



BI NORWEIGIANBUSINESS SCHOOL EXCHANGE REPORT – SPRING 2016/17

Cheng Ka Wai, Vivian

BBA in Accounting and Finance

Part 1: Monthly Activity Log

January:

I arrived Oslo with my schoolmates on the 5th Jan. I spend the first month exploring Oslo. I visited number of tourist attractions, which are easily accessible by public transport as Oslo has a very convenient public transport system. The Folk Museum and the Nasjonalgalleriet are “must-go” tourist attractions. Despite the cold weather, I enjoy the view of Oslo, especially when the whole city covered with snow.



At the end of the month, I went to London with two new friends and celebrated our Lunar New Year right there. It is the first time I did not celebrate the festival with my family, which was kind of lonely somehow, but making new friends reduced the loneliness.



The Great Hall



My first British afternoon tea

February:

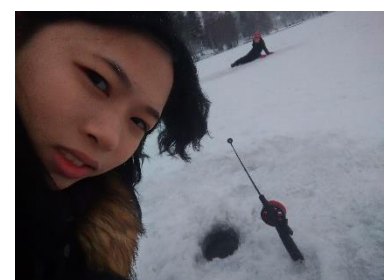


The Norwegians love camping with family and friends, and nothing could stop them from



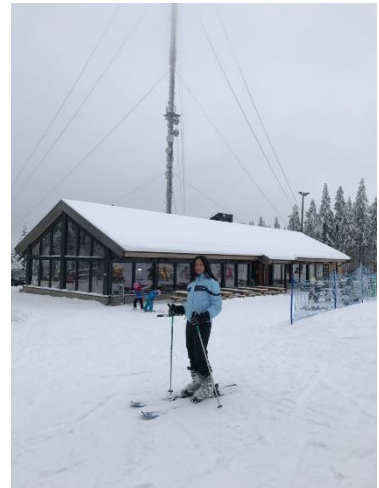
doing this. Therefore, there is an event “Markadagen”, which would be organized around Norway every year. This year the organizer chose Sognsvann, Oslo as the place of the event, which is just next to our Kringsja Student Village. People were friendly the atmosphere

was great. Even though I was just a stranger, they still welcomed me to join their barbecue. One of the families even taught me how to ski on ice. I also tried my first ice fishing,



although I caught nothing. I am not sure would the event still be organized in Oslo next year, but if you have the chance, you must join Markadagen!

Snow kept falling around Oslo, which created a nice weather and places for winter sport. I tried my first skiing with my schoolmates at the Vinterpark, which is properly the largest skiing park in Oslo. Although the weather was cold and snow kept falling all day long, I was warm from head to toe because of the exercises and the excitement of my first skiing.



In the late February I went to Venice to join the Carnevale di Venezia. This is an annual festival held in Venice and is one of the top three carnival in the world. I always wanted to join this festival since I was a child because of those attractive, colorful and elaborate carnival masks and costumes. There even a contest for the best costume and the best mask. What amazed me the most are the attitude of the costume players. They were not professional, but they were professional in all aspects. They put efforts to be perfect, from the hair to the make-up, the mask to the costume, the accessories to even their posture. The weather was cold and winds kept blowing from Adriatic Sea. However you would not see any of them afraid of the weather. The Carnival was more attracting because of these people.





March:

As a “chocoholic”, I always want to visit Belgium. So early in March I planned myself a “chocolate-trip”, which I visited Brussels, Antwerp, Luxemburg and Cologne. During the trip, I was able to taste a lot of hand-made chocolate and of course buy a lot of chocolate. As a “reward” for the trip, I found myself heavier after the trip.

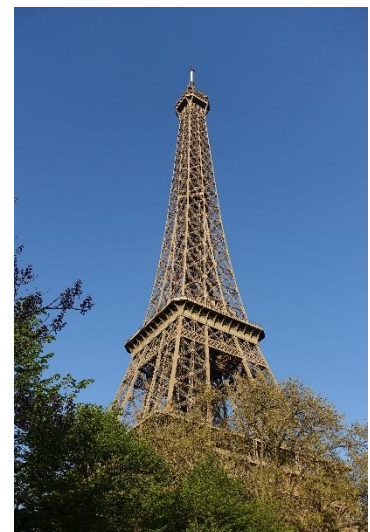


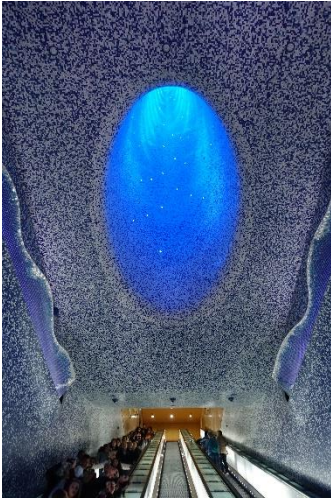
At the end of the month, I visited Rotterdam and Amsterdam in Netherlands. Windmills at the Kinderdijk, Rotterdam were stunning, and the blossoms in the Keukenhof Garden were gorgeous. No wonder why Netherlands is famous for these two things.



