

**EXCHANGE REPORT – SPRING 2018  
UNIVERSITY OF INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA  
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**

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**BBA in Information Systems and Management**  
**Year 3**



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# PART I: Monthly Activity Log

## March

My exchange journey started on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2018. It was still winter and snowing even in late March. I got to meet the other exchange students of the school of Management (Sowi) and the Austrians were so nice and kind though they didn't speak fluent English!

The first week was all about the administrative work and school started on 5<sup>th</sup> March. During the weekends, I went to the Easter market, the highest Zoo in Europe, and also skied for the first time in my life with the friends I met there!



There were also a few welcoming activities for us to get along with other students including city challenge, Joint Study Program gathering and of course some parties. I met a lot of gorgeous people there so make sure you go as well 😊!

At the end of March, I had a two-and-a-half-week of Easter holiday so I planned to go on a long trip! I went to Paris, Geneva, Zermatt, Venice and Rome where I was amazed by everything! Plan ahead and make sure you won't waste the longest holiday here in Innsbruck!

## April

Since I had my first midterm (they called it exam but it was like a midterm with 35 MC questions) and a final exam in May (it was a blocked course and I will explain it later) in the second week of April, I resumed to my study after my 10-day trip. Besides, it was the time that we should start working on our projects, therefore I basically studied and worked during April but as I had three school days per week only, I made a weekend trip to Berlin with my friend! Don't forget to play while you work 😊 Other times, I went on a hiking to the Lansersee, visited the Zoo, joint some parties and sit along the river and chill!



## May

It was another month of study as I had three projects to work on. Though I didn't go to visit some other places, I enjoyed the time here in Innsbruck. By going to the famous lake – Baggersee, hiking, cooking with my friends, and merely walking through the streets in the city, you could realise how time could be so slow and how relaxing it is to chill in the nature for a whole day!



## June

All I did was basically traveling since I only had three school days in June. I went to London, Vienna, Munich, Vaduz and Salzburg respectively. These are all great cities that should be in everyone's must-go list. However, I didn't forget to travel within Innsbruck since my parents came to visit me during the second week of June. I brought them around to the Ambras Castle, Nordkette, the Swarovski Crystal World, and a lot other must-dos in Innsbruck.

What worth noting is that there is also a lake just outside Innsbruck called the Archensee, make sure you visit it and it will never disappoint you!



## July

I went to Copenhagen and Amsterdam during the reading week (1<sup>st</sup> week of July) before the final exam week (2<sup>nd</sup> week of July). Copenhagen is one of my most favourite cities and the Scandinavians are not as cool and detached towards people as they are generally known. Likewise, Amsterdam is such an interesting city that I saw lots of things that I have never ever seen before (you know what I mean)!

My exams took place on the first two days of the exam week and for my courses, all it required was a good memorization of the content they taught during the lectures and seminars, so time was needed but it wasn't difficult at all 😊

I enjoyed the last few days in Innsbruck and I flew to London and went back to Hong Kong at the end of July.

# PART II: General Exchange Information

## 1. Visa Procedures

If you are staying in Austria more than 90 days within 180 days, you will have to apply for the residence visa D. You could google all the things you need on their website including the application form, documents for application and other information such as the opening hours. You should make a copy for all your documents you bring there, including your ID photo (so bring two photos). Please note that there is no application fee since you are going to be an exchange student, and you will need to make an appointment before you go to the embassy as they have newly introduced the appointment system in this February. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to email them and ask.

For your reference, the documents you will need to bring are as follow:

1. **Application form** must be duly completed, signed and submitted in person
2. **Passport-photo** not older than 6 months (criteria kindly see: [www.passbildkriterien.at](http://www.passbildkriterien.at))
3. **Valid passport** (valid for at least 6 months after your return to Hong Kong/Macau)
4. **Hong Kong/Macau (Permanent) ID-Card**
5. **Hong Kong/Macau Students ID-Card**
6. **Birth-Certificate** (in original; if issued from an authority outside Hong Kong or Macau please let the birth certificate be legalized by the authorities of the issuing country)
7. **Proof of sufficient financial means of your sponsor/parents** (f.e.: recent bank statement; statement of regular salary by the employer; working contract)
8. Proof of an existing **scholarship program** (if any)
9. Supporting **letter from your university** in Hong Kong/Macau
10. **Letter of Acceptance from the Austrian University**/the Austrian Students Exchange Program
11. **Proof of proper accommodation** during your time in Austria (f.e. rental contract)
12. **Flight ticket** (round-trip, the destination coming back to Hong Kong can be outside Austria)
13. **Travel/medical insurance** (minimum coverage is EURO 30.000,--; validity for the entire Schengen area and the entire duration of your stay)

