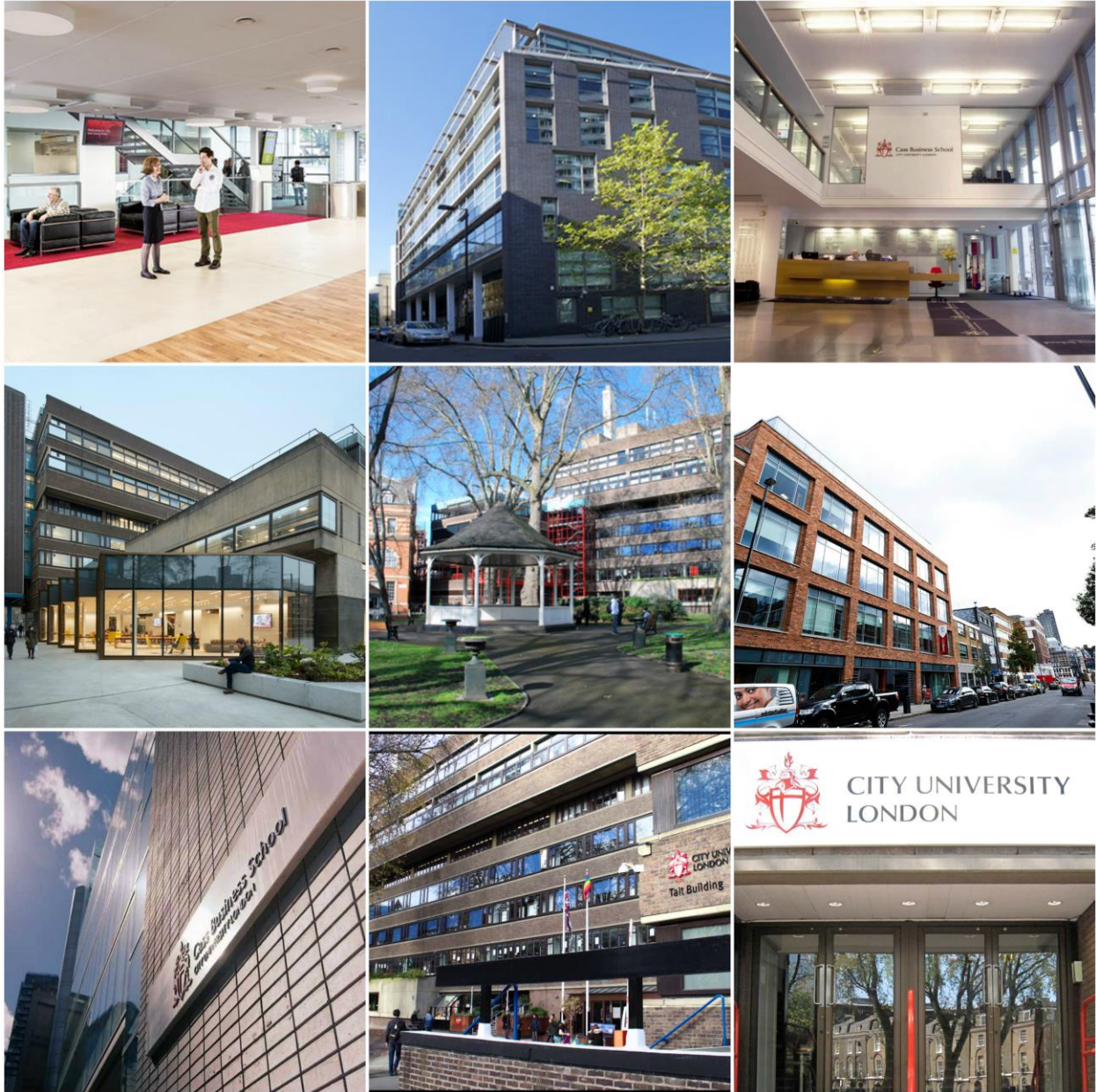


# EXCHANGE REPORT



FALL 2017  
CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON  
RAYNE CHAN

## Part 1 - Monthly Activity Log

### **September**

I arrived a little earlier than the orientation week in Europe and toured Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam before going to London. The orientation activities at City took place in late September and I got the chance to meet with some Hongkongers and Chinese studying there in the mingling session.

