



Exchange Report 2017

Cass Business School, City University London

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Finance and Information System Year 3

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Part I – Activity Log

January

I arrived London on 16th, which was around 1 week earlier than school starts. Unfortunately, I didn't get an official hall offer from university so I needed to find a place to live on my own. Compare to the place that exchange students live with official hall offer, my place is quite far away, which takes around 40 minutes to campus. After 2 days of orientation, school starts on the following week. After settling down most of the things, I visited the attractions in London with other UST exchange students, and went to Oxford at the end of this month.

February

After spending the first 2 weeks to figure out which course to choose, my timetable is settled. Compare to UST, the time u spend for lessons will be smaller as each course only have 1 class each week, and only last for 2 hours. Although being an exchange student under cass business school, but I just visited cass for a few times. Most of the UG courses take place in the main campus, while cass business school is mainly for post graduates or studying, as there are plenty of study area. The food in main campus is not good and the choices are limited, but luckily there are some restaurants nearby, so most of the time I went out for lunch after lessons.

March

There are tests and group projects due in late February and March, so I spend quite a lot of time having meeting or revising. Luckily those things were no difficult and I didn't need to spend a lot of time on them. Some of my friends travelled to Europe in this month, and I joined them when they arrived UK. We spent some time In London and we went to Brighton's Seven Sister Park for the beautiful view.

April

April is the time when the semester ends, and the alternative assessments for exchange students. Instead of taking exams, exchange students could choose to apply for alternative assessments, which most likely are essays or case studies, and the difficulty varies depending on the courses you take. I spent around 1.5 weeks to finish all 4 assessments. After submitting the last assessment, I started my trip

through Europe. And I went to Amsterdam, cologne, Brussel, and Paris during my trip.

May

My second trip started in May, which I travelled to Budapest, berlin and Copenhagen. After I finish my second trip, I stayed in London and for 1 more week and I returned to Hong Kong on 18th.

Visa procedures

Being a Hong Kong citizen, you don't require a visa to stay in UK if the duration is less than 180 days, what you need to do is bring the acceptance letter and they will give you a student visa. When you leave UK remember to bring the acceptance letter as you need that to prove you are studying in UK, so that you can re-enter UK.

Orientation Activities

The orientation Activities in Cass is not that much, and a little bit boring. There were 2 days of orientation and most of them were just seminars and talks for introducing the campus or school systems. The only interesting activities was the “Drink evening” on the second day. The event took place in the club inside campus, and we could get 2 drinks for free.

International services and Activities

You can visit the exchange office to ask for help if you have any questions or problems. In spring there were not much international activities held in campus, I believe most of the activities were held in last semester for freshmen, thus there are not much activities for us to join in Spring.

Accommodation

Accommodation in London is quite expensive, if you cannot get an official hall offer, you will need to find accommodation yourself. The place I lived in was Tottenham Hale, which is in Zone 2, it takes me around 40 minutes to travel from my place to campus. The cost for my accommodation is 3229 pounds for four and a half months. If you want to live closer to the city center, the price will be higher.

Courses Registration

Course registration is very simple in Cass. Before semester starts, you will be able to check the courses available in the following semester and the time for classes, so you can start planning your timetable. The first week of the semester is the add/drop period, which is for you to attend the classes you want to choose, and to finalize your timetable. After you figure out the courses you would like to take, what you need to

do is just fill in a form and submit your choices online.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

I take 4 courses in this semester and the details are as follow:

