

**Fall Semester 2017-2018**

**UBC EXCHANGE REPORT**

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## Monthly Activity Log

### September

*I arrived on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. I went to the on-campus residence by taxi. When I arrived, my three other roommates had already arrived and we greeted each other. On the orientation day, I knew some new friends, from mainland, Singapore and Korea. On that day, I also joined the Intersociety International Club. In September, since the workload was not high and the weather was very good, I went to visit many places with my friends like Elizabeth Park, Central Park and the ColdPlay concert, Victoria and the downtown. Also, I joined the Intersociety activity like BBQ, Christian concert and home cooking. During class, I also met a lot of new friends through group discussions.*



## October

*I went to Seattle with my Japanese roommate and Seattle was really a pretty place. We went to the Pike Place Market, the Space Needle and Chewing Gum Wall. I really appreciated the beauty of Seattle. For the homework, it started to get busy from October since there were midterms and assignments. Also, the weather started to become much cooler and it rained a lot so it is actually not very suitable for sightseeing in Vancouver. People in Vancouver really placed importance on Halloween Festival and there were parties and firework everywhere on that day.*



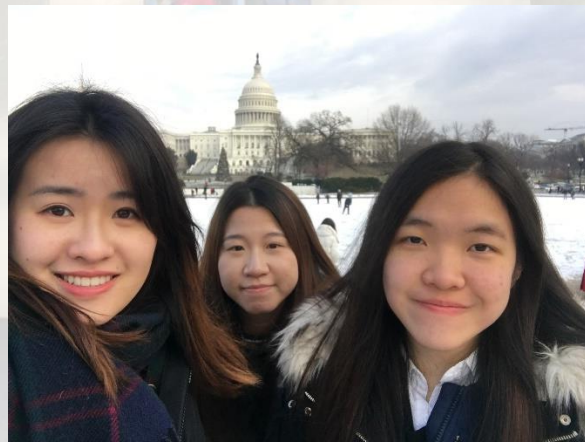
## November

*I joined a joint-university singing competition in UBC. Since HKUST did not have this kind of big singing competition, I grasped the chance and the judges were all very professional. The study load in November was large because you needed to hand in a lot of group projects and have presentations. In this month, my friend came and visited me and we went to a lot of attractions for sightseeing like Grouse Mountain and Capilano suspension bridge.*



## December-January

*The normal school day ended on 30<sup>th</sup> November and the remaining time was for you to study for your final examination. I took the time to go to San Francisco for travelling and it was very near to Vancouver with just an hour flight. My examination ended at 20<sup>th</sup> December which is also the date of the end of the semester. After the end of the semester, I went to Toronto, Washington and New York for about 15 days with my university friends. We spent our Christmas and New Year there which was really unforgettable.*



## Exchange Information

### 1) Visa Procedures

I do not need to apply for a study permit since I stay at Canada for less than 6 months. But remember to apply for the eTA online before you go to Canada. The application procedure for eTA is very easy: just complete the application form online(website: <https://www.canada.ca/>) , pay CAD\$ 7 with credit card and you will get the email approval notification within minutes. For me, I will recommend students to apply US Visa in Hong Kong first for travelling purpose. It will be better if you make the Visa at least one month before you go Canada because you need to make appointment first.

### 2) Orientation Activities

On the first day of school, there will be an orientation day. You will receive an email regarding your group name and the place to meet. All people in the group are exchange students and also business school students so you have great chance to know new friends there. On that day, I first listened to the talk for exchange students and then went to the Main Mall Street. There are clubs and societies for you to join on the street. You can just sign up for the interested clubs first and then they will send you some information of their activities. If you really want to join , you can then go the AMS Nest to pay the membership fee in the following one to two weeks.

### 3)International Services & Activities

If you have any enquiries regarding your exchange information, you can send emails to the Go Global Office and it usually takes them a day to reply your emails. If you have something really urgent, you can go to their office directly. The staffs are really helpful and can really address the problems effectively.

Besides, you will have an exchange buddy assigned to you. You are automatically assigned into a group of about 13 so you can go to the buddy gatherings if you are interested.

There are many UBC Facebook groups. The most famous one is called UBC Incoming Exchange Student 2017/18. People there will ask people for day trips or trips to other countries so you can join them and meet new friends.

There is also a UBC Exchange Student Club. It offers a lot of clubbing and gatherings. Be sure to join the activities as soon as possible because their tickets sell out very quickly, especially for the orientation activities.

#### **4)Accommodations**

I lived in Fairview Crescent with 3 other roommates. We each had an individual room and shared two toilets, one kitchen and the living room. For the kitchen, there are one micro-oven, oven ,fridge and stove. But there are no cooking utensils provided and you can buy them in Walmart with your roommates. Fairview Crescent is a quite special student residence. It is not a tall building and is like a place with many individual small houses so it is good for you if you want to experience this type of housing style. Since the house had only four people, it was very easy for you to become close with your roommates. Fairview is also very close the Village where there are many cheap Asian food. But a big reminder is that there are usually no air conditioner in your room for most residence in UBC so it is extremely hot there in the early September. Remember to bring a fan with you. However, it also has its downsides for Fairview Crescent. Sometimes, the noise is really loud outside because there are many people gathering outside your house. They usually have parties until 4:00 a.m. The second disadvantage is that it is quite far away from the Sauder Business School (about 15-20 minutes walk).

Another popular residence will be Walter Gage. It is very close to the business school and bookstore (only 5 minutes walk). I think there are more Asian exchange students living in Walter Gage as well. But I heard that the hygiene of the toilet is not that good because six people share the same toilet.



