
EXCHANGE REPORT



Lancaster University, United Kingdom

Fall 2018/2019



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Year 3

Professional Accounting & Operations Management

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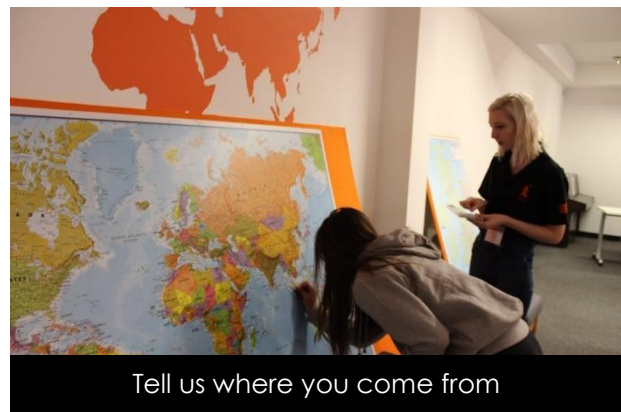
Part I Monthly Activity Log

Welcome Week: 1st – 7th October 2018

Michaelmas Term: 9th October 2018 – 14th December 2018

September 2018

The official arriving date of Fylde College was 30th September 2018. I received a lot of emails from school this month, such as accommodation information from your college manager, pre-arrival information from the study abroad office and orientation guide for welcome week. I arrived at Manchester on 30th September and took the coach to Lancaster University. A compulsory college welcome talk was held to welcome new students. College representatives came to my flat, gathered all the flatmates and we played some ice-breaking games. A college welcoming dinner was scheduled to let you know people from your college.



October 2018

Places travelled: Lancaster, Lake District, Northumberland (Alnwick, Bamburgh, Seahouses), York, Newcastle upon Tyne, Beamish

First week of the term is welcome week, a series of orientation events and college activities were held. An orientation talk was organized by the Global Study Office on 1st October, information about enrolling for modules, academic support, brief introduction to student life at Lancaster were given. Second day is the module enrolment day where students need to go to Great Hall in person to register for the classes. The events in the rest of the week are optional. I met friends from all around the world during the events, such as China, Taiwan, Malaysia, USA and Australia. I joined the school for the Lancaster Castle tour. My college organized various activities during the week, such as pub quiz, movie night, pizza making, cheese tasting and board game night. I travelled to Lake District with my new friends during the weekend of the welcome week.

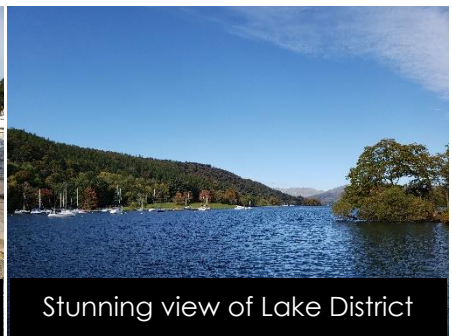
Official school term started on 9th October. I have enrolled in one accounting course, one operations management course and one marketing course. The marketing course required to read 6 academic papers and 2 textbook chapters every week. I also had difficulties in understanding the lecturer's Scottish accents. After first week of class, I have decided to swap the marketing course with an operations management course. To be honest, I did my revision every week as I know it will be hard if I only catch up at the end of the term before exam. Due to light workload, I travelled every weekend in this month. I joined Graduate College tour to Alnwick Castle, travelled to York with a friend met in Lancaster and visited my friend in Newcastle.



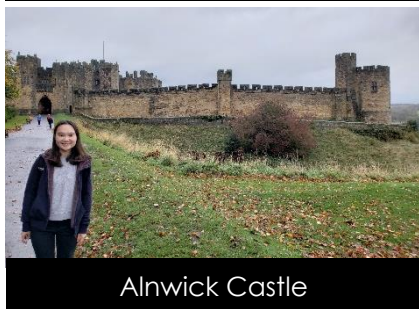
Lancaster Castle



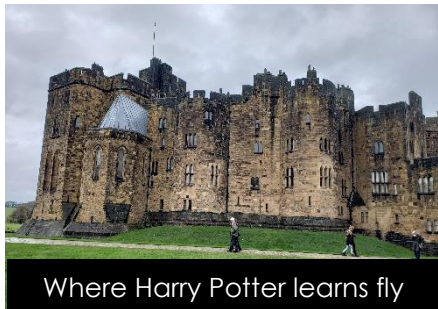
Day Trip to Lake District



Stunning view of Lake District



Alnwick Castle



Where Harry Potter learns fly



Newcastle Upon Tyne



Beamish Museum



The Shambles in York

November 2018

Places travelled: Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield, Preston, Edinburgh (Scotland), Portsmouth, Bristol, Brighton

