



Lancaster University Exchange Report (2017-2018 Spring Semester)
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Travel Log

January

London| Chester| Preston| Manchester| Liverpool

After settling down at my friend's dorm, I carried my backpack and took my first virgin train to London. This is my first trip with my HKUST schoolmates and I strongly recommend you to find out who else is going to the same country as you since you might spend some time with them at the beginning of your exchange journey. I went to London with exchange students in University of Warwick and it was a wonderful trip that I could meet new faces and be new friends. I also went on a short day trip to Chester organized by Study Abroad Society and this is a great opportunity to meet new friends from all around the world.



Lent term started on 13th January, right after the orientation session and I took 5 courses in total including one accounting course and four management course. Professor started teaching in the first week since the term only had 10 weeks for teaching so you must not skip the first class or you would probably miss some of the important information.

The first weekend is a windy and cold weekend and all of my friends decided to stay at dorm but I chose to have my first solo trip to Preston, an hour away from Lancaster if you took the bus directly from university. Preston was a historical city but the tourist

spots were not centralised. The museums were nice and it was convenient to go directly from university. Therefore, you may go there for a short visit whenever you are free.

The following weekend, I went to Manchester which is an hour away from Lancaster and had a day trip with another friend from UST. I also went to Liverpool for another day trip on Sunday and the Cathedral is the most fantastic one I have been throughout my exchange so I personally recommend you to pay a visit.

Generally speaking, January was quite a relaxing month and there is not much to do except routine homework like case preparation. It would be great if you have a fruitful plan for trips before you start getting busy.



February

Lake District | Durham | Newcastle | Edinburgh | York

At the beginning of February, I participated a Lake District day trip organized by the Study Abroad Society. I would recommend going to the trip if you want to meet more exchange buddies and I met up another group of friends from different parts of the world. I would say exchange could be more fantastic if you can stand out of your comfort zone and these events would be your first step to get connected with others.

The second week of February is the Chinese New Year, I chose to go to Durham to spend the whole weekend with my college classmates. This is my first Chinese New Year spending with friends and this is wonderful since we have been to Newcastle China Town and we could see different kinds of celebration like lion dance.



At the end of February, I went to Newcastle again for my UST friends, Parco. He was on exchange in Northumbria University and we went to Edinburgh to spend our weekend. Edinburgh is a very nice place and this is the best part of the UK though it's a bit cold comparing with other parts of the UK.

In February we don't have much work to do. I only got a presentation and a quiz and they are pretty easy to handle with so don't worry about getting a packed schedule and treasure your time to take a look at different parts of the UK.

March

Iceland (Reykjavik) | London | The Netherland (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Hague) | Belgium (Brussel, Bruges)



At the beginning of the March, I went on my first overseas trip to Iceland with another UST friend who had exchange in Canada. Iceland has beautiful scenery but the price of goods is pretty high so make sure you have enough money if you plan to go to Iceland. Starting from the second week of March, schedule was getting tighter and I had a few coursework, projects and tests. The last week of the semester I got 3 tests, 2 project reports and 2 presentations. Therefore, make sure you have enough time for studying and finishing your coursework and I personally

recommend you not to plan any overseas travelling trips at the end of the semester.



After the end of the semester, I started my Europe trip with my best friend, Parco again. This was a 3 weeks trip and we have been to several different countries including Germany, Belgium, The Netherland and Luxembourg. The trip was a great fun though it is a bit tiring. For the semester break trip, it is recommended that you should have a plan at least a month before the trip and booked all the flights/ train tickets/ hostel as soon as possible

April

Luxembourg | Germany (Koln, Berlin, Dresden)| Czech Republic (Prague, Cesky Krumlov)| Glasgow| Blackpool

After I was back from Prague in the mid-April, I started doing my revision since the exam is coming. The summer term started at 23rd April and most of my course had a review session. Those session mainly summarized what you have learnt and provided you with an overview of the exam format. Therefore, it was necessary to attend those sessions to understand all the requirements as well as formats of the exam which might not be shown in the student portal.



At the end of April, I went on a short trip with my Warwick exchange friend to Scotland and Highland. It was quite convenient to take the Virgin Train to Scotland since that was the terminus of Virgin Train West Coast. The scenery in Highland is pretty nice and I would describe it as a cheaper version of Iceland trip.