14. **Parental consent** (in case you are less than 18 years old, both parents or legal guardians have to give their written consent)
15. Further documents may be requested depending on the individual case

**Please, submit your application at least THREE weeks prior to your departure. And please go to their website for the most updated and accurate information!**

## 2. Orientation Activities

There are some official orientation days including the registration day, the uni guidance tour, computer lab registration (where you register for your courses), joint study welcome day. Make sure you attend all the sections as it is compulsory and that is the chance for you to meet other exchange students! Check the date before booking your flight tickets as it should be approximately one week before the school starts.

## 3. International Services & Activities

If you are going to Innsbruck alone, don't panic 😊 There is a group who organises events for exchange students called **ESN**. If you would like to know more people outside the classroom, make sure you apply for it and join some of their activities and parties! Events including City Challenge, Pub Crawl, Welcome Party, International Dinner and Farwell Party are the opportunities for you to experience the city and you will find a lot of amazing people there!!



#### 4. Accommodations

I lived in the party dorm – Rössl in der Au by Home4Students. I would regard it as the best accommodation in terms of location, facilities, living condition, though it is the second most expensive dorm in Innsbruck (EUR 399,-/month). It is just 5 minutes' walk to the Main Campus, 15 minutes' walk to the city centre as well as the business school (Sowi). Besides, it's well-furnished and there is small supermarket right down stairs! There is also a laundry room but you will have to pay EUR 1 every time you use the washing machines and the tumble dryers. There is a reason why it is called a 'party dorm', and apparently, there is party nearly every Wednesday to Sunday, sometimes Monday and Tuesday as well. I personally think that it might be a bit noisy but I can still work and sleep in my room at night efficiently. However, the worst thing about the parties is that the kitchen will be horribly dirty every weekend, though the cleaning lady will clean it after that. Hence, if you are a person that doesn't need a very quiet environment to work and sleep, and if you don't mind the kitchen might be a bit dirty, this will definitely be your best choice 😊

One thing to mention is that, you might realise that there is an 'official' website for you to apply your accommodation in Innsbruck called 'OeAD'. It is a website that you can choose from all the dormitories there are and they provide pictures and prices for you to justify which is the best place for you to live. However, one drawback of this organisation is that they require a lot of additional charges including the EUR 35 administration fee you're paying once you apply through them, EUR 60 booking fee, EUR 40 transaction fee and also EUR 30 cleaning fee from your EUR 950 deposit after checking out your dorm. If you want to avoid those fees or at least pay less, you might want to apply directly to the dorm (i.e. Home4Students for my dorm). I'm not sure about the fees of the other dorms, so check it out on OeAD.





## 5. Courses Registration

The system is quite complicated but Christoph, your coordinator will guide you through everything. So rest assured and make sure you do everything before the deadlines and attend the sessions they have ON TIME! Austrians are so straight on that. Long story short, what you can do in advance is first, to look up on HKUST's course database and see which courses you can register for credit transfer. Then, the university will release the timeslots of the courses they provide in the coming semester one to two months before the beginning of semester and hence, you could manage your course combination to avoid 'disapproved' time clashes. You can only apply for your courses once you arrive Innsbruck on the day when you have your Computer Lab Registration.

What's so interesting here is that they actually allow some 'time clashes' between courses. The courses are constructed by two parts – the lecture part (VO), and the pro-seminar part (PS). The lecture part is not mandatory (in most of the cases), while the pro-seminar part is actually mandatory (you can only miss 1-2 sessions depends on the total number of seminars you have)! So if you have a lecture clashing another seminar, it's actually allowed. This is just one example about the system and Christoph will explain to you thoroughly, so don't worry! By the way, remember to register both the lecture and the pro-seminar parts.

