

LEUNG CHI HONG (ACCT & MGMT YEAR 3)

EXCHANGE REPORT (FALL)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC, PRAGUE



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Monthly Log

September

I arrived Prague on 5th September while the Semester would start a week later so I had plenty of time to wander around the city. An orientation week was held to welcome exchange students, providing information about the dormitory, course registration and examination. Basically, I learnt everything from the talks and notes distributed in the week. The first month passed incredibly fast by spending time in supermarkets and meeting new friends. Also, I travelled to Karlovy Vary, a small town fond of drinkable hot spring, which tasted like water after boiling coppers.



October

I planned some trips before the midterm examinations. There was an unforgettable experience of my visit to Croatia. Since I sent back my passport back to Hong Kong for the visa application, the governors refused me to enter Croatia and I spent 24 hours on buses and trains within two days leaving and going back Prague. It is one of the stupidest mistake I have made in my life - travelling without a passport. After the failed trip to Croatia, I travelled to Cesky Krumlov, Finland and Iceland with my friends.



November

It was a busy month filled with projects, presentation and midterm. By the meantime, the weather became real cold. I went to Krakow in Poland for visiting the concentration camp. Living in a hostel, I met a Taiwanese girl and chatted for the entire night. We walked around the city together and joined a free tour to Jewish Square which has uncountable historical stories.



December

Approaching to the end of semester. My schedule was filled with exams. Since I had taken a master course in Math, I was kind of anxious that I would fail the course. Luckily after the final examinations I barely pass it. I travelled to Italy with my friend after the finals. In the end of December I spent the Christmas in Salzburg. Followed with Hallstatt, Kognessee, Vienna and Budapest. It was a wonderful trip and I will always remember that I caught the last sunset of 2017 and first sunrise of 2018 in Budapest.



January

The semester has ended in December so basically January is all for travelling. I visited Paris and Zurich before going back to Hong Kong.

General Exchange Information

Visa Application

1. Get the acceptance package from SBM
2. Send email to Czech Embassy for a letter of applying non-criminal record from HK Police
3. Go to Wan Chai (Police Headquarter) for the application and you need to wait for around 3 weeks to 1 month. They will send the record directly to the Embassy
4. The Czech Embassy will send an email to you once they receive the non-criminal record and you need to arrange a booking for the application of visa. You need to prepare the bank statement with \$30000 HKD inside to prove you are financially

sufficient for the trip. Also, the proof of accommodation and letter of acceptance from the school will be needed.

5. Buy the insurance from the email issued and go to get the visa with the proof. In my case, the visa application last for almost 4 months so I entered EU with traveller visa and mailed back the passport to finish the application. Please do it as soon as possible otherwise it will be really annoying to travel without the passport.

Orientation Activities (Buddies System)

The orientation week starts one week before the schooling. I get everything i needed such as Sim card, maps, Student ID, or other information useful in the first few days. There are some city tours or parties in cheap price available as well.

International Service and Activities

Mainly is the BUddy System. Every Exchange Student will be assigned to a local student. My Buddy contacted me in mid July when I was in America. He provided detailed guidelines for me to check in because he was not free to pick me up in airport back then. The Buddy System also holds party on Tuesday every week. I am not a big fan of party so I did not join any of them but my friends said it is pretty good.

Accommodation

The dormitory locates outside the school. It takes almost 30 minutes to travel between 2 places. I chose the double-beds room in Jarov Hall F before the departure. There was an email with all application procedures about the hall. A 5000 CZK deposit is needed to be kept in the account during the exchange period. Everything needed in a bedroom will be provided (bed sheets and pillows etc). Every room contains 2 bedrooms, a stove, bathroom and washroom. Heaters in the room will be automatically on in winter. However, the elevator in the dormitory had been broken since October and I lived in 11/F. It was quite inconvenience although there was another lift to 9/F. The officers said they will not repair it because the cost is too high.

Course Registration

The registration of courses is similar to HKUST. We have almost a week time for add-drop period. Just do as the email told. I crossed check with the database in ARRO to ensure my credits meet the requirement of credit transfer.

Teaching and Assessment Methods

2RU135 Basic Czech for foreigners (A1)

The course includes a midterm exam, a presentation and a final exam, with counting attendance. Attending the class and finish the presentation will grant 50% of the total grade of the course. You will have some basic understanding on the grammar and basic czech vocabs after classes but do not expect you can speak fluently with just one basic course.

2RO181 Basic Spanish for Economists I

The course includes exact same components as the basic czech language but the exams count for nearly 90% of the total grade. Therefore, it is essential to study the course materials and attend all classes to ensure the concept is clear. Great payoff will result in greater return. I can read some easy spanish passages and speak some simple sentences now.

3BE322 Corporate finance

The course has plenty of workloads, i.e. 3 tests, 3 projects and 1 final exam. However, no attendance is required. Make sure you present in class while there is a quiz or project presentation happening. Some of the contents are duplicated with FINA2303 so it is not difficult to catch up in class. If you want to get the most out of the course, you should listen carefully during the case study presentation because there are lots of insights from other classmates worth-thinking.

