



EXCHANGE REPORT – Fall 2017
Lancaster University,
United Kingdom

HO WING YEE

YEAR 3

(Professional Accounting & Information System)

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Monthly Activity Log

October 2017

My registration day was 1st October, 2017 and beforehand, I have travelled London for a week before arriving Lancaster on 30th September. Upon my arrival to Lancaster train station, many student ambassadors guided us to take either the free shuttle bus to the university or taxi to the town. It was warm to have a helping hand from the university especially on a rainy day.

I was assigned to Cartmel College which provided an International Buddy Program for me. My exchange buddy picked me up at the college gate on the registration day and kindly showed me around the whole campus. It took me almost two weeks to familiar myself about the campus and the town. Lancaster is a small town but it definitely provided everything I need to settle down including Chinese cuisine to cure my homesickness. An app named “iLancaster” is highly recommended for quick settlement as it included all the information you need from events in campus to bus schedules in the town.

It was strange to be a freshman again but I was lucky to be surrounded by friends from HKUST and my college. Via iLancaster, my HKUST friends and I joined a wide range of orientation activities such as International student orientation talk, free traditional high tea and college breakfast date etc. I have made friends from literally all over the world, including the Mainland, USA, Australia and Qatar and so on. Moreover, I have joined one of the college netball team as well. My team mates are mainly local and we practiced twice a week. The social secretary of the college teams organized social events every two weeks. I was so fortunate to be part of them as they made me feel like being home.



Flash trip to Manchester

The Michaelmas term commenced on 9th October. I have enrolled in two accounting courses and one philosophy course. Similar to the tutorial session in HKUST, I had tutorial for each course. By this moment, the workload was fair as all midterms and assignments would start after week 5, except attendance was taken and weekly assignment was collected in every tutorial session. In total, I have 9 hours of class every week with a Friday off so I have plenty of time to explore the UK. I have been to Manchester, Lake District, Edinburgh and Highland during the weekends.



Explore Lake District



Stunning natural landscape in Highland

November 2017

November started in week 4 which was the last weekend before the tasks began. I seized the chance to travel Cardiff for 3 days, followed by a midterm and a philosophy essay due. At week 5, I have received special course assessment for exchange student, which were two take-home exams and a final exam in week 10. Taking the weekly tutorial preparation into account, the workload was still moderate as only one midterm or assignment due per week. Talking about the weather, it was winter-time so the sun set at 4pm. I got a few classes from 5-6pm so it's like going to school at night.

As I have joined the college netball team, I joined the inter-college tournament and competed against other college every Tuesday night. It was rainy and windy for the whole November so playing game at outdoor court at below 5 degree Celsius was quite challenging and unforgettable. Moreover I have made friends from Hong Kong via social gathering. My friend and I visited Edinburgh Christmas market. It was definitely the best Christmas market-to-go and I love the mulled wine very much. Also, I have been to Birmingham during the Black Friday weekend to enjoy the great discount. It is a shopper paradise with almost all department stores in walking distance to the train station. The Christmas market in Birmingham should be the largest in the UK as it covered half of the city center.



Solo trip to Cardiff



Day trip to Edinburgh



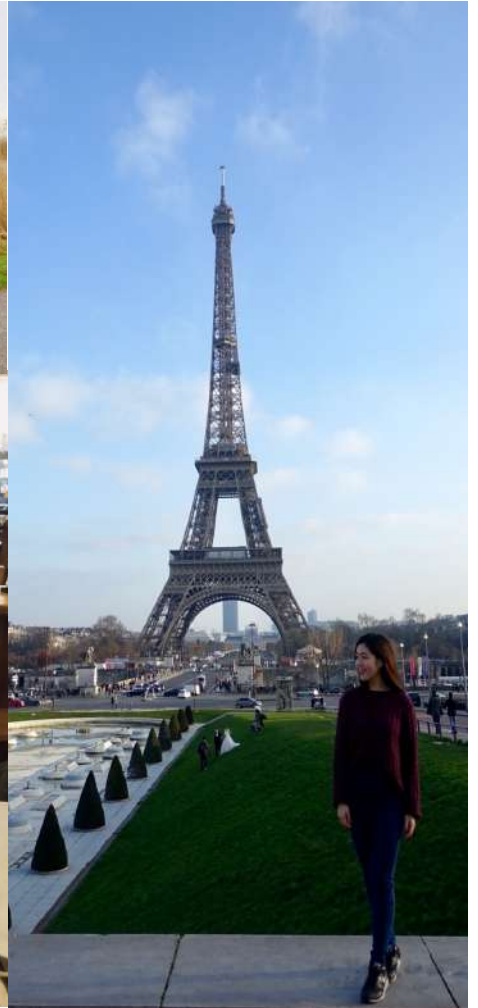
Shopping and Tasting mulled wine in Birmingham during Black Friday weekend