April:

As the month of Easter, we had a week of holiday to celebrate the festival. Including my time off, I got in total two weeks for travelling. My Easter trip started at Paris, then I went to Florence to join my new friend, which we spend the rest of trip in Italy, including Florence, Rome and Napoli.





It is nice to have chance exploring the other part of Europe, especially the sunny weather was good for the photo shooting. It is really “skies of blues and clouds of white”. My friend gave me a couple lesson of photo shooting during the trip, which is another good reason to make new friends as you

always could learn something from them.



May:

May was the month of final examinations. All of the grades of my courses were 100% based on the result of final exams. I had 2 exams in the mid-May and 1 in late May. During the early May I spent most of my time studying my notes and doing the past papers. Professors would even provide extra exercises for revision.

17th May is the National Day of Norway. Norwegians dressed up in their traditional custom. Royal family would greet the citizen at the palace. I did not celebrate it due to some personal reason but I strongly recommend you stay in Oslo and have fun with Norwegian together.

I have also travelled to Edinburg, Athens and Santorini in May. If you go to High Land day tour, I strongly suggest you to join the one that visit Isle of Skye. The view is awesome even just saw from the postcard. Do remember to join the day tour of Edinburg if you go there, the tour would be the first step for you to know the town where Harry Potter born.

June:

Soon after the last exam I had my last trip in Europe before I left. This time I visited Munich, Wien, Prague and Berlin. If I have more time I would even visit Budapest. This is a very remarkable trip not only because it was the last trip, but it was also the trip that I met my primary schoolmate again. It was great that we could still get in touch after all these years.



Part 2: General Exchange Information

1) Visa Procedures

Apply for your visa as soon as you accept the offer. It takes at least a month to process and since Norway **is not part of the European Union**, you would definitely need the visa for the passport checking. As a Hong Kong residence, you are required to make an appointment with Norwegian Consulate and submit all necessary documents during the appointment. The Consulate would send an email of notification for the picking up of letter approval. The visa costs HKD3083 for my year.

2) Orientation Activities

BI arranges pick up service on specific days. BI staff will wait for students at Oslo S train station (both airport expert train Flytoget and NSB train can take you from airport to Oslo S train station). They will get you a welcoming pack with useful information. Don't worry if you miss the welcoming pack as they would give you again right before the orientation talk. Orientation talk is the first event arranged for exchange students. Many important issues such as course registration, examination arrangement, student card application will be mentioned. Every student will be assigned to an exchange students group with 2 buddies from BI. Buddies will show you around the campus following by a welcoming party in the university pub. It would be a nice chance to make friends.

3) International Services & Activities

InSA(International Student Association) will organized different cultural events and activities for international students. Every month it organizes a city walk visiting tourist attractions in Oslo for free. 'BI-nner' is a monthly free dinner for international students. You can volunteer to be the assistant, get into the canteen kitchen in BI, prepares the food for others. In the month of Lunar New Year, we had a Chinese-themed BI-nner that we had chance to celebrate Lunar New Year with other international students. There is a gym inside the campus running by SiO (Student Association in Oslo). You have to be the member of the gym in order to use it.

4) Accommodations

Kringsja Student Village operated by Sio should be the cheapest option for international students. It takes 20 minutes from Kringsja station to Nydalen station with T-Bana to go to school. There are two types of room, a single room with private toilets and a single room with toilet shared by 2. 7 people share one large kitchen, with oven, sink, cook top, a table and some chairs. You might be lucky to find some dinnerware in the cupboard left by the previous tenants. Laundry might locate in other blocks and you would need the laundry card for access so make sure you keep it safe.

