

EXCHANGE REPORT--- SPRING 2017

BI Norwegian Business School

Lau Tze Ying
BBA (Accounting & Economics)

Part 1 - Monthly Activity Log

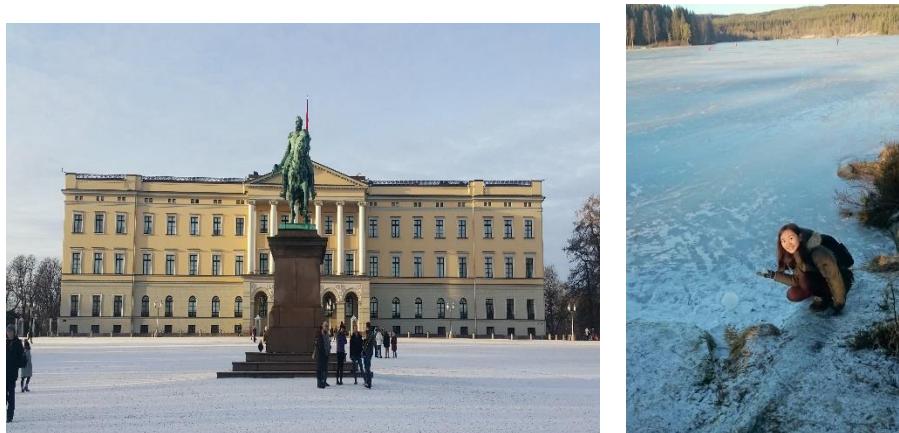
January

I arrived at Oslo with other UST students on 6th January and I had a busy first week. Things that needed to be done include buying household necessities, registering the student identity at BI and a local police station and joining various orientation activities. At the end of the month, I went to BI-nner which was a monthly dinner organized for international students by the school. I also went on a trip to the UK to celebrate the Chinese New Year.



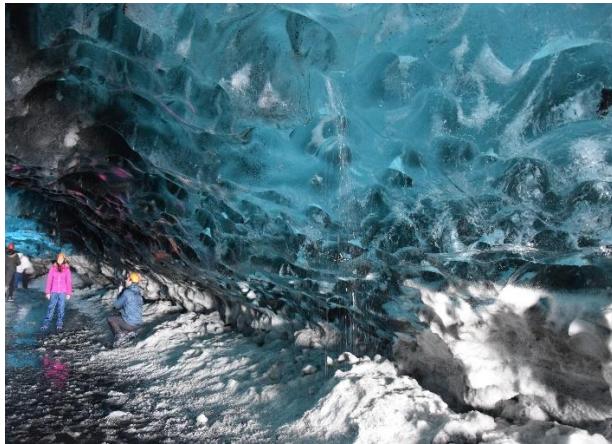
February

I started to get used to the life in Oslo. Aside from attending the routine classes, I also spent some time on exploring the city like visiting the National Gallery and the Royal Palace and walking on the frozen lake in Sognsvann. Outside Oslo, I travelled to Stockholm, Copenhagen and Tromsø which is located in the northern part of Norway to catch the aurora.



March

Because of the unfavourable weather in Tromsø, I could not see the aurora. Therefore, I joined a local aurora tour when I was travelling in Iceland. This time the sky was so clear that I could even capture the yellow northern light. Having finished certain assignments, I left Norway for another trip at the end of the month---Berlin, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.



April

I spent half a month on travelling in Europe during the Easter holidays. I went to Prague, Vienna, Hallstatt, Budapest, Munich, Venice, Pisa, the Vatican City and Rome. For the rest of the time since my lessons came to an end, I had a lot of time to prepare for the remaining assignments, presentations and examinations which started in early May. April is such a fruitful month.



May

It is the month of examinations. Fortunately, I was able to make some time for few more trips between exams--- Bergen, London and Paris. I joined the “Sognefjord in a nutshell tour” in Bergen to see the natural landscape of Norway which is a representative and highlighting activity to do in the country. The National Day is on the 17th May. I went to watch the Children’s parade. Almost everyone was dressed up in their traditional clothes and went onto street waving the national flag. It was the most bustling day I had ever seen in Oslo.