The lecturers started to distribute the coursework at the end of this month. Luckily, I did not need to submit any coursework this month. I seized the chance to travel to Leeds and Edinburgh with friends met in Lancaster. Since Christmas is coming soon, most Christmas markets open in late November. Among all the Christmas markets I have visited, I particularly like Edinburgh Christmas Market as it has rides, food stores and souvenirs shops, all packed together. I could really feel the festive season while walking in the market. I also had 3 solo trips to Liverpool, Sheffield and Preston. At the end of November, I visited my friend in Portsmouth and we travelled to Bristol and Brighton. Apart from travelling, I joined Gospel Choir rehearsal on every Wednesday night to prepare for the carolling service in early December and Chinese Christian Fellowship regular meeting on Friday night.



Kirkstall Abbey in Leeds



My travel buddy



Beatles in Liverpool



Liverpool Royal Albert Dock



Kelham Island in Sheffield



Peace Garden in Sheffield



Avenham and Miller Park in Preston



A breathtaking view



Calton Hill in Edinburgh



Edinburgh Christmas Market



St. Mary Redcliff in Bristol



Sunset in Brighton Palace Pier

December 2018

Places travelled: Manchester, Belfast (Northern Ireland), Nottingham, Cardiff (Wales), Birmingham, Durham, Hartlepool, Glasgow (Scotland)

I had a great time joining two carolling services with Gospel Choir as my last carolling experience was during my secondary school. I had one accounting end of term test in Week 9, one accounting visiting student exam in Week 10 and one coursework assignment due in Week 10. In order to prepare for the exams and coursework, I did not travel in the last two weeks, but planned for the travelling itinerary after the term ends. I checked out on 15th December, then travelled to Manchester to visit my friend and we went to Belfast, Nottingham, Cardiff, Birmingham, Durham, Hartlepool and Glasgow.



Manchester Christmas Market



Manchester United



Titanic Belfast



University of Nottingham



Cardiff Christmas Market



Lego reindeers



Birmingham Christmas Market



Beamish Museum



My travel buddy



Sunset in Hartlepool



University of Glasgow



Glasgow Christmas Market

January 2019

Places travelled: London, Windsor, Cambridge, Bath, Oxford

My sister visited me in London and we travelled to Windsor, Cambridge, Bath and Oxford. We took our return flight to Hong Kong in mid-January.



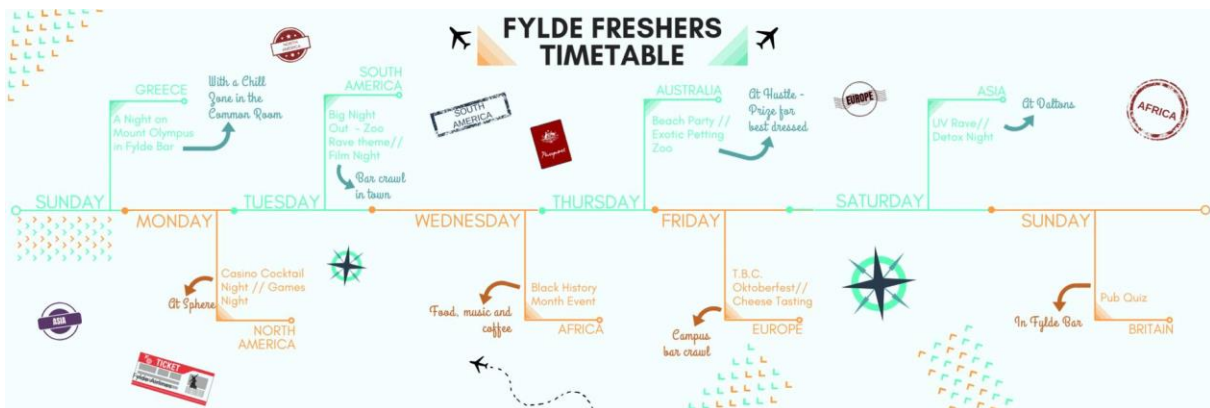
Part II General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

