



BI NORWEGIAN BUSINESS SCHOOL

Exchange Report – Fall 2017

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Monthly Activity Log

August

I arrived at Oslo on August 11. I signed up for the ‘Meet and Greet Service’, in which student helpers from BI provided information on how to get to the SiO housing office and the student village. My exchange mates and I joined a few activities such as concert and talks during the Orientation Week. We bought some household items and kitchen utensils from IKEA and there were free shuttlebuses accessing in particular days. During the month, we explored around the city and visited attractions like Akershus Fortress, Oslo Opera House, Sognsvann Lake, Holmenkollen Ski Jump Tower, Grünerløkka and Ekebergparken etc. School started at August 22.



September

As it was still the beginning of the semester and workload was light, we kept touring around Oslo, to places such as the Norwegian Folk Museum and the Norwegian Outlet. During day-offs and weekends, we did some travelling to Bergen and Stockholm, which are close cities to Oslo. We also joined BI-ner early this month, where we met international students for a free dinner.



October

Besides a case assignment, there was no other homework nor quizzes for all the courses I was taking – which meant more travelling coming! I went to Copenhagen and Helsinki in two of the weekends. With the remaining free time, we had explored more food and things to do in Oslo and surprisingly, we found a good and affordable place to go bowling and pooling. We checked the Northern Light forecast in Oslo quite often and went to Sognsvann Lake for 3-4 nights during the month. Unfortunately, we were unable to see the aurora.



November

Despite 3 final exams in late November, I still went to Amsterdam and Iceland for the first two weeks of the month. Iceland is one of the best places to go if you are going to have your exchange program in Europe (I guarantee!). The landscape is just breath-taking yet serene, and I was so lucky to see snow covering the entire Iceland. After coming back, I started to study for my exams. Going to BI campus continuously for 2 weeks for 10 hours per day to study was the most toughest period of my exchange journey.



December

Besides the last final exam in mid-December, the month was all about travelling. I went to London and Dublin before the exam and Milan, Munich, Zurich & Frankfurt with my exchange mates after the exam. I spent the Christmas period in Oslo, Stockholm and Rovaniemi with my sister and Vienna for New Year's Eve. The trip to Rovaniemi was the most special one to me, since I had the chance to ride the reindeer and husky, as well as to go to the Santa Claus Village.



January

My journey continued, where I went to Budapest, Rome, Athens and Santorini before heading back to Oslo. I returned to Hong Kong on 16/1.



General Exchange Information

1) Visa Procedures

Although I am an EU citizen, I chose to apply for the residence permit at the Norwegian Consulate in Hong Kong. Application procedures are simple (just click on the link in 'Useful Links and Contacts' below) and no processing fee is required for EU citizens. The procedures apply the same to Hong Kong citizens, but it charges around HKD3000. For EU citizens, the UDI system is actually a more convenient way of doing so, but I did not since I was not familiarized with the portal.

2) Orientation Activities

From August 14-23, we had the orientation week, which was also the buddy week. Groups of exchange students were assigned to buddies who are BI students. As the grouping is on a random basis, I was able to meet students from all over the world. During the week, a wide range of events such as concerts, parties, sailing trip and speech were organized. I joined a few of them, however, I was not able to keep in touch with my buddies and other exchange students (it really depends on how engaging and enthusiastic your buddies are).

3) International Services and Activities

A Facebook Group is created every semester for exchange students. By joining the group, you will be updated with student activities organized by the school and some of those organized for university students in Oslo. One activity that is worth-mentioning is the 'BI-nner', which gathers international students for a free dinner, and registration is on a first-come-first-served basis.

4) Accommodations

International exchange students in BI are guaranteed with housing during their term of study. There are 3 housing providers: SiO, BSN and Diakonhjemmet, with each offering rooms of different types (single room, studio; furnished, unfurnished etc.) and prices. 4 of my exchange mates from UST and I chose to live in Kringsja Student Village provided by SiO. We all lived in unfurnished single room with shared bathroom. A supermarket called Kiwi is situated near the entrance of the village. There are also 2 kindergartens in the neighborhood (so expect a considerable noise level during weekdays). It took us 20 minutes to go to BI by metro from the village.

5) Course Registration

I received an email sent by BI in late June, which provided access to the course list, course descriptions, workload, schedule and online registration form. Registration procedures are simple: you just need to type your personal information as well as the course codes of the courses you want to take. If you want to transfer credits from the courses you are going to take, make sure you have checked in the course equivalence database, that those courses are relevant and are not expired before your term of study.

6) Teaching Assessment & Methods

Below are 4 courses I have taken during the semester, and their teaching, assessment & methods:

ELE 3702 Social Entrepreneurship (equiv. to MGMT 2130: Business Ethics and Social Responsibility)

60% Term paper, 30% Take-home exam & 10% Reflection. In this course, I partnered with 4 other students for a group project about our chosen social enterprise. It was a valuable experience to me as my groupmates are from all over the world. The lecturer was very passionate and engaging during lectures, which made learning more interesting (despite having the lesson at 8am). Final exam consisted of 2 essay-questions which assessed students' knowledge on the idea of social entrepreneurship and examples of social entrepreneurs. It is important to be attentive during class and study the textbook before exam.