### **October**

The teaching officially started in early October, which is one month later than in UST. I was officially enrolled in all the classes I wanted, and was surprised to see so many people attending multiple classes just to make sure they got the right ones. For one module, the class was so full that the lecturer had to lock the door to prevent more people from coming in.

### **November**

By this time, it became a lot colder than the first two months but having been there for some time already, I had kind of become accustomed to the weather there. I made use of the day offs and weekends to do some travelling in nearby cities such as Oxford, Cambridge and Bath.

### **December**

The teaching ended in mid-December. Since as an exchange student, I did not need to attend the final examinations. Instead, I spent some time finishing off all the alternative assessments (mostly essays) so that I could make use of the remaining time to go to places I had not been to in London and other cities in Europe.

### **January**

My journey in Europe came to an end as I took the bus to go from Edinburgh to London, where I then took the flight back to Hong Kong. It was both an exciting and fruitful yet tiring experience, with a lot of planning involved for accommodation and transportation.

## Part 2 - General Exchange Information

### **Visa Procedures**

As I am holding an HKSAR passport, there is no need for me to apply for a visa to study in the United Kingdom for a semester. When selecting the type of visas during the registration and application processes, just choose short term study visa, which is free. Later, you will receive an email as well as a document (which will be sent to HKUST SBM) supporting the one semester study. The physical copy will need to be presented to the UK border control officer, who will then stamp on the passport specifying the type of the visa and its expiry date.

### **Orientation Activities**

The orientation activities took place in late September, days before the start of the semester. There was a compulsory day for exchange students where the study abroad staff at City would go through some general information about the exchange, the university itself and other important information about studying in London. There was also a guided campus tour by student ambassadors to help exchange students get familiar with the facilities and rooms.

On top of all these, there were also other optional orientation activities of a social or entertainment nature, including mingling activities and club events. Besides, there was a freshers' week, arguably only for year one full time students but also open to exchange students to get to know the student clubs and teams there.

Overall, there was no lack of activities in the orientation period for exchange students.

### **International Services & Activities**

From time to time, there were student groups organizing trips to other UK cities, from nearby cities like Bath or Oxford to as far as Brighton and Canterbury, which usually took place on weekends as a one-day or two-day trip. This is also a good chance to mix with local and other international students in a different setting in addition to study.

## **Accommodation**

As exchange students I could opt for living in Liberty Hall, one of the private accommodations offered by the university at a fee. Depending the number of students from UST in that term and perhaps other unknown factors, not everyone from UST would be assigned a room, in which case you might have to look for home stays or other options.

I lived in a single room with a private bathroom. It was well furnished with a duvet, two pillows with covers, a bed sheet as well as some basic cooking and culinary utensils for use of the common kitchen shared among eight to twelve people and equipped with stoves, fridges, cupboards for each person, ovens and microwave ovens. There were heating panels in the room which you could adjust.

The hall is just within 5-minute walking distance from the nearest building of City (Tate Building). It also has a pool table and a printer (free to use but every page will come with a small advertisement at the bottom of the page) in the common room on the ground floor. Overall it is a very safe and quiet hall just as the rest of the neighborhood (Islington).

## **Courses Registration**

Course registration was straightforward. Before the semester started, I received an online form through email asking me to specify the course preferences. One week or two into the semester, I received another form (the same as the first one) to confirm the courses I wish to take after trying to sit in for those courses. I successfully enrolled in all the four courses I specified at the first time. Depending on the popularity of some courses, they might not be available if you have not specified your preference for them at the first time.

I could choose four academic courses max plus one cultural module (Historic London or Performing Arts), the latter of which is quite different from academic courses as you get the chance to either visit famous places in London with the instructor as the guide, or watch some famous shows in many of the iconic theatres in London (at a much-discounted fee).

## **Teaching & Assessment Methods**

The four courses I took were Introduction to Real Estate Investment, Strategic Marketing, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, and Technical Analysis.

### Introduction to Real Estate Investment

There was only a regular two-hour lecture each week with tutorials in some weeks. It gives an overview of real estate investment especially in the UK context, from the general terminology to valuation.