## 6. Teaching & Assessment Methods

They encourage interactive learning during the lecture, so try to engage more and interact with your professors, this might make a huge effect on your grades if they have a good impression on you since they always have a presumption of exchange students going on trips and playing around instead of learning and studying. Let them know that you take the courses seriously and they will admire it!

As aforementioned, there is a lecture and a pro-seminar part in every course, they do normal teaching in the lecture part while they focus more on and guide you through the projects during the pro-seminar part. The lecture time is unexpectedly long and ineffective, ranging from 2 hrs 45 mins to 9 hrs (I'm not kidding lol) even though they have breaks amid the lecture

time. Yet, the content of the courses is easy and manageable for HK students, hence it's not stressful at all.

For the examination, you are only allowed to take the exam once you pass the pro-seminar session. In other words, you will receive a grade of your pro-seminar part before registering for the exam. You will be tested on the knowledge taught in both lecture and seminar parts, so make sure you study both if you want to pass the exam. Normally speaking, you will have to get 60% to pass the course, for exam and pro-seminar **respectively**.

Blocked courses – courses that will be finished within two months. That's why I had a final exam in April and some lectures for 9 hrs lol. Basically they squeeze everything they have to do in two months, two lectures per week, and one seminar per week after they finished the lecture part. Therefore, the workload might be a bit heavy, but it's good for exchange students as you will have more time to go on some trips after the course is finished 😊.

## 7. Sports & Recreation Facilities

Go skiing, go skiing, go skiing! (it's so bloody important so I repeat three times haha) Skiing is the most famous winter sports here and people come because of that! Beware of the skiing season because if you are not a professional skier, the best ski resort will be **Schlick 2000** and it operates only from November to March/April! It might be a bit expensive, approximately EUR 50 per time including entrance fee and rental fee for the gears, but it's totally worth it! Make sure you bring a sun glasses with you if you don't want to buy a sun goggles there which is quite expensive (and a pair of winter gloves as well). Bring your friends along with you as well and if you have extra money for that, you might want to take a beginner lesson there for EUR 105 and another EUR 25 for the second person and so on (the more people you have with you, the cheaper it will be on average).

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

The legal tender in Austria is euro, which is the same as most of the other countries in Europe.

It will be easier if you create an account in Austria, but I heard they charge a fee for that (EUR 5 per month). However, I applied for **Sparkasse**'s student account and they didn't charge me any additional fees, and they are super helpful so if you want to apply one, I would recommend **Sparkasse**. Please ask Christoph for the most updated information as well.

My expenses are as follow:

	<b>EUR</b>
1. Total Living Expenses	1880
2. Total Accommodation Fee (including all additional fees)	1745
3. Total Travelling Expenses	5000
4. Total Airfare (go to Innsbruck and back to Hong Kong)	1094
	<hr/> <b>TOTAL <u>9719</u></b>

**P.S.** The exchange rate fluctuated a lot throughout the whole period of time from 9.1 to 9.8, so the amount of money I use might not be the most accurate but I'm sure it can be used as a reference.

## 9. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

The school itself doesn't not have any clubs for you to join, except the orchestra. If you do play music, I encourage you to join the orchestra but they do require interviews for that. Exchange students will organise some international dinners and parties themselves so you could also join them to know more people who study in Innsbruck but in another school (MCI).

## 10. Health & Safety

The city is super safe comparing to other cities in Europe, almost the same in Hong Kong. However, the street will be darker than that in Hong Kong at night, especially during the winter, so make sure you're with your friends while staying out late.

If you need to visit a doctor, tell Christoph and he will make an appointment for you. This is the most convenient way to do so since you do not know if the people on the other side of the phone knows English or not. If you want to avoid any troubles, try to bring some medicines with you and I'm sure it will help 😊

## 11. Food

Cooking will be the best way to save your money since the price to have a meal in a restaurant will be EUR 12 or up including the main dish and a drink, excluding fast food. You can do daily grocery shopping at SPAR, Hofer, Billa, MPreis or Merkur, they have everything you need. Besides, I found it so cheap to buy milk, bread, chocolate and of course, beer here. So if these are your fav, you are definitely going to the right place! Most importantly, there are some traditional Austrian food and drinks you must try at least once before you leave, including **sachertorte, schnitzel, frankfurter, weisswurst, currywurst, knödel, kaiserschmarrn, almdudler**, and also **radler**. You will regret it for sure if you don't.

