



Exchange Report

The University of Manchester, U.K.

Alliance Manchester Business School

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Information Systems and Operations Management, Year 3

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Part I – Monthly Activity Log

January

I arrived at the Manchester airport on the early morning of 25th. It was still very cold, and we took a taxi directly to Weston Hall to complete check in. The business school held an orientation on the 26th for the exchange students, where they briefly introduced all the information needed. We also got to see all the other exchange students and had a simple campus tour. January was about getting more familiarized with the environment and complete some basic grocery shopping. The new semester starts on the 29th.



February

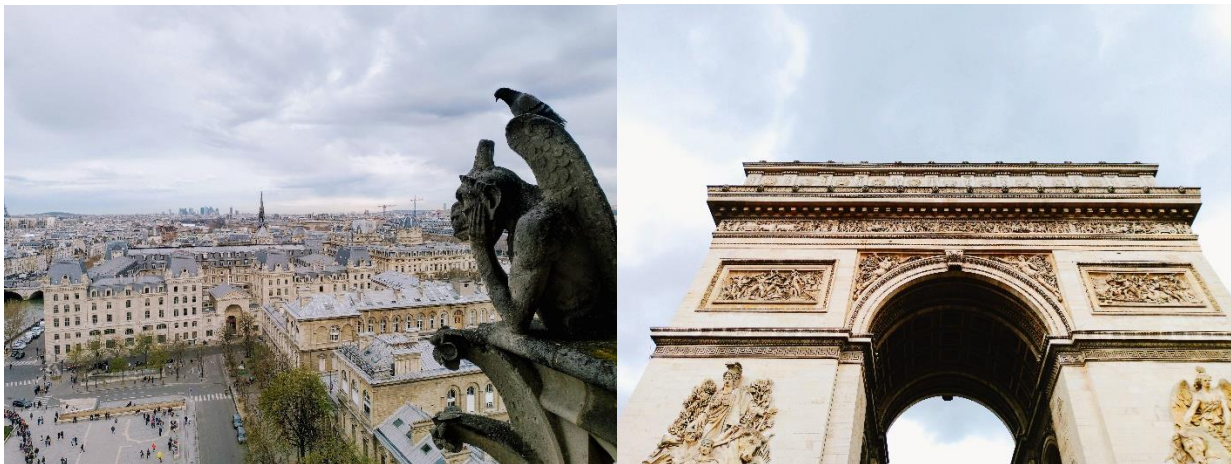
February was a relatively relaxing month. While attending the lectures on the weekdays, I went outside Manchester to explore other cities on the weekends with other exchange students. I went to the Imperial War Museum North in Salford Quay and explored Manchester China Town during the first weekend. Salford Quay is a city located in the suburban area of greater Manchester. It also has an arts and performance center called the Lowry, where many dance and music performances can be watched at reasonable prices.

We took the train down south to Bath and Stonehenge on the second weekend. The weather was still very cold. Bath is an elegant city with beige filter applied and its enriching history of the Roman empire has made it fascinate to explore. We joined a local tour to Stonehenge and it took about 1-hour bus ride from Bath to Stonehenge.



March

As the spring break started from the last week of March, I was busy having meetings and doing group projects as the teammates all have different plans for the break. It was better to finish most part of the work before the Easter as there will only be 2 weeks of lectures left after the break. I started my Easter break by a solo travel to Paris. The weather was chilling but the city itself was still very fascinating.



April

The spring break continues until the 16th of April. During the first week of the month my mother and sister came to London and we spent a few days wondering around the city. The best part was to get to watch the West End musicals Aladdin and Lion King! The actors, the music, and the dance brought together a wonderful show that I just couldn't take my eyes off the stage! During the London family trip, I also visited Oxford and Cambridge.



May

After ending the Easter break travel, I resumed to the school work by wrapping up all the group projects and individual essays. The short and intensive semester ends on the second week of May and then followed by a one-week study break. I took this chance to visit the Scotland highlands and Edinburgh with my exchange friends. We were very lucky to experience a sunny day in St. Andrews and would recommend the rural highlands and historical Edinburgh as a must visit for UK. After the trip we returned to Manchester to prepare for the final exams.



June

June was about finishing the final exams and packing for leave. I finished my exam on the 5th and left Manchester on the 6th.

Part II – General Exchange Information

1) Visa Procedures

Holding a Taiwan passport, I do not need a UK visa for short term study (less than six months). When entering UK, the official letter issued by Alliance Manchester Business School (clearing stating the studying period) should be shown to the custom and a student visa stamp will be chopped on the passport. However, if you leave outside the UK for travel, the student visa stamp will be given again.

2) Orientation Activities

The Alliance Manchester Business School hosts an orientation day for all the exchange students before the semester starts. As it is compulsory, be sure to attend the session as it is not only useful to acquire the information needed before the classes officially starts but it is also a good opportunity to meet other exchange students.

3) International Services & Activities

The International Exchange team provides support for exchange students. You may also look out for International Societies that hosts regular trips around UK.

4) Accommodations

Exchange students will be given accommodation on campus and should apply through the school's e-accommodation system online. The University of Manchester consists of three campus: City campus, Victoria Campus, and Fallowfield Campus. Fallowfield is generally not recommended as it is quite far away from the city center and school buildings and you may need to take buses or buy a bike to go to school

I lived in Weston Hall's single room for this semester. It is a self-catered hall with 8 people sharing one flat that contains common room and kitchen. Weston Hall has a great location in the City campus that is close to both the city center and the classroom buildings. When applying for hall accommodation, self-catered option is recommended as it allows you to cook in hall and be more flexible on your meal options.

Be sure that after you received the accommodation offer, you need to complete the online induction and print out the confirmation letter. Remember to bring the letter with you when you check in the accommodation.