May

Denmark (Copenhagen)| Finland (Helsinki)| Estonia (Tallinn)| Italy (Venice)

My exam starts at 17 May so I didn't travel around after my trip to Scotland. I spend my two weeks mainly on studying and the ROSE. The ROSE is the largest inter-school sports competition between Lancaster University and York University. This year the organizer is Lancaster and the atmosphere is so good that nearly all students chilled out and supported Lancaster. The ROSE lasts for three days and I was really excited that I didn't plan for the trips but staying to watch some competitions and support my friend. Right after my first exam, since I got 12 days in between my first and second exam, I had a family trip to Denmark, Finland, Estonia and Italy. It was a wonderful trip but I started to feel a bit stressed about my exam. Luckily, since I have spent most of my time on the subject following, I managed to do it well but I personally not recommend you to have long trips unless that is a family trip which is possibly unavoidable.



June

Cambridge

The exam schedule was not tight so I had 10 days in total in between my third and fourth exam. I went to Cambridge to visit my secondary friends and he brought me around the campus. If you have friends who are studying in Cambridge, ask them to be your tour guide. You can get permission to enter some of the beautiful colleges for free. Right after I finished my last exam at 11th June.

Visa Procedure

Lancaster University will send you information regarding the application of tier 4 visa. Lancaster will also recommend you to apply for it so you can guarantee yourself entering the UK and stay for half a year.

However, I did not apply for the tier 4 study visa since the UK is one of the European countries which allows HKSAR residents to stay in for half a year with a short-term study visa which you apply upon arrival.

Note that you should bring along your acceptance letter from Lancaster University if you just apply for the short-term study visa to prove that you are currently a UK student.

Orientation Activities

Orientation starts from 9th January and lasted for 4 days including a day trip to Chester which costed 10 pounds for transportation. I met up another exchange mate from HKUST, Winnie, a day before and we joined the orientation together to meet other exchange students from other parts of the world. The orientation includes course registration, introduction, student ID registration, guided tour some entertaining activities.

International Services & Activities

Study abroad society organize trips from time to time and I recommend you check it out to see if there is any trips. For other service and activities, you can find out more by joining different societies.

Accommodations

Registration of the student housing starts before the beginning of the semester. You can choose up to two out of nine colleges for on-campus dorms (Note: some of the exchange students are not allocated to on-campus accommodation but student accommodation in University of Cumbria) You can check different types of accommodations from the school website and I personally recommend you choose colleges located at the central part of campus since it might take up to 20 mins to walk from some colleges to the place where you have your lectures. I was allocated to Furness College, which is one the colleges located at the central. This college is convenient and people are fantastic.

Courses Registration

Before the start of the exchange, you will need to fill in the application form which also include a study plan. At that time you can check whether the courses will open in either lent or summer term.

After you arrive at Lancaster, you will need to attend orientation activities which include a half day registration. You will receive relevant documents and fill in before heading to the venue in order to facilitate the course registration process. For some of the advance course, for example act 311, staff representative may ask you a few questions to see if you meet their prerequisite requirement. I personally suggest you bring your transcript to the course registration venue (Great Wall) as a proof for any prerequisite. You don't need to worry much about whether the course is full or not since Lancaster Business School is quite popular and it is not hard to choose the courses you would love to take.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

ACF311

This course is an ordinary accounting course but this is also the hardest course I took in Lancaster. This is because the content of the course involves more about the accounting standard which requires a deep understanding rather than the accounting entries and statement.

Assessment method: Coursework Test (25%), Exam (75%)

ACF317

This course is equivalent to the course MGMT 4210 which is a case studies course. This is an interesting course but the workload is relatively heavy since you are required to read and prepare portfolio before class to join the discussion. Note that there may be a course reconstruction and ACF317 may not be available but combining with another course starting from the next semester according to the professor.

Assessment Method: Coursework Portfolio (15%), Case Presentation (10%), Exam (75%)

OWT314

This is a course about corporate social responsibility. Through number of case studies discussed in seminars and a case project about ethics and social responsibility, you can discover the dark side (or the bright side) of specific companies as well as understanding how people are affected in making ethical decision.

Assessment method: Case Project (50%), Exam (50%)

ENSI315

This is the most meaningful and interesting course I took in Lancaster. This course is about the social context of entrepreneurship, which provides you with a chance to get into a deeper understanding of how social enterprises commit to the society and operate successfully at the same time. The most interesting part is that we were divided into groups and conduct our own seminar session. This is a very special experience allowing you to be a teacher and teach in the way you like.

Assessment method: Short Presentation (15%), Long Presentation (25%), Reflective essay (60%)

MSCI224

This course is a relatively easy course. The content is straightforward but also requires you to practice more to clear the concept. The quizzes and exams are not hard as well and I believe this is quite a manageable course that you can take if you have a management major which needs electives credits transfer.