ELE 3709 Project Management (equiv. to ISOM 4750: Business Project Management)

100% Final exam. Course content is very straight-forward. The lecturer delivered assignments every week and submission was not required. Final exam questions were pretty much around a few topics which could be found in the past papers, so it was not really difficult.

EXC 2901 Norwegian Culture and History (equiv. to Common Core Course in Humanities)

100% Final exam (essay-type). The lecturer was not as engaging and the lecture notes were not as comprehensible to me. Besides, I would recommend this course if only you are really interested in knowing more about Norwegian history, since the teaching of the 'history' part is significantly more than the 'culture' part. Final exam consists of writing 2 essays, and during my exam, the 2 questions were the same as past paper questions.

EXC 3650 Supply Chain Management (equiv. to ISOM 4770: Supply Chain Management)

30% Simulation assignment, 70% Final exam. The assignment was based on an 8-hour in-class supply chain simulation game, and I did it with my exchange mate. The course content is similar to another OM elective course (ISOM 3760 Logistics Management) that I have studied before. Final exam questions were very straight forward.

7) Sports & Recreation Facilities

You can apply as a member of the SiO Athletica's gym, where one is located in the BI campus, and also in 4 other places. However, the price for exchange students without a Norwegian bank account is very high (380NOK for one month; 1050NOK for three months).

8) Finance & Banking (including currency/expenses)

What is good about Norwegian Krone is that its exchange rate with HKD is about 1:1, which saves you time from currency conversion. Although I brought some cash and ATM cards for cash withdrawal during exchange, most of the time I would just use credit card, since you can use it in almost everywhere. Anything in Norway is expensive, so expect a higher living expenses than in Hong Kong. Remember to bring enough Euros if you are going to travel in other European countries.

9) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

Sometimes there are booths run by companies from different sectors around the school campus, offering job opportunities to students.

10) Health & Safety

SiO provides health, counselling and dentist services to students. You will need to register beforehand to enjoy these services. One of the health centers is located in the BI campus. Norway is a very safe country in general, but I would recommend someone accompanying if you are going to the city center (Jernbanetorget metro station) at night.

11) Food

Eating out in Norway is a costly option, on average you will have to spend over HKD150 for lunch/dinner. Therefore, I cooked at my dorm most of the time. You can buy cheaper vegetables and seasonings in a market outside Grønland metro station. 'ScanAsia', located in the city center, is another option. Kiwi, Rema 1000 and Coop are some chain supermarkets where I bought meat as well as other household items.

12) Transportation

On the first day of arrival, I bought the Ruter travel card, which is available in most convenience shops such as Narvesan and 7-eleven. It costs NOK60 for the card itself and NOK425 for the transportation expenses. You have to top up the card in every 30 days. The travel card allows you to use bus, tram, metro and ferry services around Oslo. Remember to bring the card with you all the time, because there could be random inspections anywhere and anytime. If you forgot to bring the card, you would have to pay a fine of NOK1150.

13) Climate

In August when it is still summer time, the highest temperature can reach 22 °C. In September and October, the temperature range is around 3-17°C. Temperature difference is significant between day and night. Starting from November, it can drop to below 0°C and you would see snow around that time.

14) Communication

Most Norwegians speak fluent English, so communication barrier is not a problem. People in Norway are generally nice and helpful.

15) Cautionary measures

As mentioned above, Norway is a very safe country, so basically no cautionary measure is required.

Items to Bring

- HKID Card (+Photocopy)
- Passport (+Photocopy)
- Residence Permit Letter (+Photocopy)
- Admission Letter (+Photocopy)
- Insurance Letter (+Photocopy)
- Cash (NOK, EURO and little HKD)
- Credit Card(s) & ATM Card(s)
- Wifi Router & LAN Cable
- Portable Charger & Adaptor
- Extension Cord
- Medicine (Panadol, eye drop etc.)
- Hair Drier
- Torch
- Sunglasses
- Spare Glasses (if applicable)
- Contact lenses (if applicable)
- Notebook
- Laptop

- Calculator

Clothings:

- Water-proof boots
- Water-proof trousers
- Long socks
- Scarf
- Gloves
- Beanie
- Windproof jacket
- Down jacket
- Heat-trapping underclothes & leggings
- Under wears
- Flip flops

Useful Links and Contacts

- <https://www.norway.no/en/china/norway-china/norwegian-consulate-in-hong-kong/> (Norwegian Consulate in Hong Kong)
- <https://ruter.no/> (Transportation within Oslo)
- <https://at.bi.no/NO> (BI school page)
- <https://www.skyscanner.net/>, <https://www.momondo.co.uk/> (for cheap air tickets)

Some final words...

Exchange is really a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Not only will you be able to learn different cultures, it is also an opportunity to learn to become an independent and mature individual. Exchange is also a period when you can really relax yourself and do things that you will not normally do in Hong Kong. So make sure you enjoy every moment in your exchange journey!