## 12. Transportation

You can travel to every corner of the city simply by buses and trams, it's so convenient and you can buy a semester ticket for that. It costs approximately EUR 130 but it's worth it if you will use it every day. For your reference, a single ticket of a bus or a tram will be around EUR 2,40, you know what to choose. However, I didn't buy it as everything is just within walking distance to me, so I bought the 8-time ticket in case I really have to go somewhere far away. You could also buy or rent a bike for your daily use. Innsbruck is a 'bike-friendly' city but be aware of the traffic and the cars as you will be riding on the road with cars just next to you 😊 Make sure you know some of the rules for biking such as turn signals etc. If you're travelling to other cities, ÖBB is the train company of Austria and you can always go to the Hauptbahnhof (main train station) near the city centre to take the train but you will have to book a ticket in advance. Flixbus is another choice if you don't mind to travel for an incredibly long time on the bus. You can buy the bus ticket on the bus but if you want to have a guaranteed seat and journey, please book it with their app as well.

### 13. Climate

It was still super cold when I arrived Innsbruck in late February and even in March. They had minus degrees during the time but it was not as cold as I thought. It got warmer in April and became as hot as it is in Hong Kong in May. Therefore, bring both summer and winter clothes with you, buying clothes here will not be a wise action.

### 14. Communication

I use THREE during the whole time. The monthly package with data, message and phone usage within Austria is EUR 10 and that within the countries in the EU will be EUR 15. Otherwise, you could also buy a SIM Card and also vouchers every time you want to top up your card for phone and data usage SEPARATELY, depends on your personal usage.

### 15. Cautionary measures

If you have any chance to deal with the cops or involve in any accident, call Christoph, he will help you with that since the cops and people around might not speak English to a great extent.

Try to be super cautious when you go skiing, the insurance package offered by Hong Kong companies will NOT cover it. Make sure you buy an insurance in Innsbruck for skiing if you're really worried about it (I didn't buy though).

Learn a few German greetings or words, people will be nicer to you even if you might speak it wrongly. Most of the shopkeepers outside the Main Street (the tourist place) do NOT speak English, and they do have a very strong dialect when speaking German as well. So smile and say thank you even though you don't understand them 😊

## PART III: Items to Bring

1. Acceptance letter and all documents for administrative use
2. Insurance documents
3. Passport (and copies)
4. HKID
5. Cash, both euro and hkd
6. Credit cards
7. Skin care products (e.g. body lotion and lip balm, you will definitely need it in the winter)
8. Sun screen (you will get burn in the summer if you don't wear it)
9. Nail cutter
10. Clothes
11. Shoes (at least one waterproof shoes for the winter)
12. Flip flop
13. Bags
14. Spare glasses (if you wear glasses)
15. Hangers (if you have some clothes that cannot be put in the tumble dryer)
16. Laundry bag
17. Towels
18. Toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss
19. Hair dryer
20. Umbrella
21. Medicine
22. Water bottle/Cup
23. Power banks, cables, adapters
24. Earphones
25. Computer
26. USB (if necessary)
27. Stationary, folders, notebooks
28. HK snacks (in case you miss home)
29. Locks (for your baggage if necessary)
30. Rice cooker (if necessary)

## PART IV: Useful Links and Contacts

ESN: <http://innsbruck.esnaustria.org/>

FlixBus: <https://www.flixbus.com/>

GoEuro: <https://www.goeuro.com/>

Home4Students: <https://www.home4students.at/en/living/dormitories-innsbruck/73-studentenheim-hoettinger-au/>

Hostel World: <https://www.hostelworld.com/>

Innsbruck official website: <https://www.innsbruck.info/>

LFU (school website): <https://lfuonline.uibk.ac.at/public/lfuonline.home>

ÖBB: <http://www.oebb.at/en/>

OeAD: <https://housing.oead.at/en/accommodation/wien-en>