Inter-college Netball Tournament

December 2017

It came to the end of the semester and all assignments and exams were due in week 9 and 10. My classmates and I revised hard in the Baker house farm. Meanwhile, I have to ship my luggage and get myself prepared for the Europe trip. It was the most challenging period, despite of the workload, it is always hard to say goodbye. Eventually, I have managed to have farewell gathering with my friends and took several shots with the professors in Lancaster University. On 15th December, I have checked out my hall and started my one-month Europe journey. I have travelled Brussels, Paris, Vienna, Prague, Berlin, Frankfurt, Amsterdam and Rotterdam during my trip. It was unforgettable to meet HKUST friends in different part of Europe. Finally, I backed London to do my last-minute shopping and take my returned flight to Hong Kong in mid-January.



General Exchange Information

(1) Visa Procedures

If you plan to stay in United Kingdom for less than 6 months, you do not need to apply the visa in advance. However, upon your arrival to UK border, you will have to present an acceptance letter issued by Lancaster University, which is normally sent to you in March. It is recommended to print it out before you leave Hong Kong. Attached link below are the other documents required by UK border. According to my experience, those documents will be checked as per request and instead they would ask you a few question. For example, your address in UK, program of study, length of duration and detail of returning tickets etc.

https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa/y/hong-kong/study/six_months_or_less

(2) Orientation Activities

During 2nd – 8th October 2017, it was their “Fresher Week”. Upon my arrival to Lancaster University, I attended an orientation talk given by the college dean. Then the International Office would held a welcoming talk for all exchange students and explain in detail about the course enrollment.

The junior college representatives (JCR) of each college will organize different activities such as pub quiz, free breakfast and college sports team trail etc. Most of them were clubbing and social networking. It was not compulsory but it was a good chance to make friends in the college.

We had been assigned a flat representative and he/she would guide you to download “iLancaster”, which is an extremely helpful app notifying you all important events, public transport, timetable and most importantly the path advisor. It is strongly recommended to check out the “welcoming week” column for the information of all events held. We had joined Lancaster Castle tour and enjoyed traditional English tea via the app.



(3) International Services & Activities

In Lancaster University, there is a good mix of local and international students so they do not specify services or activities for us. However there is a few society for mainlanders and Hong Kong students. Apart from the International student orientation talk, there are many workshops or tea gathering throughout the semester. I have joined a farewell gathering before I left Lancaster.

(4) Accommodations

In June, I received an email inviting me to dedicate my choice of accommodation. Since Lancaster University adopted collegiate system, so their on-campus housings are divided by 9 colleges, namely Bowland, Cartmel, County, Furness, Fylde, Graduate, Grizedale, Lonsdale and Pendle. Graduate college is for the postgraduate so technically there are 8 colleges for exchange students to choose. Fylde and Furness are located next by Alexandra Square which is the university center. Bowland is the oldest college among all. It is located near library as well as County. Grizedale is the most popular hall for local students which their party culture is similar to Hall 4 in HKUST. Both Gizedale and Pendle are near Management School which is convenient for business students. Located in the most south western part of the campus are Lonsdale and Cartmel, which I was belonged to the later college.

Only superior en suites are provided in Cartmel College. The en suite included a private washroom with a washbasin and shower. There are 6-8 en suites in one flat sharing a kitchen and a house is consisted by 8 flats. Make it simpler, each house is a small community in the college. Barker House Farm is the largest dining hall among all colleges. Self-study rooms and college bar can be found in there as well. Nearby is the portal which opens for 24 hours. If you have any parcel or want to seek help, you can always ring or go there directly. The receptionists are very helpful and funny.