FR 2203 Company Valuation (Equivalent to FINA 3403: Corporate Valuation, 3 credits)	This course has one mid-term and 1 case-study as alternative assessment, the mid-term is not difficult but the case-study is pretty hard. The time limit to complete the study is just 3 days and the questions are quite complicated
FR2210 Alternative Investment Management (Equivalent to FINA 3403: Corporate Valuation, 4 credits)	This is a quite interesting course as you can have a chance to participate in a trading game. However, the course materials are so much that the professor will skip slides during lectures, thus it will be quite hard to catch up. There are no midterms for this course, while you will need to write an evaluation report after the end of the trading game. The alternative assessment for this course will be simply a research essay.
FR 2211 Derivatives Trading and Hedging (Equivalent to FINA 3203: Derivative Securities, 3 credits)	This course has one group assignment which is about calculations and analysis, you will need to have some revision before your group start doing it. The alternative assessment for this course is a research summary. Each student will choose 1 paper and have 1 week to go through it and write the summary. I think this is the most difficult assessment among all 4 as the paper is quite long with concepts that you are not familiar with.
IF3101 International Finance	This course has one group essay and 1

(Equivalent to FINA 4403: International Finance, 3 credits)	essay as assessment. Both 2 tasks are not difficult and I think this is the easiest course among them.
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Sports & Recreational Facilities

There are not many sports facilities in campus. For students who are interested in doing sports, they can join the citySport membership, which provides different types of sports and training classes. Although I didn't join the membership, but I believe joining the membership is a good choice, compare to other gyms in London. The details for this membership will be covered during the orientation.

Finance and banking

It is extremely common for people to use cards for payment, and it will be more convenient to use cards as you will not need to carry any coins. You may choose any banks you want to open an account and get a debit card. Santander is the most convenient choice as it has a branch open inside campus. After you get the letter for opening bank account from the school office, you can straightly go there and book a time slot for opening a bank account. For choosing which bank account you will like to open, be careful some accounts may have charges, while some do not.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

For students going to cass in spring semester, there are not much chance for joining clubs in cass, as I believe they already recruited members in last semester. ESN is the only organization that I get in touch with during the orientation, it is an organization for exchange students, and it will sometimes organize events for exchange students to join. Apart from that, there are not much activities held in cass during those months.

Health and Safety

There is a Student Health Service Center in campus, but luckily I didn't have the chance to visit it. Although there are 2 attacks happened in London this year, London in general is a safe place, but there are quite a lot homeless people, so just be careful at night and avoid going out alone, and you should be fine.

Food

There are different kinds of restaurant near the station Angel, which is the closest Underground station from campus, and it takes around 5-10 mins of walking. Similar to Hong Kong, you can almost find any kind of food you want in London. And if you miss Asian food, just visit china town near Leicester Square Station, there are many Chinese restaurants for you to choose.

Transportation

Transportation in London is expensive, which cost more than 2 times compare to Hong Kong, but there are specials offers for students to lower the cost. Firstly, get an oyster card as soon as possible as the ticket price is much higher than using oyster card. You need to pay a deposit for the card, but you can get a " ". The second way to lower the fare is to register a rail card, oyster card combined with rail card can further lower the price for transportation, plus rail card itself can offer you discounts when you buy train tickets to other cities in UK.

Climate

In January and February, the temperature will be quite low(around 3 to 5 degrees), sometimes might be lower, You should bring a thick coat for keeping you warm. Moreover, it is quite windy in London with some rain, so you should also prepare some water proof clothing for such weather.

Communication

You may get different sim cards during orientations or gift packs, and among those providers I know, giffgaff should be the cheapest. There are plans with different amount of data and call minutes for you to choose, or you can just top up your amount and pay for what you use. Although giffgaff has a low price for data plan, it doesn't provide data plan outside UK. While the usage fee outside UK is quite expensive, it is better to buy a plan from other service provider when you travel through Europe.

Cautionary Measures

Apart from living in London, exchange students should be more careful when they travel through Europe, as some countries in Europe will be more dangerous, and the people there might be more aggressive to beg you for money, or some may try to

steal your things. Exchange students should also be careful apart from enjoying their trips.

Cost and expenses

Accommodation: 40000HKD

Transportation: 4000HKD

Living Expense: 10000 HKD

Travelling: 15000 HKD

Entertainment Expense: 5000 HKD

Items to bring

1. Stationary
2. Adaptor (for travelling to places outside UK)
3. Chargers
4. Acceptance letter
5. Clothing (thick clothes for cold temperature)
6. Medicine