5) Courses Registration

In December you will receive email from BI regarding the course list in registration procedure. You are allowed to choose 4 courses with maximum 30 ECTS credits. The class size is large enough that you are very likely to get into any courses you want. During the add/ drop period, you can change your course choice by sending email to the International Student Office (instead of making changes in the student portal). The number of credits could be transfer back to UST would be based on database of ARR so please do check the database before you make the decision.

6) Teaching & Assessment Methods

The teaching style in BI is quite similar to that in HKUST. Professors would post the lecture notes 1-2 days before the lecture and students could check and print the notes at @BI. There is a 15-minute break for every 45-minute lesson and student are free to do anything during the break. Courses open for exchange students are conducted in English and

usually are elective courses. Assessment method depends on respective course. Some may have 100% grading towards final exam or presentation plus a paper, which would be stated in the course description.

7) Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

Open the overseas withdrawal function for your current account. Try to apply for a credit card before you go as in Europe people use credit card for nearly any payment, including T-Bana tickets. Be careful with Union Pay as it is quite difficult to find an ATM that accepts Union Pay in Norway. I applied a Citi Bank account that can withdraw cash from ATM without handling charge. Make sure the method of security check for credit card is workable in Europe before you go as there might be a chance that your Hong Kong phone number cannot receive any message in Europe.

8) Health & Safety

There is no clinic in BI. I am not sure about how to make an appointment. You better bring some medicine with you from your family doctors in Hong Kong. The previous exchange students said they need to have a body check upon arrival, but we did not have one and nothing happens. So you might need to confirm with the police when you report to them.

9) Food

Eating out in Oslo is quite expensive and most of the Norwegians would cook at home. Do your shopping in Grønland, where you could find fresh vegetables and fruit at a very reasonable (sometimes cheaper) price. Kiwi and Rema 1000 are 2 chained supermarkets which sell goods at a cheaper price, just like Welcome and ParknShop. Remember nearly all supermarkets close on Sunday (except the one in Grønland). If you miss Hong Kong food, there are a couple of Asian food markets like A Food Market in Grønland and city centre. You can buy Asian food in a more expensive price than that in Hong Kong.

10) Transportation

Ruter# is the transport provider in Oslo. A student monthly transportation ticket covers all the public transportation (T-bane=metro, bus, tram, train, ferry) within Zone 1 in Oslo. You can buy the card in Ruter service center or convenient store. Activate the card before using it and remember to top up & activate the card before it expires. Inspection is carried out randomly at the station and on the car. A fine is charged for an invalidated ticket.

For travelling outside Zone 1, you can purchase an extensive ticket on top of the monthly pass.

Oslo Gardermoen Airport is located in Zone 4. You just need to pay **extra 60 NOK** to travel from Oslo S to Airport with NSB train (which is cheaper than travelling with Flytoget). Extensive tickets can be purchased from ticket machines in the station. The RuterReise (mobile app) helps you to plan your journey and get real-time information about departures on almost all public transport in Oslo.

11) Climate

You will have a white winter in Oslo. The temperature may reach -15 degrees Celsius in January. A water-proof jacket is important in snowy and rainy days (Norwegians don't prefer an umbrella because of the strong wind). Always keep your hands and feet warm with thick gloves and wool socks. It is very slippery when the snow starts melting in April. This year there is still some snow in May, so be aware of the slippery floor. A pair of good shoes is needed. Though it is cold outside, there is a heater in every building. You don't have to dress too warm. I bought 3 Uniqlo extra warm heattech, which would be enough for the cold weather. In May, the temperature may reach 20 degrees Celsius. Prepare for very different weathers between Norway and other parts of Europe. Always remember to bring one extra warm clothing if you go travel between January and March.

12) Communication

Communication is not a problem in Norway. More than 80% of Norwegian can speak English very well. Though description of the products is written in Norwegian, you can ask anyone for translation and they would willing to help.

13) Cost

Items	Amount(HKD)
Visa	3083
Flight(Oslo ← →Hong Kong)	6493
Rent (Oslo)	15878.74 (3398 NOK *5)
Flight & Accommodation(Traveling)	~23000
Living Expense	~16000-17000

Part 3: Items to Bring and Contacts

- Resident permit approval letter
- Passport
- Router & LAN cable (as there is no wifi in Kringsja)
- Adapter (Europe type) x 2
- Plug extension
- Notebook
- Charger
- Water-proof jacket, gloves, shoes
- Clothes for both winter and summer
- Camera
- Cream
- Medicine
- Money (should be enough for your first few days' spending)
- Debit and Credit Card
- Some Hong Kong food (I bring some tea and instant noodles)