The rental of an en suite is roughly £135 per week and it is 11 week let for Michaelmas term. The web payment system would issue the invoice after the official check-in so you do not need to pay it in advance. The official check-in and check-out date was 1st October and 15th December respectively. It meant that you can live on campus one week before the semester starts till one day after the last lecture day of the term. Cartmel College also offered catered-accommodation in Barker House Farm which costed around £185 per week. I have chosen self-catered as it was much cheaper to cook by yourself or cater in different restaurants in the campus.



(5) Courses Registration

In June, the study abroad team from Lancaster University sent me a guideline to register my university account with a password sent in separate email. During the registration process, I was asked to dedicate the courses I would like to enroll in. Please note that it does not guarantee any enrollment. It is only a preliminary process for pre-registration. After the registration, I can log in the Lancaster university web portal to access my timetable. The maximum credits for the Michaelmas term is 12 and the courses are generally 4-credit each. In short, only 3 courses can be enrolled in a term.

In Lancaster University, they adopted batch registration instead of online registration. A registration event ticket would be sent in late September and I can view my pre-registered timetable via the web portal. Reminders would be sent in advance about the enrollment date. It was usually different from local students so please be alerted. The course registration forms would be distributed by the college or during the international students orientation talk. The forms have to be filled in and brought to the registration event. It was held in the Great hall and it is advised to come earlier as the course registration is first-come-first-served. I have brought the official transcript and course outlines of the accounting courses I have taken in HKUST as well as the form for the reference. The department staff asked me a few questions about my understanding in accounting and he/she approved my request of enrollment. After I have seek all the approvals, I submitted my form to the International Student Officer. It took a few days for batch data-input so the timetable may not be refreshed immediately.

For tutorial session, the lecturer would open online enrollment after the first lecture. Similar to HKUST, two weeks of add-drop period would be given after the semester commenced. Please noted that any add or drop action required approvals from the department staff but not the teaching staff i.e. your lecturer or tutor. Also signatures are required in amending timetables so do check out the office hour of administration staff before your visit.

Timetable						
Week: 9/10/2017 - 15/12/2017			Start Time: 8:00 AM			
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
8:00 AM						
9:00 AM						
10:00 AM		A.C.F301/L01/01 FAR - Faraday LT 1-10	PHIL100/L02/01 LEC - LEC 1 Biology LT 1-10			
11:00 AM				AC.F301/W01/01 GFX - George Fox LT 3 (wk 1-5) CHC - Charles Carter A19 (wk 6-10)		
12:00 PM						
1:00 PM	AC.F303/W01/02 BLN - Bowland Nth SR 25					
2:00 PM						
3:00 PM	AC.F303/L01/01 COS - County South LT A70			AC.F303/L02/01 COS - County South LT A70 1-5		
4:00 PM		PHIL100/L01/01 LEC - LEC 1 Biology LT 1-10		PHIL100/S01/06 COM - County Main SR 7 1-10		
5:00 PM		AC.F301/L02/01 FAR - Faraday LT 1-10				
6:00 PM						

(6) Teaching & Assessment Methods

I have enrolled in 3 courses shown as the following:

Course Code & Course Title	Assessment	Teaching method
AcF301: Financial Accounting I	Coursework – Tutorial (10%) - 4% tutorial attendance - 6% tutorial preparation Coursework tests (40%) - 20% Test 1 –week 6 - 20% Test 2 – week 9 Examination tests (40%) - 50% Visiting Student Exam - Due in week 10	Lecture notes are distributed every class. Concepts and examples will be demonstrated in the lecture. Tutorial assignment will be checked or submitted in the tutorial session which can effectively clear my concept. However, the midterms and final exam format are different from the tutorial assignment so better refer to the past papers.
AcF303: Advanced Management Accounting	Coursework assignment (25%) - Announced by week 3 - Due in week 8 Examination tests (75%) - Take- home Visiting Student Exam - Distributed in week 5 - Due in mid-January	Lecture notes are clearly printed and distributed to each student in the first lecture. Loads of daily example and interaction are provided during the lecture. Tutorial session is not compulsory, but the tutorial questions are challenging and meanwhile inspiring. The coursework covered the scope which cannot be examined in the exam setting such as using excel to compute and analyze correlation between two variables.
PHIL100: Introduction to Philosophy	Coursework – Seminar (10%) - Attendance - Seminar input Coursework (45%) - 1 st assignment (essay) Examination tests (45%) - Take- home Visiting Student Exam - 2 pieces of essays - Released in week 8 - Due in week 10	Lecture notes and readings will be released online one day before the lecture. As it is a full-year course consisting of 4 modules, the teaching style differ with the lecturers. Generally the lecturer will introduce a concept or theory from the reading. Then they will encourage students to think critically about the theory and rise challenge. As well as the seminar, plenty of discussion time built up my logical thinking skills.