Assessment method: 2 Quizzes (30%), Exam (70%)

Sports & Recreation Facilities

Unlike HKUST, the gymnasium in Lancaster requires students to purchase membership to use the sports facilities. The basic membership costs about 50 to 60 pounds per semester so you can think about whether you would purchase the membership or not.

There are nine colleges in total in Lancaster. Each college has its own study space and bar. The most popular activity is pool (50p per round) and this is a pretty nice experience if you can learn a new sport during exchange and meet new friends.

Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

As mentioned in the exchange report 16/17, Barclays does not accept exchange student application. Therefore, I have chosen the other bank on campus, Santander. There are two kinds of debit card application including a normal debit card and contactless debit cards. The latter one has the contactless function, which is the same as EPS and it costs 1 pound per month for the handling fee. I suggest you apply for the contactless card since it is quite common to use contactless card like how we use our octopus card for shopping. You don't need to take much money and the online banking helps you manage the money through mobile apps as well.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There is a social club recruiting event in January so feel free to participate and know more about societies which you may find it interesting. I didn't join any clubs except the Study Abroad Society since every weekend I have plans for trips. It is hard to participate weekend functions though some of the societies are special.

Health & Safety

There is a clinic in Lancaster providing basic clinical service. Also, there is a hospital which located somewhere nearby the university. Please note that for the clinical service, appointment is necessary and it may take up to a month for reservation of non-urgent medical service.

Food

There are quite a few food choices on campus. The brochure given by the school in the orientation will introduce those restaurants. Here are a few recommendations which you might want to know:

1. Sultan/ The Spice Lab: Delicious Indian dishes which I like the most. The staffs are nice and I can even get into the kitchen for a short visit. This is a must-try restaurant which I strongly recommend.
2. Barkers: Another restaurant which is in Cartmel College. Though it is a bit far from central campus, the food is comparatively nice and cheap. Cartmel College common space also a very comfortable environment which worth visiting.
3. Wong's Kitchen: The only Chinese food restaurants in University. The price is a bit high but whenever you want Chinese dishes, this is a convenient place for you to enjoy a nice Chinese lunch/ dinner.

Transportation

Lancaster is a small town nearby Manchester. This year, HKUST cooperated with Cathay Pacific and provided us with discounted flight ticket. However, due to the New Year peak season, the latest time that I could take the flight is the 1st January for Manchester Airport. Therefore, I chose to go to the UK a week before the orientation began and get to know more about places nearby. Since 1st January is a public holiday, Trans Pennine Express stopped operating direct train from Manchester Airport to Lancaster. Therefore, I personally recommend you not to take the 1st January flight since you might find it difficult to carry your heavy luggage and find the right station for train interchange.

For most of the daytrips I have in the UK, I will choose taking the virgin train west coast since this is the fastest to travel from Lancaster to different cities. For the tickets, you can use the "Trainline" apps to check the price. Remember the price will rise from time to time so book it as soon as possible.

Another way is to take the bus for travelling (National Express). However, I personally do not recommend since usually they only have one bus departing at 1:30pm from Lancaster and the timeslot is not a nice one given that the ride might be long to other city. If you really want to take the coach for trips, I suggest you to take a train to Manchester to change the coach which departs in Manchester Victoria. There are a lot more timeslots to be chosen.

Climate

UK is not cold in terms of temperature. However, it is important to note that UK is a pretty windy country and please make sure your jacket has wind breaking function. After April, the weather is getting warmer but not a hot weather until June.

Communication

Lancaster has a comparatively stable Wi-Fi on campus. As I remember it ranked number 2 in the UK in terms of Wi-Fi service providing. For the mobile network, I used the Pay-as-you-go provided by Three.

Cautionary measures

Items to bring:

- Passport
- Money and cards
- Laptop
- Notebook and Stationery
- Approval Letter from Lancaster University
- Medicine
- Rice Cooker (you can make friends trust me)

Final thought

Exchange is more than trips and studying. After you read through this report, you may find out 1. I have visited a lot of places 2. there is a lot missing information such as my ordinary school life. The reason I did not put this into my report is that everyone has a unique exchange life that he or she would like to have. If you have any dreams about exchange or want to be a better person you would love to be, just go ahead. No one knows you well when you come to a new place and that's why you can redefine how life should be and life you want to live. Without being restricted by the environment with high pace, it's the right time for you to think about who you are. And well, wish every of you have a wonderful exchange. Remember, you only live once. Don't give up trying and you will receive a lot more than you expected.

Useful Link

Lancaster Student Accommodation

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/facilities/accommodation/>

Lancaster Study Abroad Website

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/study/international-students/study-abroad/>

Virgin Train

www.virgintrains.co.uk

National Express

www.nationalexpress.com

Trainline

www.thetrainline.com