street train station. It is quite convenient for students to take Eurostar and train to airports or other UK cities. I am grateful that I could live in Liberty Hall and meet some

nice friends there.

5. Course Registration

The entire process of course registration is simple and easy. Before the course registration, students can check the module details and time on Cass online timetable. During the orientation period, students would receive a course registration email which includes an online form to finalize our timetable in the semester.

6. Teaching & Assessment Methods

There is a 2-hour lecture for each course each week, and there are 10 lectures in total. Course grades are measured by course work and assessment performances, yet attendance is not counted in my registered courses. As an exchange student, I was given the opportunity that using the alternative assessments (essay or case study) to replace school exams.

Course	UST Equivalent	Assessment
FR2210 Alternative Investment Management	FINA 4000LEVEL	Group Course Work & Alternative Assessment (Essay)
FR2203 Company Valuation	FINA 3403 Corporate Valuation	Mid-term Exam & Alternative Assessment (Case Study)
FR2211 Derivatives Trading and Hedging	FINA 3203 Derivative Securities	Group Course Work & Alternative Assessment (Essay)
IF3101 International Finance	FINA 4403 International Finance	Group Course Work & Alternative Assessment (Essay)
LA2018 Historic London	HMCC UCORE	Group Presentation & Final Exam

7. Sports & Recreation Facilities

City University has its own sport centre called CitySport, which is a 5-minute walk from the campus. With a paid membership, students could enjoy the gym facilities or take sports classes in CitySport. I purchased a 3-month membership and extended my membership for an extra month. There are various sports classes provided by CitySport, including yoga, zumba, hip hop dance, etc. It is a nice option if you would like to work out during the exchange period.

8. Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

Students could ask the student office to issue a study proof for opening a bank account in the UK. With a bank account in the Santander Bank UK, I was given a basic bank card and a debit card. I exchanged some pounds in Hong Kong and deposited them into Santander. In daily transactions, I usually pay by debit card (similar to EPS payment method in Hong Kong). It is more convenient to have a debit card as card payment is very common in the UK. It is also possible for students to withdraw cash in the UK by using Hong Kong ATM cards with UnionPay logo in Barclays Bank's ATMs.

Items	HKD	(GBP)
Flight	8,000	
Accommodation	43,350	(4335 GBP)
Travel	31,820	(3182 GBP)
Phone Plan	1,200	(120 GBP)
Food	10,140	(1014 GBP)
Transportation	1,000	(100 GBP)
Miscellaneous	24,840	
Total	120,350	

9. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

Social Clubs usually recruit members at the beginning of the academic year, thus there are only limited societies available for spring exchange students.

10. Health & Safety

Before departing to London, I went to the clinic for a medical prescription in case of illness. London is safe in general, yet students should be more alert when walking alone at night as there are some drunk people on the streets.

11. Food

Although there is an array of food choices in London, cooking at home is still the best way to save living costs. There are lots of recipes and cookery videos online, students could learn cooking easily despite the limited cooking experience.





12. Transportation

Oyster card is commonly used in paying transportation fee which can be easily purchased in underground stations. Students could apply for a 16-25 Railcard, which costs 30 GBP, to enjoy a maximum 1/3 prices off of the underground and train journey. There is a hopper fare in London bus system, after paying for the first bus journey by Oyster card, passengers could have the second bus journey for free within an hour.

13. Climate

The weather in London was much better than my expectation before going on exchange. It is undeniable that London could be as windy as Typhoon 8 in Hong Kong, but raining was not as hard and frequent as Hong Kong, a hooded coat is more useful than an umbrella in London.

14. Communication

Liberty Hall provided me a free giffgaff sim card once I checked in, I used to purchase the 10 pounds plan with 2gb data from giffgaff until my Europe trip. I then changed my service provider to 3UK for the data roaming plan. I chose the 2gb one- month contract which costs 16 pounds per month. It is suggested that students could purchase phone plans with more data as you will use the map application frequently when travelling. Although my phone plan was a one-month contract, the contract has been renewed automatically and took 30 days for cancellation, students should call 3UK helpline 30 days before leaving the UK to cancel their contract.

15. Cautionary measures

It is not recommended that students stay out too late in London as streets could be quiet at night, yet, students should always be sensible with the drunks as they could be violent. I saw a drunk broke the bus doors at night.

Wearing an anti- theft waist wallet when travelling in Europe is recommended, it could prevent any losses from pickpocketing.

PART III - Items to bring

- Anti-theft waist wallet
- ATM Card (With UnionPay)
- Cash
- Charger
- Coats
- Credit Card
- Gloves
- Medicines
- Notebook
- Official Acceptance Letter

PART IV - Useful Links and Contacts

- Cass Undergraduate Module Catalog
<http://www.cass.city.ac.uk/student-intranet/undergraduate/modules>
- UNiDAYS (UK student discount website)
<https://www.myunidays.com/>

If you would like to know more about my exchange journey, please feel free to get my contact from the SBM Exchange Team (bmugexch@ust.hk).