

Exchange Report

The University of Manchester, UK

Alliance Manchester Business School



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Operations Management & Information System, Year 3

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Part I – Monthly Activity Log

September 2017

I arrived in Manchester on 14th September, the first day for accommodation check in. Before that, I travelled around UK for two weeks. The social activities organized by the hall started right away on the first night, where I got to meet my fellow hall mates. The



induction day for AMBS exchange students was on 18th, where I got to meet other exchange students and had a campus tour. That week was Freshers' Week, with different induction talks, welcome parties and society promotion fair. I went on a hiking trip in the Peak District with AMBS International Programmes Society, which organized activities for AMBS exchange students. It was a good opportunity to make new friends. There were tasters' sessions for different sports. I tried Quidditch, the sport from Harry Potter, which was quite an experience. Classes started on 25th.

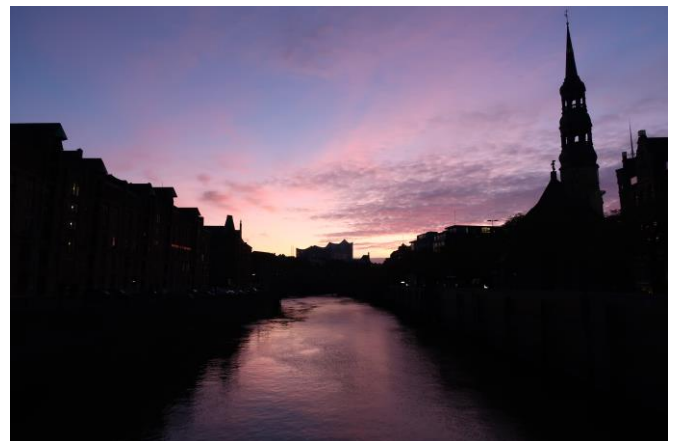
October

October went by quickly with classes, Quidditch sessions, experiencing exploring the city and travelling. Since the workload was light and I had Friday off, I was able to travel on the weekends. I visited other cities in the UK such as York and Edinburgh. There was a study abroad fair held in AMBS on 18th where the two of us from HKUST had to represent Hong Kong. We talked to students interested in having an exchange in Hong Kong. We also met students who had previously exchanged in Hong Kong. It was amazing how much they had loved it and even considered a future here. For two days, some of the university staff were on strike, responding to the university's job cuts. It was the first time I had even heard of a strike by teachers.



November

Towards the end of October to the start of November was around a week off for catching up on readings. In that week I travelled to Germany and Italy and experienced such different cultures from that in the UK. After reading week, I started preparing for assignments as the courses progressed and the content deepened. For other events, there was always a lot going on in Manchester. I attended a conference regarding women entrepreneurships and employment talk by a local bank. My friends often went to concerts by local bands. The students' union also frequently held social events. By the end of the month, the Christmas market was already running and it could be felt that people's spirit was slowly building up.



December

December was eventful. Manchester had its first snow in early December and I saw snow for the first time in my life. Before the Christmas break, there were many celebrations such as a Christmas ball held by AMBS, Christmas formal dinner held by the hall, secret Santa and visiting the massive Manchester Christmas market. Most of the exchange students taking special assessments would leave during Christmas break, so there was farewell for the fellow exchange students. Right before the break was also the time for submitting assignments, so it was a busy time. During Christmas break, I visited London for the festive atmosphere and then travelled to some Nordic countries such as Finland.



January 2018

I was working hard for essays and exams in the first half of the month. Luckily my exams ended early so I still had one week left to enjoy my time in UK. On 27th I said goodbye to UK and came back to Hong Kong.

Part II – General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

Holding a HKSAR passport, I did not have to apply for a visa before going on exchange. At the port of entry into the UK, a short term study visa was granted in the form of a stamp on my passport, provided that I could show the required documents, such as confirmation letter of the exchange program and proof of return flight. These information and other details can be found on the UK government website, which is quoted in the below section. One important thing was that this visa was to be granted every time I re-entered UK. So remember to bring all the required documents with you if you travel to other European countries, so you can provide them when you re-enter UK.