It is stated in the UK official website that if you stay in the United Kingdom for less than 6 months, you do not need to pre-apply for visa before arrival. You can ask for the visa at the port of entry in the UK from an Immigration Officer. Remember to bring all necessary information with you, such as Lancaster University official letter of acceptance, and immigration letter. There is no cost to obtain a visa if you apply at the border. There is a charge of around HKD 1074 if you pre-apply for it. After you have completed the online application, you need to select a time to visit the UK Visas & Immigration office in person to submit the document proofs. A visa will be issued in 14 working days. I heard that the immigration officer will ask you a lot of questions at the border from my friends, so I decided to pre-apply for the visa. More information can be found [here](#)

Orientation Activities

I received a study abroad welcome week guide via email in early September. It listed all the compulsory and optional events. I had a college welcome talk at night on my arrival date, followed by a college welcoming dinner. Compulsory activities include orientation talk by Study Abroad Office, university registration, module enrolment and unismart induction event. Optional activities include library talk, transportation talk, music performance, tea gathering and so on. The junior college representatives (JCR) organized various activities during the week, such as pub quiz, movie night, pizza making, cheese tasting and board game night. Below shows a list of activities organized by my college during Fresher's week. Fresher's Fair was held in the Great Hall, where different student societies set up booths and recruit new members. These are the opportunities where you can meet new friends.



International Services & Activities

There is an airport pickup service from Manchester Airport organized by the University on 29th and 30th September. It costs £25 and remember to book it in advance. It is more convenient to use this service as you do not need to carry two large luggage by yourself. More information will be given when you receive the offer letter.

Accommodations

Lancaster University adopts collegiate system and its accommodation has been named "Best University Halls" since 2010. There are nine colleges, eight for undergraduate (Bowland, Cartmel, County, Furness, Fylde, Grizedale, Lonsdale and Pendle), and one for postgraduate (Graduate). After completing the online application, you will receive an email about applying for on campus accommodation. Each college has different characteristics, for example, Pendle college is famous for music and it is the only college that holds weekly music live night. Grizedale has the largest common room and a lot of local students are in this college. I chose Furness and Fylde as they are located at the centre of the campus, just 5 mins walk to the management school and main campus.



There are different accommodation types, including standard with washbasin, super ensuite, ensuite, townhouse, self-contained studio, and catered accommodation. The offer received may be different from what you have chosen. A £200 accommodation deposit will be collected when you accept the offer. Luckily, my offer is super ensuite in Fylde. The room is more spacious and cleaner than what I have expected. More information can be found [here](#)



Courses Registration

In June, you are asked to fill in an online application, indicating which subjects you want to take, you can only take a maximum of 3 courses in Michaelmas Term. Study abroad modules is an informative page where you can look for available courses. Note that not all courses on the list are available in your term, and the availability of courses may change in August. You are advised to check the list again in early September. A tentative timetable is available on your student portal before your arrival.

During the welcome week, you are asked to register the courses in the Great Hall in person. It is suggested to go there as early as possible because the courses are first-come, first-served. You need to get the approval from the departments that teach the modules you are planning to take. If the courses have pre-requisite, the department representative will ask you some questions. Remember to bring an official transcript with you for supporting document. Do pick some spare options in case your intended courses are rejected.

The add-drop period is the first two weeks of the term. If you would like to add/drop a course, you need to get the signature from both the departments that teach the

	Mon. 12 Nov	Tue. 13 Nov	Wed. 14 Nov	Thu. 15 Nov	Fri. 16 Nov
08:00					
09:00					
10:00		Lecture AC.F301L02/01 FAR - Faraday LT			
11:00				Workshop MSCI242/W01/04 ASH - ASH House PC Zone 1	
12:00					
13:00				Lecture MSCI222L02/01 FUR - Furness LT 1	
14:00		Seminar MSCI222/S01/04 BLN - Bowland Nth SR 05			
15:00			Drop-in session AC.F301/D01/01 FYL - Fyde LT 1 A15	Workshop AC.F301/W01/05 WEL - Welcome Centre LT1 A34	
16:00	Lecture MSCI222L01/01 MAN - Mngt School LT 04				
17:00		Lecture AC.F301L01/01 GFX - George Fox LT 1			
18:00		Lecture MSCI242L01/01 FAR - Faraday LT			

module you intend to add and drop. Do check out the office hour of the department undergraduate coordinator before your visit.

Each course includes lectures, workshops or seminars. Lecture sessions are shown on your timetable after you have submitted the course registration form. For workshops and seminars, the lecturer will open the online registration after the first lecture, and you can choose the sessions that fit your timetable. Personally, I intended to arrange all my classes on Monday to Thursday, so I could reserve Friday for my weekend trip.