June

I did not stay so long in Norway in June because my exam period had ended. So I only did some leisure activities like hiking in Oslo and buying souvenirs, getting ready to return to Hong Kong.



Part 2 – General Exchange information

Visa Procedures

Since the Student Permit takes time to be processed, it is better to apply for one with a valid passport from the Royal Norwegian Consulate Hong Kong as early as possible. You may browse the official website or enquire the staff at Norwegian Consulate, HK directly by <hong-kong@norwayconsulate.com>. They would be pleased to reply to you with a detailed Student Visa Guide (Appendix 1) regarding your passport type. It is important to notice that cash is expected to be the means of payment for the visa application and the staff from the consulate strictly adhere to the photo requirements, so that you do not need to re-book another appointment for it.

Orientation Activities

The orientation program for in-coming exchange students usually lasts for weeks. The events organized for international students include a welcoming gathering activity with local students as Exchange Buddies to share things you may want to know in a group of about 10. Also, you can participate in other voluntary activities such as lectures introducing basic Norwegian language.

International Services and Activities

During weekends, there would be some outdoor activities such as Bus Sightseeing tours and fishing on ice. The BI-nner which is a monthly dinner held on campus is one of the highlights. All activity information including the registration methods would be sent to your email or could be seen on BI Student Portal.

Accommodations

There are three types of accommodation providers for students: SiO, BSN and Diakonhjemmet. SiO is the cheapest ones with monthly rent of around 3398 NOK (housing rent may vary across blocks and floors). One of the most popular dormitory locations of SiO is the Kringsja Student Village. The distance between BI and all types of housing is within a 20-minute journey by metro. Among them, BSN is the closest to the school but the most expensive one.

P.S. Since all UST students lived in the same block at Kringsja Student Village, we could discuss things and even share household necessities with each other easily.

Course Registration

Course registration for the Spring semester would be proceeded in December. The class enrolment is simple. All you need to do is to choose courses you want to take in a form. Usually they allow you to take up to four courses for each semester. You do not need to worry about that the enrolment would be unsuccessful because of excess demand as it is unlikely to happen.

Teaching Materials and Methods

Many, though not all, course grades at BI are counted 100% toward the final examinations. So read the course description before enrolling your courses is crucial. The following are my course list:

1. ELE 3710 Business and Professional Ethics
<http://web.bi.no/info/kurs2016.nsf/vWebKodeEng/133EB253492D0445C125764D003278E0>
2. EXC 3505 Strategy
<http://web.bi.no/info/kurs2014.nsf/vWebKurslookupEng/exc+3505>
3. EXC 3603 International Economics
<http://web.bi.no/info/kurs2016.nsf/vWebKurslookupEng/exc+3603>
4. ELE 3763 Innovation Strategy and Technological Change
<http://web.bi.no/info/kurs2014.nsf/vWebKurslookupEng/ele+3763>

Lessons at BI usually take 2 hours and 45 minutes. There will be a break for each session of 45 minutes.

Sports and Recreation Facilities

There is a gym room on campus but you need to pay a membership fee for it. If you want to play some sports you may try ice skating outdoor or hike in the city. You could not do a lot of shopping in Oslo since stores usually close at 5pm, so going to museums is a desirable activity during your spare time.

Financing and Banking

The living expenses in Norway ranges from 10000 to 2000 NOK. If you go travelling around Europe, you would need to exchange more cash in European currencies like euros and the British pounds. Credit cards are more popular in Europe. But in the city center of Oslo, there are still ATMs from which you could withdraw cash.

Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

There are bars in Oslo and one called Kroa is run inside BI. You may also meet new friends in international events and in class during break time.

Health and Safety

It is hard to find a clinic in Oslo and so you had better bring some medicine along before your departure to Norway. Safety is never a worrying problem in Norway and most citizens are nice and willing to lend you their helping hands.

Food

Most food could be bought in grocery stores in Gronland and supermarkets such as KIWI and REMA 1000 which are the two cheapest supermarket in Norway. Be notice that all supermarkets are closed on Sundays and public holidays.

Transportation

The two most frequently taken transports are the T-bane metro and buses. By buying a monthly student pass (for Zone 1 only) which costs around 400 NOK, you gain access to all transports including the tram, T-bane metro, buses and ferries and do not need to pay for it each time you take it. Remember to update your card when it is going to expire as policemen may get on board to check if you have a valid Ruter pass for the transportation service.