2MO642 Financial Management in International Business - in English

The course includes 2 midterm and 1 final exam. Also, there is a case study and attendance components. It has some basic concepts about FX, bonding

and risks. 80% of the grade relies on examinations. It is not hard to get a pass but aiming for higher grade should present some efforts in the case study.

4ST644 Stochastic Processes and Risk in Finance and Insurance

It is a master math course focusing on technical side of finance and insurance. Some concepts related to derivatives pricing and claims return are included. I do not encourage general SBM student to take this course unless you are passionate about applied math like me. The course has 1 midterm and 2 final exams (the last one dependable on your grade, you can skip it if you can pass with the marks in first 2 tests). In my opinion, this is the most rewarding course i took in this semester since it challenges my limit.

Sports and Recreation Facilities

There are some gym rooms and ball game courts within the dormitory but the scale is incomparable with those in UST. My flatmate told me he prefers to go further and finds something in the city centre. To me, I do not demand much quality from the facilities so I think it is quite convenient to have recreation areas in such a close distance. Moreover, I can easily find cinemas in Prague and the ticket is pretty cheap for student (180 CZK). All films are in english and subtitled with czech, which is another learning opportunity!

Finance and Banking

I bring cash. There are some Hong Kong students from CUHK using credit card and debit card. The cost of living in Prague is relatively cheap compared with Hong Kong. Travelling costs a lot despite of the convenient location of the city. Here is the reference of my expenses throughout the exchange period

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Amount (HKD)</u> |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Flight (Swiss Airline) | 9,800 |
| Living Expenses | 12,000 |
| Insurance | 1,000 |
| Data Plan | 600 |

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Accommodation | 10,000 |
| Travelling | 30,000 |
| Visa Application | 400 |
| Total | 63,800 |

Social Club and Networking

I did not join any clubs or parties simply because I do not enjoy them. Yet, a party will be held every tuesday and the students with a “party card” is free to go. The card is accessible in the orientation week.

Health and Safety

Prague is a safe city. Just stay alert as same as in Hong Kong. I never witness any crime in this city so far. You can seek for help from the dormitory or school office if you are not feeling well because it is not easy to find a doctor and communicate with them.

Food

I am not a big fan of local food but you can always have other choices here. Everything is cheap even compared to Hong Kong.

Transportation

Tram, Bus and Metro are 3 major Transportation. 119 Bus is a shuttle from airport to the closest Metro Station. Most of the time I will take No.9 or 11 Tram travelling around the city and school. The school will arrange the documents for application of transportation pass upon the start of orientation week. I choose to buy a 3 month pass and a 1 month pass since UST’s exchange period lasts for 4 months in total. You can take all 3 kinds of public transport with the pass. There are some random checks for the tickets so DO NOT SKIP IT or you will get fine for 800 CZK, which is nearly tripe of a normal ticket.

Climate

The weather is similar to Hong Kong when I first arrived in September. Later it turned colder than I expected and dropped to around 15°C in mid October. The weather is usually sunny in the morning but changed to cloudy in the afternoon. It is dry and freezing in the middle of Winter, around 0 degree for most of the time in late November to January. Snowing sometimes happens but not as constant as Nordic Region.

Communication

Sim Card. There is a package exclusive for exchange student and you can get it in orientation week as mentioned above. REMEMBER TO CHARGE IN EACH MONTH otherwise the telecommunication company will terminate the discount and it is impossible to get the same Sim card outside the campus. Locals can hardly speak english but it is easy to communicate with basic body gesture. On the other hand, I encourage students to take the Basic Czech Course in order to get some understandings on the Language.

Cautionary Measures

I have 2 insurance covering everything of the trip. One from the visa and another one I bought it from AXA, which is a travel insurance lasting for one year.

Checklist of items to bring

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Necessities | Cash and Credit card | Lock |
| | Passport and ID card | Flip flops |
| | Sim card and Spare Phone | |
| | Keys | |
| | Neck pillow | |
| | Air ticket | |
| | | |
| Outfits | Hat | Shoes |
| | Coat | Umbrella |
| | Gloves | Clothes |
| | Scarf | Socks |
| | | Pajama |
| | | |

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Electronics | Power bank | Instant camera |
| | Charging Line (Type B+C) | Instax film |
| | Adaptor | Battery |
| | Plugs | Wide lens |
| | | |
| Personal care | Hand cream | Medicine |
| | Lipstick | Shampoo |
| | Toothpaste | Towel |
| | | Tissue |

Useful Links

School

[VSE](#)

Accommodation

[ISKAM](#)

SIS

[INSIS](#)

Travelling

[Airbnb](#)

[Goeuro](#)

[Regiojet](#)

[Flixbus](#)

[Hostelworld](#)

Best of all

[Google](#)

Last words

It has been a journey. A remarkable one. Going somewhere strange and meeting new people are always great and refreshing. Prague is a relaxing place where I can rethink what to do after my graduation and the direction of my life. I am really thankful for the chance given by SBM to explore the world outside Hong Kong.