All lecture materials can be downloaded through Moodle, which is a learning space similar to Canvas.



(7) Sports & Recreation Facilities

Lancaster University offered a wide range of sports facility such as swimming pool, fitness suite, sports hall, climbing wall and steam room in the Sports Centre. To access the sports facility, membership or pay as you go scheme has to be purchased. There are 4 membership options for different level of training. It costs £37 to £114 per term. As I was the team player of the college netball team, I did not join the membership and instead, I had my fitness training in the outdoor sportsground. They do have plenty of outdoor sports spaces in the campus such as netball courts, rugby pitches and multi-use games areas etc.

(8) Finance & Banking

Cost and Expenses

	HKD\$
Flight tickets (HKG ⇄ LHR)	7,000
Accommodation	15,000
Living expense	20,000
Travelling (both UK & Europe)	<u>25,000</u>
Total	<u>67,000</u>

For banking, there are two banks in the campus, Santander and Barclays. HSBC (UK), NatWest and Yorkshire banks can be found in the town. I have set up the bank account in Santander as it is on-campus and zero administrative fee is charged. There are two types of bank accounts, mainly international student and basic one. The former will charge £5 per month to enjoy free overseas transaction. I chose the latter one as I have already bought sterling's in Hong Kong so I do not need the overseas transaction service.

After checked-in my accommodation, I have applied the address proof via the web portal and collected it in The Base at the Alexandra square. The address proof was free of charge and the staff would print it for you immediately after you have finished the order. Then I brought my passport, acceptance letter and the address proof to Santander bank branch. It took me half hour to finish the application. It was advised to register for e-banking for easier management. The basic account is consisted of a saving account and a current account. I claimed one cash card for cash withdrawal and one debit card for e-payment after a week. Debit card is extremely useful as not only online payment, even rent a bike or check out in supermarket can be done by this card.



(9) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

In week 1, the university has organized a two-day fresher fair for the society to recruit members. You will be surprised by the range of clubs and societies. There are clubs for academic, sports, community services, interest and culture, and even Harry Potter society. The executive committee of each society will hold a trial session before collecting the membership fee.

(10) Health & Safety

Lancaster is a safe town as you are always surrounded by the security guards or police. I have hanged out with my friends at night and I did not need to worry about my safety at all.

The university concerned about our mental health as well. During the fresher week, there was a drama show about being a wise university student and some reminders to maintain work-life balance. Throughout the semester, plenty of workshops or counselling session will be held for academic consulting or releasing stress.

(11) Food

Western and Chinese cuisine can be found in the town. It usually costed me £7-10 for a meal deal. Burgers from the hawkers are highly recommended as they are more mouthwatering than those in the fast food shop.

One of my exchange goal is to learn cooking so I almost cooked every meal during the weekdays. Generally speaking, I spent roughly £25 in buying ingredients per week. I usually do my grocery once a week and mainly on Wednesday as there will be Sainsbury free shuttle bus to the town. If you have spent more than £5 in Sainsbury, you can take the return bus to the university pass for free. I prefer to take the free shuttle bus to the town and take the bus near the Chinese supermarket to return to Cartmel College directly as my hall is far away from the university pass.

Between the lectures, I will have subway or Greggs for a quick lunch. The Pizza Republic located around Furness College offered the most delicious pizza I have ever had in Lancaster. Moreover, the ribs offered by Barker House Farm is very delicious as well. There are also Chinese cuisine provided by the canteen of George Fox but I think those in the town are better.