Orientation Activities

Before classes began, there was an induction session welcoming us and providing important information regarding this exchange program. We received a pack of detailed information such as registration, campus map, safety, facilities and upcoming activities. As mentioned above there was a hiking trip following the induction day where we got to meet other exchange students. In the freshers' week there were many optional talks going through different topics for all students. We were also assigned a buddy beforehand to help us settle.

International Services & Activities

The exchange program coordinators were very helpful with international student matters. For activities, there is an International Society which organizes different cultural activities and trips to different UK cities which is a good way to meet other international students. The AMBS International Programmes Society also organizes many social events and trips for exchange students.

Accommodations

There are a range of university accommodations to choose from. In due time there will be email regarding application of student accommodation. The application was based on a first-come-first-served method so I recommend completing application well before stated deadline. I got offered my third choice, Ashburne Hall, which is located quite a distance from campus but with lively social scene. It is catered with a sink in each single bedroom. There are shared kitchen and bathroom with other people on the same corridor. I recommend

catering hall which can save the time and money to cook.

Courses Registration

We had to apply for the course registration by sending back a form in July. There was a list of courses for exchange students. I opted for taking exams instead of special assessment. Here are the courses I took.

Course Code	Course Title	Assessment
BMAN24241	Creativity, Design & Entrepreneurship	100% Essay
BMAN31451	Foundations of Supply Chain Management	100% Exam
BMAN31391	The Economics of Sport	25% Essay & 75% Exam
BMAN30151	Advanced Business Information Systems	100% Exam

Teaching & Assessment Methods

There were lectures and tutorials or workshops which took attendance. In one course there were also seminars given by external speakers who were scholars or company representatives. Exchange students can take special assessment which is handing in essays instead of taking exams.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

There were regular free sports sessions organized by the university. They provided many kinds of sports to participate in. There were also many sports societies which held regular practices and even acted as a medium for you to gain certain qualification such as kick boxing. There were gyms that charged and sport centers.

Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

I opened a bank account with a local bank for the convenience of paying by debit card. I also activated the overseas ATM withdrawal service for my Hong Kong bank account before I left for UK. Here are my approximated expenses.

Items	Amount (HKD)
Return Flight Tickets	9000
Accommodation	26500
Living Expenses	20000
Travelling	30000
Total	85500

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There were all sorts of activities and plenty of networking opportunities in Manchester. You can find the most specific and unexpected societies. Watch out for the flyers they give out at the start of the semester, the emails and Facebook pages for Manchester events.

Health & Safety

When I arrived I had to register with a general practitioner (GP) who would provide you with free medical services. Be sure to bring your personal medicine with you as you may not find familiar medicine in the local pharmacy.

Food

Dining out is expensive but you can find good deals for ingredients sold in supermarkets. Breakfast and dinner were catered at my hall on weekdays which was included in the rent and saved me a lot of money.

Transportation

My hall was quite far away from the campus so I applied for a bus pass called unirider which allowed me to freely take buses operated by the company Stagecoach within Manchester. To travel to other cities, you can take coaches and trains. I applied for a 16-25 railcard which had a discount of 1/3 off the train ticket price. It would be worth it if you plan on taking the train often.

Climate

It rained a lot so a waterproof jacket would be handy. The weather got cold in December and January but the indoors were warm, so one or two thick coats or down jackets will do.

Communication

I used the Pay As You Go by 3 which included “Feel At Home Around the World” service that allowed me to use data and calls in other European countries.

Cautionary measures

Generally Manchester is quite safe. To exert higher awareness in the beginning and slowly adapt worked for me. Take care of your belongings and watch out for your mobile phone on the sidewalks as there were many incidents of bikers

taking the phones as they rode by. Avoid walking alone late at night as I heard of some robbery cases.

Part III – Items to Bring

- ✓ Passport & Visa documents
- ✓ ID card
- ✓ Cards and cash
- ✓ AMBS confirmation letter
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ Personal medicine
- ✓ Jackets
- ✓ Adapters (for Europe)

Part IV – Useful Links and Contacts

- UK Short-term Study Visa:
<https://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa>
- Student Accommodation
<http://www.accommodation.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Trainline
<https://www.thetrainline.com/>
- GoEuro
<https://www.goeuro.com/>
- National Express
<https://www.nationalexpress.com/en>

If more information is needed, get my contact from SBM Exchange Team by emailing at bmugexch@ust.hk. Enjoy Manchester! ☺