Climate

The weather in Norway is a lot more extreme than Hong Kong. In winter, it is dry, cold and always snow. The coldest days could have a temperature of - 15°C. The night time is long during winter but short during summer in Norway.

Communication

Most Norwegian people speak in Norwegian but like international students at BI, they also speak English. So communication is not a great concern.

Cautionary Measures

When travelling in different places even in Oslo, it is imperative to be aware of the personal safety and belongings.

Part 3 – To-bring List

- Study permit approval letter (**printed version**)
 - Decision letter issued by BI (**printed version**)
 - Passport
 - ID card of your home country
 - Router
 - Adapter
 - Notebook and chargers
 - Warm clothes and gloves
 - Medicine
 - Money (Cash and Credit Card)
- (Optional: Slip-resistant shoes, Camera, bed sheets, facial cream...)

Part 4 – Useful Materials and Links

Website links

- 1) BI Portal: <https://at.bi.no/en/atbi/it/it-services/login-for-@bi>
- 2) Ruter: <https://ruter.no/en/>
- 3) SiO: <https://www.sio.no/en/housing>

Email addresses

- 1) International Office of BI: international.office@bi.no
- 2) Norwegian Consulate, HK: hong-kong@norwayconsulate.com

Appendix 1--- Study Permit Guide (For Hong Kong & Macau residents – apply in person):

- Your passport, valid at least 90 days after expiry of the visa with 2 photo-copies (**all used pages including the bio page**).
- 2 Application forms (GP-7028E), duly completed **in BLOCK LETTERS** with 2 passport photos (Same photo session, colour with white background, maximum six months old)
- The "Letter of Admission" issued by the Norwegian institution of learning
- Financial Guarantee: Self-financed applicants should deposit the money in a Norwegian bank in the applicant's name and provide documentation. NOK 103,950 for one year or NOK 51,975 for one semester. (Not applicable for students at folk high school. For more information, contact your educational institute). If the applicant has been granted financial support from the Norwegian State Educational Fund, please present the original letter of approval. If the applicant has an economic guarantee from a sponsor, the money should be deposited in a Norwegian bank in the applicant's name. Please provide documentation.
- Proof of accommodation in Norway (e.g. Tenancy agreement, lease of house, etc.)
- Hong Kong or Macau Identity Card
- For mainland Chinese students who are studying in Hong Kong or Macau, please also enclose a copy of "hukou" with English translation on a separate paper
- A proof of residence in Hong Kong or Macau in the past six months (Applied to non-permanent HK residents)

Note 1: Online application does not apply to applicants living in Hong Kong or Macau.

Note 2: Applicants under 18 must also produce the Birth Certificate with an apostille stamp and be accompanied by their parents for the application. A letter of consent for travelling alone is required and be signed by the parents in front of the consular officer.

All submitted documents must be in two sets and the original must be produced. (One original + 1 photo copy or 2 photo copies if the original must be returned)

All documents have to be translated into Norwegian or English if applicable.

Additional documents may be required.

Processing fee (Cash only – please tender exact amount): HK\$3,083 (NOK3,200) as per

1 October 2016 (To be adjusted every quarter)

All applications will be forwarded to the Directorate of Immigration in Norway. **The processing time takes about 1-2 months.** If the application is successful but you need an entry visa to Norway (e.g. PRC passport) you will be asked to hand in your passport and to pay the courier

fee HKD 200. Your passport will be returned from the Norwegian Embassy in Beijing with an entry visa to Norway after 7 -10 days.

Where to apply in Hong Kong:

Royal Norwegian Consulate,

Rooms 1510-1512, West Tower, Shun Tak Centre,

168-200 Connaught Road, Central, Hong Kong.

Tel (852) 2546 9881 / Fax: (852) 2546 9887 / Email: hong-kong@norwayconsulate.com

Submission of applications: 10 am – 12 noon & 2 pm – 4 pm (Monday to Thursday, except public holidays). (BY APPOINTMENT)

Download application form:

http://www.udi.no/globalassets/global/skjemaer/application_-_for_a_permit_for_residence_or_work_gp7028.pdf