

2017/18 Fall Exchange Report  
NOVA School of Business and Economics



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BSc in Marketing and Information Systems (Year 4)

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## **Part I Monthly Activity Log**

### ***September***

Apart from myself, there was another HKUST student going to NOVA for Fall 2017 exchange. We planned to arrive Lisbon on the same day, 6<sup>th</sup> of September in order to attend the orientation day at NOVA the next day. We could only move into the university dormitory on the 10<sup>th</sup>, therefore, we lived at an Airbnb for the first few days. I lived in the university dormitory during my exchange period. Since first day of classes began on 14<sup>th</sup> of September, there was a week for us to get familiar with and explore a bit about the place. We have visited Belem where you can taste the most famous custard tart in Lisbon.



*Custard Tarts at Pasteis de Belem*

### ***October***

After staying in Lisbon for a month, I started to be familiar with the new environment and things became routine. I have enrolled 3 courses at NOVA, including Information Systems, Principles of Management and Strategy. The workload is still light at the beginning of the semester. Apart from attending the lesson, I also travelled to Morocco during the last week of October. I had a great time riding camel and stargazing in the Sahara desert.



*Camel Riding in the Sahara Desert*

## ***November***

Despite attending regular classes, I have travelled to Brussels, Belgium in the middle of the month. Brussels is famous for its waffles, chocolates and fries. I have tried several waffles with different toppings, like caramel sauce, whipped cream and strawberries. It started to get busy in Late-November. I have attended several meetings with my group mates. I also had my first presentation at the end of November.



*Waffle in Brussels, Belgium*



*Royal Palace of Brussels, Belgium*

## ***December***

December was a busy month since most of the project deadlines were due in mid-December. After submission of all project reports, I travelled to Germany as well as Spain during Christmas break. I have visited 3 cities in Germany, including Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt. The highlight of the trip was visiting the Neuschwanstein Castle, the fairy tale castle.



*East Side Gallery, Berlin, Germany*



*Neuschwanstein Castle, Germany*

## ***January***

Exams are conducted after Christmas break at NOVA. I had altogether three finals to attend. If you fail the final for the first time, you are given a second chance to take up the resit exam in late-January. Trip to Zurich and Vienna marked the end of my exchange period.

## **Part II General Exchange Information**

### ***1. Visa Procedures***

Portuguese visa application is quite complicated. You cannot make the visa in Hong Kong. You are required to contact the Consulate of Portugal in Macau via email and pass them relevant documents in order to get a letter for applying the Certificate of No Criminal Conviction issued by the Hong Kong Police Force. You have to pick up the letter from the Consulate of Portugal in Hong Kong and take it with you for the application of the certificate. It takes around a month for the Certificate of No Criminal Conviction Office to send the proof to the Consulate in

Macau. Once the proof has reached the Consulate in Macau, you will be contacted to arrange an interview with the consular officer in Macau. It takes around another month of time for the visa application to process. When the visa is ready, you have to visit Macau again to pick it up.

## ***2. Orientation Activities***

The orientation day was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September and it lasted around half a day. First it came to the welcoming section where the school officer would give a general introduction of NOVA and useful information for exchange students to pay attention to regarding the location of the support services and how to get a transportation pass, following a campus tour which a student representative from the student union would take you around NOVA. There were also booths setting outside the auditorium, which is similar to the promotion period of student societies in HKUST but the scale is much smaller here. It is the opportunity you can choose to join any of the societies according to your interests. I have joined and welcoming dinner gathering with the rest of the exchange students.

## ***3. International Services & Activities***

The International office had organized several activities for exchange students throughout the semester. In October, exchange students were invited to join an International Fair where students came from different places had a chance to share their experience of their home university and present typical clothing, food, drinks, among other traditional items to NOVA students. Besides, Erasmus Student Network Lisboa, a non-profit organization formed by Portuguese Erasmus students creates a Christmas Exchange every year and international students are given an opportunity to spend their Christmas with a Portuguese family.

## ***4. Accommodation***

I lived in the on-campus dormitory, Residencia Universitaria Dr. Alfredo de Sousa during my exchange period and it costs €225 per month. Living at the university dormitory is way cheaper than renting an accommodation offered by

a third party. Exchange students would usually get a single room, sharing toilet and bathroom with a double room. Around 30 students share a kitchen and a common study area. It only takes a 5-minute walk to the university. With a 10-minute walk from the main gate, you can reach the S.Sebastião station, the nearest metro station to NOVA, with few restaurants and a shopping mall around the area.

### ***5. Courses Registration***

Course registration is quite simple here. Like Students just need to send an email to the student aboard office to confirm which courses you are going to take. The student aboard office will usually allow students to take the courses they want. You can get the course information from NOVA in advance before you decide which courses to enroll. Each undergraduate course has 7.5 ECTS (credits) or 4 ECTS (credits). You can take at a maximum of 32 ECTS.