(12) Transportation



Almost every bus in Lancaster will pass through the university and the town. The bus timetables can be found in iLancaster. If you would like to plan a route, you can go to the Stagecoach website. Schedule of free shuttle bus travelling to and from Sainsbury and Sugarhouse, which the latter is one of the popular club in the town, can be found in iLancaster as well. It takes £1.9 for a single ticket and £2.7 for the return one. The Stagecoach Company offered day pass, 7-days pass, monthly pass and term pass as well. Attached is the link for your reference. <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables>

For travelling around UK, I have purchased a one-year young person railcard for £30 which offers me great discounts whenever I book a train ticket. The Trainline is a highly recommended website for planning a train journey. Though it is not the cheapest but it is definitely the most comfortable and convenient way to travel around the country.



For travelling in Europe, GoEuro is a website I used to search for airline, train and bus services across the countries. General speaking, bus is the cheapest option but it took the longest time to arrive the destination. You can search the information from GoEuro and find the best deal fulfilling your requirement.

(13) Climate

The weather in Lancaster are mainly rainy and windy. The temperature is around 0°C - 13°C. Sometimes it snows but not heavily. A parka is highly suggested to stay warm from day to night. Fortunately, heaters are everywhere in Lancaster. I would comment the winter time in Lancaster is not as harsh as in Hong Kong.



(14) Communication

Lancaster university students are from all over the world and UK is an English-speaking country so normally I have not encountered language problem. However, some accents are quite hard to follow such as the Scottish.



Concerning about the mobile service, I have chosen Giffgaff Company which is an online shop. I have ordered a free SIM card before I left Hong Kong so I topped up my giffgaff account and enjoyed the mobile data service right after my arrival to Heathrow airport. Please note that the underground does not provide any network service. Apart from losing connection in the tube, the mobile data service is very stable. Most importantly, it can be topped up via online payment and the data plan can be changed flexibly. I usually topped up £10 for 3 GB data with unlimited texts and call minutes.

I changed my service provided to 3UK when I was travelling in Europe. This service provider offers a feel-at-home plan which enabling data connection in more than 60 countries including Hong Kong. I have bought the £20 All-in-One Add-on plan to enjoy 12 GB data with 3000 minutes and texts.



Items to Bring

Documents:

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ HKID card
- ✓ Acceptance letter
- ✓ Immunization record
- ✓ Flight ticket
- ✓ Official transcript from HKUST
- ✓ IELTS certificate
- ✓ Insurance letter (if any)

Cash & Communication:

- ✓ Foreign currency cheque (if any)
- ✓ Credit cards
- ✓ Mobile phone
- ✓ Power bank
- ✓ laptop

Living necessities:

- ✓ Beddings (not provided by the university)
- ✓ Universal plugs & charger adaptor
- ✓ Eyeglasses
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ medicines
- ✓ Hair dryer

Clothing:

- ✓ Parka
- ✓ Sweater
- ✓ Hoodies
- ✓ Jeans
- ✓ leggings
- ✓ Full suits (in case of formal presentation)
- ✓ Pajamas
- ✓ Underwear
- ✓ Trainers
- ✓ Boots (water-proof is preferred)
- ✓ Scarf
- ✓ Gloves
- ✓ Hats

Useful Links and Contacts

UK border – Visa application:

https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa/y/hong-kong/study/six_months_or_less

iLancaster download link:

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/welcome/before-you-arrive/download-ilancaster/>

Web Portal of Lancaster University:

https://weblogin.lancs.ac.uk/login/?cosign-https-portal.lancaster.ac.uk&https://portal.lancaster.ac.uk/student_portal

Accommodation Application Portal of Lancaster University:

<http://accommodation.lancaster.ac.uk/>

Study Aboard Course Handbook of Lancaster University:

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/study/international-students/study-abroad/visiting-students/study-abroad-modules/>

Santander Bank (UK):

<https://www.santander.co.uk/uk/index>

Railcard:

<https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>

Trainline:

<https://www.thetrainline.com/>

GoEuro:

<https://www.goeuro.com/>

Skyscanner:

<https://www.skyscanner.com.hk/>

Airbnb:

<https://www.airbnb.com.hk/>

Giffgaff:

<https://www.giffgaff.com/>

3UK:

<http://www.three.co.uk/>