5) Course Registration

I received the course choice form in October and submitted back my course choices in late November. Make sure to save some time to check for course equivalency in the HKUST database and apply for credit transfer assessment if you would like to take the course that has not been taken by other UST exchange students before.

For the credit transfer assessment, you may write to the Alliance exchange team to ask for the syllabus for the specific course that you wish to apply for as the supporting

documents. The exchange team usually response quite quickly but the credit transfer assessment process takes around 4 to 6 weeks so it would be best to apply as soon as possible.

I decided to enroll in 2 IS electives and 2 OM electives. Here are the courses I took for the spring semester:

Course Code	Course Title	Assessment method	HKUST Course Equivalency
BMAN20792	Technology and Strategy Innovation	20% Seminar, 80% Individual Essay	ISOM-IS Elective
BMAN24322	Business Data Analytics	100% Final Exam	ISOM3900
BMAN31492	Strategic Supply Chain Management	40% Coursework, 60% Final Exam	ISOM4700
BMAN31592	IT in Business Strategy	50% Coursework, 50% Final Exam	ISOM4020

6) Teaching & Assessment Methods

Courses are taught in lectures and seminars (tutorials). The way of teaching is quite similar to the experience in UST. Since the class hours and semester length in Manchester are shorter, be expected to do more self-learning outside regular class hours.

There will be much more reading materials provided by the professor that may ask you to complete before attending the lecture. The readings are usually business cases that the professor may use them and discuss in class. They are also helpful in terms of completing the coursework and preparing for final exam.

7) Sports & Recreation Facilities

The university has many sports centers and gyms located in various campus. There is usually a membership plan to pay if you wish to use the gym.

8) Finance & Banking

I did not open a bank account in UK as the length of stay is rather short (less than 6 months). I asked the Manchester business school team and they replied that it is hard for exchange students to open a local bank account. Instead, I opened a bank account in Taiwan that can withdraw foreign currency. As it charges service fee every time I use the ATM, I only limit the withdrawal of money to once a month. On a side note, be sure to bring enough pounds upon arriving the UK.

9) Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

Both the university and business school has many student societies that welcome exchange student to get involved. For example, I teamed up with other exchange students and joined a business case competition held by one of the business school societies.

10) Health & Safety

I was very lucky not to get sick during my exchange period. There are medical support in the university but you may have to pay for it.

11) Food

As I chose the self-catered hall to live, during the semester I cook on my own a lot. I go to supermarkets or Chinatown stores to buy groceries. For supermarkets, Aldi and Lidl offers even cheaper deals than Tesco. There are canteens and many caf   located in the campus.

12) Transportation

I move around the university and Manchester mostly by foot. The public transportation in Manchester is very convenient with many buses and trams connecting different parts of the city.

When travelling around UK cities, it is recommended using the 16-25 Railcard (apply by having a UK university student ID card and a passport photo) which can save you 30% of the train ticket fee.

13) Climate

The winter in Manchester is very cold with strong wind so a thick windproof jacket is strongly recommended. Generally the city rains frequently but an umbrella is not very useful since the rains are usually not very heavy. The most enjoyable times happen in May and June, where days are very long (the sun rises around 4:30 a.m. and sets around 9:30 p.m.) and less rainy.

14) Communication

I use 3 for my monthly data plan. I went to the store in Arndale and bought their SIM card. They have many data plans to choose from and as the campus is covered with Wi-Fi, I usually buy the monthly 5GB plan.

15) Cautionary Measures

It is said that Europe countries in general are not safe. Be sure not to go out alone after the sun has set (or that you hang out with friends you know). Do not use the smartphone while walking on the street and be cautious of the surroundings. Be vigilant if you would like to withdraw cash from ATM. The safest and most recommended way is to use the indoor ATMs located inside the banks. As long as you stay aware you are able to stay safe.

Part III – Items to Bring

- Important documents:
 - Passport/ ID card original+copy
 - AMBS offer letter
 - Accommodation confirmation letter
 - Bank cards
 - Pounds
- Others:
 - Adapters
 - Laptop and charger
 - Clothes
 - Shoes
 - Jackets, gloves, hats, scarf
 - Personal care products, toiletries and makeup
 - Medicine
 - Stationary (Pens, paper, and notebooks etc., as stationary are much more expensive in the UK)
 - Saline solutions (If you wear contact lens that needs regular cleaning then it is recommended since saline solutions in the UK is very expensive)
- Note: Things that can be bought after arriving at UK:
 - Bedsheets and pillows (can be bought in advanced through the accommodation office or at Primark)
 - Water boiler
 - Hairdryer (Shops in Arndale center offers cheap deals)
 - Cooking appliances and utensils (Can be bought at Wilko or Chinatown stores)

Part IV – Useful links and Contacts

- University of Manchester
 - The University of Manchester website
<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/>
 - Alliance Manchester Business School website
<https://www.mbs.ac.uk/>
 - The University of Manchester – Maps and Travel
<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/maps/>
- Travel
 - Visit Manchester <https://www.visitmanchester.com/>
 - 101 Great Things to Do in Manchester
<https://www.visitmanchester.com/ideas-and-inspiration/blog/read/2017/09/101-things-to-do-in-greater-manchester-b287>

Part V – Best Practices of Host University: Sporticipate

Sporticipate aims to encourage students in UoM to try out different sports for free. Once registered the students can attend all the sessions they want. Sports included are yoga, table tennis, squash, volleyball and much more. Throughout the semester I attended the badminton session and met many nice friends, either beginners or well players. It helps me build a regular exercise routine and get connected to the local students.

Sporticipate website: <http://www.sport.manchester.ac.uk/sport/sporticipate/>