### ***6. Teaching and Assessment Methods***

There is no single assessment rule at NOVA. Individual lecturer will decide the assessment method and he/she will brief students on the first day of class. Every course has a compulsory final examination covering the entire course outline. I had projects for all 3 courses I took at NOVA. You will be evaluated in a 20-point scale for each coursework requirement.

### ***7. Sports and Recreational Facilities***

There are no gym facilities at NOVA.

### ***8. Finance and Banking***

Accommodation 11,000HKD

Transportation 1,300HKD

Living Expenses 25,000HKD

Traveling 30,000HKD

Airfare 8,733HKD

Total 76033HKD

### ***9. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities***

There are students clubs both available within and outside NOVA. These clubs will hold a range of events regularly like trips, social events and parties. If you join the membership of the society, you can enjoy a discount when attending their activities. I have joined the Erasmus Life Lisboa, a student society for all international students. Joining the day trip to Obidos, I was introduced to Lisbon's historic center and explored another face of Lisbon.

### ***10. Health and Safety***

Nova does not have on-campus medical assistance, but it holds an agreement with SAMS Clinical Center, nearby. The medical appointment costs approximately €30.

### ***11. Food***

It is inexpensive to dine out in Lisbon, comparing to other European countries. During the exchange period, I usually cook by myself as to save money. There are several recommended dishes including Bacalhau, the famous salted and dried codfish said to have 365 different ways of cooking it, seafood rice served in a cast iron pot and Portuguese custard tart.

### ***12. Transportation***

Travelling around Lisbon is convenient and inexpensive. It has a well-developed public transportation network. You are recommended to apply for a monthly pass. Students under 23-year-old can enjoy a 25% discount. There are two types of passes, one which costs €27.15 is only valid in urban areas in Lisbon, another is valid in both urban and suburban areas, costing €32. The pass is valid for unlimited trips in buses, metros or trams.

### ***13. Climate***

Lisbon is one of the sunniest and warmest cities in Europe. You can always enjoy the sun here in Lisbon. The rainy season falls between October to February. When it comes to winter, your skin can easily dry out. It is noted that there are heaters in most of the indoor buildings in Lisbon.



#### **14. Communication**

The official language in Lisbon is Portuguese. I often encountered some issues when communicating with the older population. When I first arrived the university dormitory for check-in process, the dormitory staff does not know how to speak English and we turned out using a translation app for communication. However, English is widely spoken by local university students, the younger populace and people who work around the tourist spots.

#### **15. Cautionary measures**

Be prepared to meet people of different nationality during your exchange period, with different cultures and religions. Embrace this opportunity to exchange thoughts with people from different background. Open your mind to learn more about the world and have loads of fun.

### **Part III Items to Bring**

<p><i>Important Items</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cash (HKD + EUR)</li><li>• Credit card</li><li>• ATM Card with Overseas Withdrawal Function</li><li>• Passport with Visa</li><li>• University Acceptance Letter</li><li>• Hall Acceptance Letter</li><li>• Personal ID (HKID, SID)</li><li>• Travel Insurance Documents</li></ul>	<p><i>Clothing Items</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• T-shirts</li><li>• Sweaters</li><li>• Jackets</li><li>• Jeans</li><li>• Pajamas</li><li>• Underwear</li><li>• Socks</li><li>• Sunglasses &amp; Cap</li><li>• Swimwear</li><li>• Scarf &amp; Gloves</li><li>• Suit</li></ul>
<p><i>Electronic Items</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smartphone</li><li>• Portable Charger</li><li>• Laptop</li></ul>	<p><i>Personal Care Items</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Toothbrush &amp; Toothpaste</li><li>• Body Wash</li><li>• Shampoo &amp; Conditioner</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laptop Charger</li> <li>• Camera</li> <li>• Camera Charger &amp; Backup Battery</li> <li>• Earphone</li> <li>• Adapters</li> <li>• Extension Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunscreen</li> <li>• Lotion</li> <li>• Bath &amp; Face Towel</li> </ul>
<p><i>Others</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Boiler</li> <li>• Umbrella</li> <li>• Medicine</li> <li>• Travel Pillow/Eye Mask</li> <li>• Stationery</li> </ul>	

#### **Part IV Useful Links and Contacts**

- Official Webpage of NOVA School of Business and Economics  
<http://www.novasbe.unl.pt/>
- Introduction of Living in Lisbon  
<http://www.novasbe.unl.pt/living-in-lisbon-2>
- Course Information for Undergraduate Exchange Program  
<http://www.novasbe.unl.pt/undergraduates/courses>

**Hope you enjoy an unforgettable exchange journey ☺**

**If you have any further questions, please get my contact from the SBM Exchange Team on [bmugexch@ust.hk](mailto:bmugexch@ust.hk)**