Teaching and Assessment Methods

I have enrolled in the following courses:

Course Code & Title	Assessment	Teaching Method
AcF301 Financial Accounting I	25% End of Term Test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 hour test in week 9 75% Final Examination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 hours 15 mins exam in week 10 	This course is the best accounting course I have taken, which I particularly like the teaching method. The lecturer uses OneNote to write down main points and illustrate the worked examples. Concepts and short worked examples are clearly explained during lectures, while long worked examples and written questions are demonstrated during workshops or drop-in sessions. All the lectures and workshops are recorded and posted on Moodle (like Canvas in HKUST), so students can review the videos during revision. End of term test and final examination are manageable if you have revised and understood the materials. Unlike the accounting courses in HKUST, the accounting exams in LU contain both calculation questions, testing your techniques and written questions, testing your concept understanding.
MSCI 222 Optimization	50% Coursework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly calculations using software LINDO Announced in week 8 	Since I added this course at the end of add-drop period, I missed the first four lectures. I find it quite hard to understand the lecture materials as

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due in week 10 <p>50% Coursework (for single-term visiting students only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 pieces 1000 words essays • Announced in week 10 • Due in mid-January 	the powerpoint has a lot of numerical figures and tables without clear explanation. The lecturer seldom explains the content clearly, so I usually attend the lectures to get an idea of the content, then self-study with Youtube videos. Seminars are scheduled every two weeks, where the lecturer provides some exam type questions and demonstrates the problems.
MSCI 242 Spreadsheet Modelling for Management	<p>100% Coursework (for single-term visiting students only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announced in week 8 • Due in mid-January 	Personally, I think this course is very useful as it teaches a lot of useful Excel functions and VBA. There is a 1 hour lecture and a 2 hours workshop every week. The lecturer goes through some important notes of the lab manual of that week during lecture, and you can try out that by yourself during the workshop.

Sports and Recreation Facilities

There are a lot of sports facilities in Lancaster, such as swimming pool, fitness suite, sports hall, climbing wall, sauna and steam room etc. You can opt to pay as you play scheme or purchase a sports membership if you are a sports lover. More information can be found [here](#)

Finance and Banking

There are two banks on campus, Barclays and Santander. I opened an international student bank account in Barclays. Before opening a bank account, you need to order a registration certificate from student portal and collect it from the Base. You are asked to fill in an online application form, submit the required documents, such as passport copy and registration certificate, then attend a talk which introduces the terms and conditions of the account. After a week, the debit card will be issued, and passwords will be mailed to you. Personally, I think that the debit card is very convenient, not only you can use to do online purchases, but also you can use to pay for the miscellaneous expenses during travelling.

Below are my expenses:

Expense	HKD
Visa application	2,000
Flight ticket	12,300
Accommodation deposit	2,000
Accommodation	15,000
Living expense	10,000
Travelling	20,000
Total	<u>61,300</u>

Food

The university offers "Freedom", a pre-paid student dining scheme. It costs around £250 for 5 weeks and £500 for 10 weeks. The plan includes breakfast and lunch or dinner from Monday to Friday. However, this plan can be only used in a few restaurants and cafes on campus. There is a wide range of Western and Chinese cuisine on campus and in town. Instead of eating in restaurants, I usually cooked during weekdays. I spent about £20 in buying ingredients per week. There is a free hourly Sainsbury bus on every Wednesday, transporting between University Underpass and Sainsbury in town. If you spend more than £5 in Sainsbury, you are allowed to take the free bus back to the university, but the driver rarely checks the receipt. Apart from Sainsbury, there is a Chinese grocery store named KF Oriental Food Store. Ready meals in Marks & Spencer is also a good option, especially when you do not have time to cook during exam period. I suggest Poundland if you would like to buy some snacks.



Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

During the welcome week, Student Union organized Fresher's Fair where all the societies set up booths in the hall to recruit members. There are more than a hundred societies in Lancaster, from academic to baking, volunteering to media. Each society has one or two free trial sessions in first two weeks. I have tried Magic & Circus, Gospel Choir and Chinese Christian Fellowship.



Last rehearsal in Gospel Choir



Carolling Service with Gospel Choir



Last meeting in Chinese Christian Fellowship

Health and Safety

There is a clinic on campus but do bring some drugs for common flu. You will be asked to fill in a medical registration form on the registration day. Lancaster University not only cares about students' physical health, but also mental health. There was a drama showing how to maintain work-life balance and talks about well-being support and mental health during the welcome week. Although UK is a relatively safe place than other European countries, you still need to pay attention to your safety, especially when you are alone on the street at night as there are a lot of drunk people hanging around.