## 5) Courses Registration

Around the end of April, I received an email for me to complete the course request survey. It asked me to put 10 courses according to the preference and the deadline was 18th May. I was enrolled in all the 5 courses I wanted most. But I dropped one (ATSC 113) after the add-drop period. UBC is different from UST and you can still drop the course after the add-drop period but with a remark. Since I was an exchange student, the Go Global Office helped me remove the remark from the transcript. I eventually took 4 courses (COMM353, COMM459, COMM 477, COMM 491). People here rarely take more than 4 courses because the workload in UBC is quite big (some courses even higher than UST).

## 6. Teaching & Assessment Methods

Course Name (Equivalent Course)	Teaching & Assessment Method	Workload
COMM 353 (ACCT 3010)	Problem Sets 10% Writing Assignment 6% Class Participation 10% Midterm Exam 32% Final Exam 42%	Low
COMM 477 (FINAN3203)	Midterm Exam 20% Final Exam 30% Two homework assignments 10% Group project 20% Case discussions and participation 10%	High
COMM 459 (FINAN 3403)	Home work / Cases 20% Participation 10% Midterm evaluation 20% Group Project 40% Presentation 10%	Medium
COMM 491 (MGMT 4210)	2 Group Cases 40% Short Assignments 10%	High

	Classroom Contribution	10%	
	Final Exam	40%	

### 7) Sports and Recreation Activities

There is a UBC Aquatic Center where there is an indoor pool which is free. There is also Doug Mitchell Thunderbird Sports Center where you can enjoy ice-skating. There is also a Thunderbird Park which consists of a baseball field, a wright field and grass fields so you can play outdoor sports there. In Fairview Crescent, there is also a gym room but I never used it so I do not know whether it needs membership fee.

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

I brought about CAD 2000 to Canada and opened a bank account in Scotiabank. Scotiabank was quite famous for Asian exchange students because of the simpler procedures for opening the accounts. Then, I used the debit card for my daily expense. Some shops like Shoppers charge transaction fee when you pay with cash. However, CAD 2000 was not enough for the whole trip so I used the Union Pay ATM, which is located inside the Scotiabank, to withdraw money for a few times. The withdrawal limit is CAD\$1000 each time and will charge you CAD 3 each time. For online transaction, I also paid with debit card because it did not charge transaction fee like VISA.

### 9) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There are many clubs available, both academic and non-academic. I joint a club called InterVarsity International which is a Christian club. Their orientation activities were very attractive like home visit and there were many Canadian-born Hong Kong students. For networking opportunities, UBC, Sauder School and my residence department organized many activities for people to join like BBQ, parties and different competitions. I am sure you can meet new friends there.

### 10) Health & Safety

Every exchange student is required to pay for the insurance plan called iMed. It costs about HKD 1700. With the iMed card, you can go to see on-campus doctor without paying fee. If you are sick (less serious), you can go to the University Village Clinic. If you have serious problems, go to the UBC Hospital. My roommate said the

waiting time was about an hour for UBC Hospital. For safety, make sure you do not go out alone after 8:00p.m. because the roads are quite horrible and there are really some crimes happening before. The night at downtown is really quite dangerous, which is full of the homeless and some gangs. If you must walk on campus at night , you can call for the UBC safe walk. There will be some security guards to send you back home.

### **11) Food**

The food in Vancouver is really good. For the on-campus food, there are many restaurants in the AMS Nest which is near the bookstores. Also, there is a village full of restaurants with food in different countries. But, the price is not cheap (at least 7CAD per simple meal). For out of campus, there is a Robson Street that is full of delicious food like Korean food. There is also a Night Market opening at weekends. There are many street food and snacks there though the price is quite high.

Except for dining out, I usually cooked at my dorm because it was much cheaper. I shared the cooking utensils fee with my roommates. I bought the ingredients in the Save-On-Food shops which is located in the Wesbrook Village (10 minutes bus from UBC).

### **12) Transportation**

UBC requires you to buy a UPass which costs about HKD1000. After the arrival in UBC, I just went Shopper to buy the compass card which was about CAD10. I then linked the card online. You can travel around Vancouver with the compass card without paying extra fee. Make sure you renew the card online at the end of each month.

### **13) Climate**

In September, the weather in UBC was very hot and sunny just like Hong Kong. After mid-October, Vancouver almost rained every day and the weather was becoming much colder without sun which was around 5-10 degree. In December, there will be

snow frequently. Make sure you bring enough clothes, a waterproof coat and a pair of slip resistant boots. You can buy all these in Vancouver because there will be much more types available in Vancouver.

#### **14) Communication**

Since my English is not that good, I found it quite hard to have fluent conversation with the locals at first. But when time passed, I became more confident in speaking and learnt many daily dialogue. People there were very friendly and encouraged you to speak even your accent may not be as good as them. The accent of the locals were also very easy to understand. Sometimes, they might speak too fast but you could just grasp the key points and understand the meaning.

#### **15) Cautionary measures**

Remember that do not go out alone at midnight! If you face any danger, call 911 immediately. Do not walk the trail at night since it is quite quiet in UBC. If you walk in downtown at night, some people will ask you for money. Just pretend that you do not understand English and ignore them. Better not go to downtown alone at night.

### **Checklist of Items to Bring**

- Passport & HKID
- Some Cash & Credit Cards
- Umbrella
- Chargers & Adapters & LAN cables
- Wifi Router (check whether your router is suitable online)
- Waterproof Jacket and Down Jacket
- Winter Boots
- Clothes for Summer
- US Visa (Optional)
- Laptop & phones
- Bedsheets (check online to see the bed size)
- Medicines
- Stationery and calculator
- Clocks

### **Useful links**

1. <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/go-global> (For all exchange information).
2. <http://vancouver.housing.ubc.ca/> (housing)
3. <https://www.facebook.com/ubcexchange/> (UBC Facebook exchange group)



**THE END**