For assessment, there were an individual assignment (a 100-word essay + calculation) accounting for 30% and a 3000-word essay accounting for 70% as the alternative assessment.

### Strategic Marketing

There was only a regular two-hour lecture each week with no tutorials. It introduces more advanced concepts and framework in marketing, such as the outside-in framework and value equity.

For assessment, there were a group project (comprising a report and in-class presentation) to analyze and provide recommendations using the frameworks learnt a company of the group's choosing, accounting for 30%. The rest came from a 1200-word essay.

### Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice

There was only a regular two-hour lecture every week with no tutorials. The teaching was slightly different from the other three courses as it was more interactive and based on business cases. It introduces basic concepts and theories on many parts of entrepreneurship, from idea generation to team formation to financing.

For assessment, there were a group project which required a business proposal for a new business accounting for 30% and the other came from a 3000-word essay on a story of an entrepreneur that I interviewed.

### Technical Analysis

There was a regular two-hour lecture each week plus a lab session introducing the use of Metastock. It explains the theories and use of various trading indicators, rules and patterns.

For assessment, there were a group/individual assignment (one or more as a group) involving the use of Metastock to form, back-test and analyze trading rules, accounting for 30%. 70% came from an assignment consisting of both calculation and essay-type questions.

### **Sports & Recreation Facilities**

There is a sports center located about 10 minutes away from the main campus, which requires a subscription fee to use the facilities. On the main campus, there is a bar which has a pool table. Overall, there are not many sports and recreation facilities on campus because City is not a campus university and most other needs can be satisfied off-campus.

### **Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)**

I exchanged HKD for pounds before going to the UK but did not open a local bank account, but City does provide exchange students with a bank letter to support our doing so. Most restaurants accept credit cards so there should not be huge problems getting around without cash.

The approximate biggest chunk of the expenses would definitely be accommodation (around 3000 pounds, because it is in London). As I travelled on a budget, I tried to plan ahead and book tickets as early as possible to enjoy maximum savings, so I did not spend much but was still able to explore much of Europe.

### **Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities**

There were quite a lot of activities and student clubs to join during the Freshers' Week (similar to the Orientation Week in UST). Mingling sessions were also organized for international exchange students and freshers to get to know each other.

### **Health & Safety**

Free medical advice could be obtained from the nurse on duty and exchange students would also be registered for NHS and attached to a clinic near the school for further medical care services (which I heard should be free except for more complicated procedures and for pills).

### **Food**

There was no lack of food options in London ranging from Chinese to Western cuisines, in contrast to the rather limited choices on campus (pizzas, fried chicken, salad, sandwiches etc.).

## **Transportation**

With an oyster card (similar to the Octopus card), I could travel with ease within London, by bus or by underground. The short length of the fall exchange program made us exchange students not eligible to apply for the youth octopus card which entitles holder to reduced fares on both buses and underground. Still, I could apply for the 18-25 railcard which entitles me for discounted fares for intra- and inter-city travelling in the UK by train (not bus though). It is recommended to apply for an ISIC card in Hong Kong which costs around HKD100 but comes with a lot of discounts in transportation, accommodation, food and so on in UK and most other European countries.

## **Climate**

Although officially it would not be winter until October, the weather in September was already a lot colder than it would be in Hong Kong. The biggest difference would be the presence of indoor heating in Europe, which I found essential especially when the temperature dropped to below 5 or even 0. Another thing worth noting is that there would be occasional drizzles even on an apparently sunny day, as well as occasional strong breezes, which actually in many occasions ruined the travelling experience, but I gradually got used to it.

## **Communication**

English was only useful in the UK, not quite in other parts of Europe. But for most capital cities in Europe, it would be okay not to know any other European languages but it would be best to have an offline translation app installed on the smartphone e.g. Google Translate.

### Part 3 - Items to Bring

Among all the things seen in other reports, the most important things are the passport and the letter supporting the short-term study visa.

### Part 4 - Useful Links and Contacts

Better apply for one before you go to the UK/Europe:

<https://www.isic.hk/>

Look at other reports as well:

<http://undergrad.bm.ust.hk/exchange/outbound-exchange/exchange-choices/84>

Plan trips using the following:

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

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

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

<https://www.rome2rio.com/>

<https://www.google.com/maps/about/mymaps/>

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