Transportation

Stagecoach is the only bus company in Lancaster. There are a lot of buses travelling between University Underpass and town, including bus no. 1, 2, 4, 40. You can check the bus timetable on "iLancaster", a school mobile application. You can also check the timetable on the [stagecoach official website](#). It costs £2.90 for return and £2 for single journey. The transportation cost is particularly high in the UK. If you stay off campus, you are advised to purchase North-West Unirider Gold Bus Pass from the student union, it costs £180.99 for 1 term.



If you travel around the UK, train is the most popular transport. I have purchased one 16-25 young adult railcard which costs only £30 and I can enjoy 33% discount off whenever I book train ticket. As far as I know, train tickets on [Trainsplit](#) is the cheapest. However, you need to collect the tickets from the ticket machine before boarding on the train. Trainline and Virgin Train are also some websites that I usually use to book tickets. The earlier you book online, the cheapest tickets you can purchase. Note that the trains in the UK always delay or cancel. Remember to apply for delay repay if the train is delayed for more than 30 mins or cancelled. If you travel to London, remember to insert your 16-25 railcard into your oyster card to enjoy the discount using London underground. If you would like to travel to Ireland, it is suggested to take flight as it is cheaper and faster than train.



Climate



Climate in the UK is very different from HK. It is mainly rainy and chilly. The average temperature was 8-15°C from Sep-Nov, and 0-5°C in Dec and Jan. It is essential to wear waterproof windcheater during rainy days as it is very windy and impossible to use umbrella. Most of the indoor places have radiator, so you may consider wearing a thinner long-sleeve top with a hoodie and windcheater on top.

Communication

Professors and students in Lancaster come from all over the world. I seldom have language barrier with local people and exchange students. Personally, I think Scottish accent is very difficult to understand. My marketing lecturer is Scottish, and I could barely understand her accent, and I finally decided to drop the course. Local students will use some slangs, which I find them difficult to comprehend. To be honest, it is hard to join the conversation between a group of local students as you are a foreigner.



I use 3 UK "pay as you go" plan for my mobile service. There are various add-ons data plan, including £10 2GB data, £15 5GB data, £20 12GB data, £27.50 36GB data and £35 for unlimited data. Each plan lasts for 30 days. I bought a sim card, and a voucher from WHSmith. You can either purchase the voucher from WHSmith or online. The voucher is used to top up the value in the sim card, and you need to complete your top up by calling 444. Remember to convert the top up to "add-ons" in 3 official website after adding top up to your phone. Note that the underground does not provide network service. My mobile data service is stable for most of the time, except when taking trains or entering some malls. 3 UK supports mobile network in Europe, so it is very convenient when you travel outside the UK. There are other options, such as O2, giffgaff, EE, Vodafone.

Cautionary Measures

Always carry photocopies of your passport, official exchange offer letter and insurance policy with you when you travel. Create an emergency contact list, such as college emergency phone number and contact of Chinese Embassy in UK. Although the security in the UK is quite good, but if you are travelling in Europe, especially Italy and France, you may consider having a money belt to hide your passport and money.

Final thoughts

My aim for going for an exchange is to step out of my comfort zone. The past 11 weeks have trained me to be a more independent person. It is an opportunity to understand yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, and challenge yourself by having a lot of first attempts. The most distinctive difference between UK and HK is the pace of lifestyle. Without being restricted to a hustle and bustle city, you can slow down the pace, take time to understand yourself and enjoy everything you do. It will definitely be a fruitful and rewarding experience in your life.



Part III Items to bring

Documents

- Passport (with student visa)
- HKID card
- Lancaster official acceptance letter
- Lancaster immigration letter
- HKUST official transcript
- IELTS certificate
- Insurance letter
- Passport size photo
- Cash (£)/Credit card

Clothings

- Gloves
- Scarf
- Water-proof jacket
- Hoodies/sweaters
- Jeans/trousers
- Boots

Electronics

- Phone
- Laptop
- Travelling adaptor (for European countries)
- Hair dryer
- Calculator
- Water kettle
- Torch

Part IV Useful links and contacts

Visa application

https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa/y/hong-kong/passport/study/six_months_or_less

Lancaster accommodation

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/facilities/accommodation/undergraduates/>

Sports and recreational facilities

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/sport/sports-centre/>

Barclays international student account

<https://www.barclays.co.uk/current-accounts/international-student-bank-account/>

Stagecoach bus

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/>

Trainsplit

<https://www.trainsplit.com/default.aspx>

National rail

<http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

3 UK pay as you go plan

http://www.three.co.uk/Support/Pay_As_You_Go