

Exchange Report IE Business School



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Major: Information System & Economics, Year 3
Fall 2018/19

Monthly Activity Log

August 2018



Course enrollment would be done in late July and early August. I started my exchange journey by travelling to Paris for 7 days and 2 days in Lille. It is the time when I was adapting to price level and life in Europe. After that, I took flight to Madrid and settling down.

September 2018



There was an orientation session on the first day of school and a Tapas night in early September. There is not much workload in September so I managed to travel a lot in the weekend. I have been travelling to Granada and Seville in the first weekend. It was

an interesting experience to travel across the country by coach. I went to Palma de Marjoca in the second weekend with my friend. It is a place on a small island with beaches and clubs everywhere. In the third weekend, I took a night bus to Barcelona and I was glad that I have been to there when it is still a good time visiting the well-known beach Barceloneta. What's more, I was lucky enough to enjoy the La Merce Festival 2018 while there were a lot of parades and performance all over the city. I took a day trip to Segovia in the last weekend.

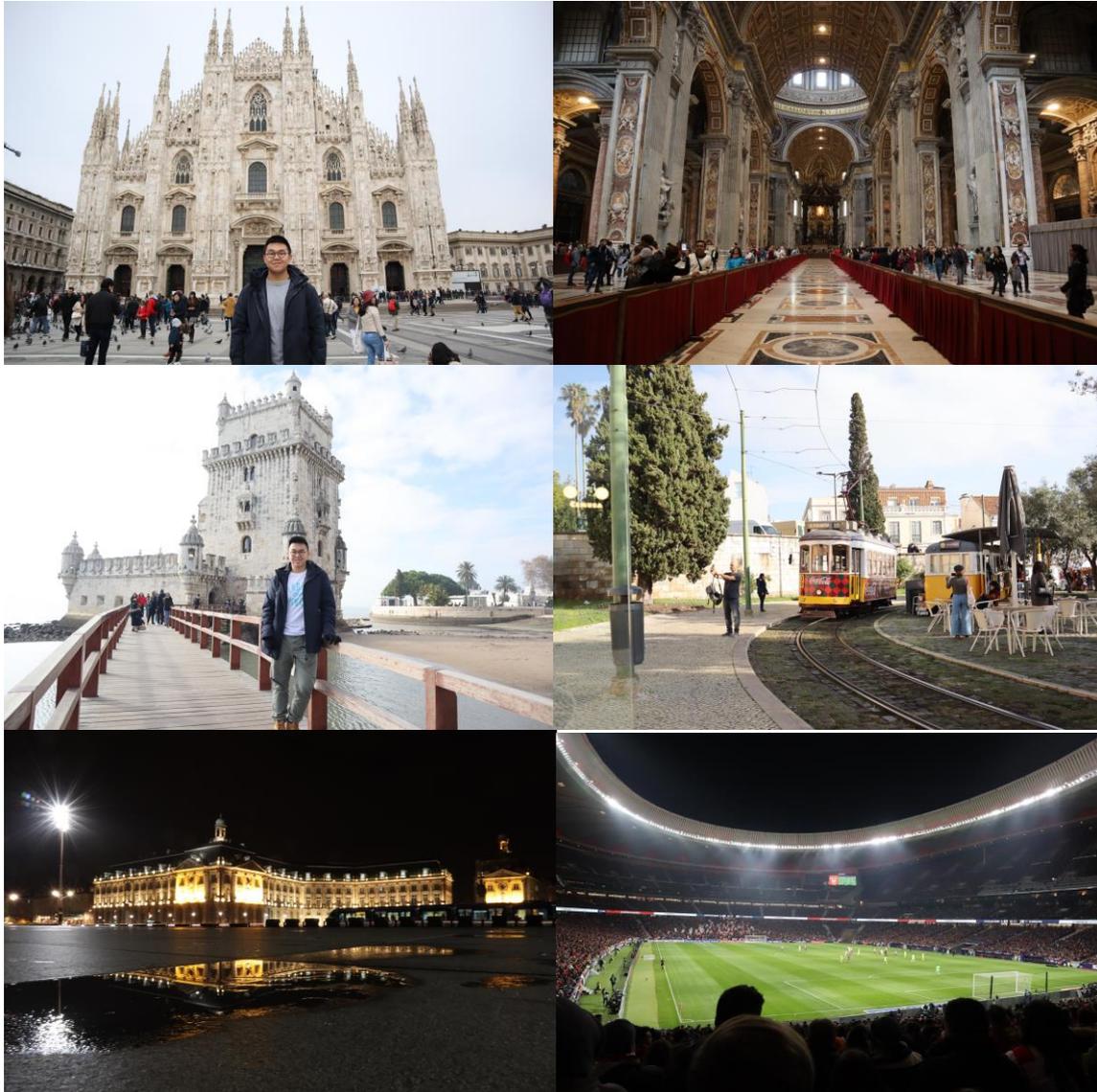
October 2018



Due to the 70% attendance policy, I planned my travel schedule carefully to skip as least lessons as I could. In the first weekend, I flew to Munich and joined the Oktober Fest. The atmosphere is really good when everyone is wearing the costume and dancing alongside with beer. After Munich was Greece, I travelled to Athens and Santorini for few days. It was a really beautiful places but food in Santorini is very expensive. In the end of October, I travelled to UK to visit my friends. Aside from

visiting London, I spent a day in Oxford to wander around the old town and enjoyed a football match played by Oxford United.

November 2018

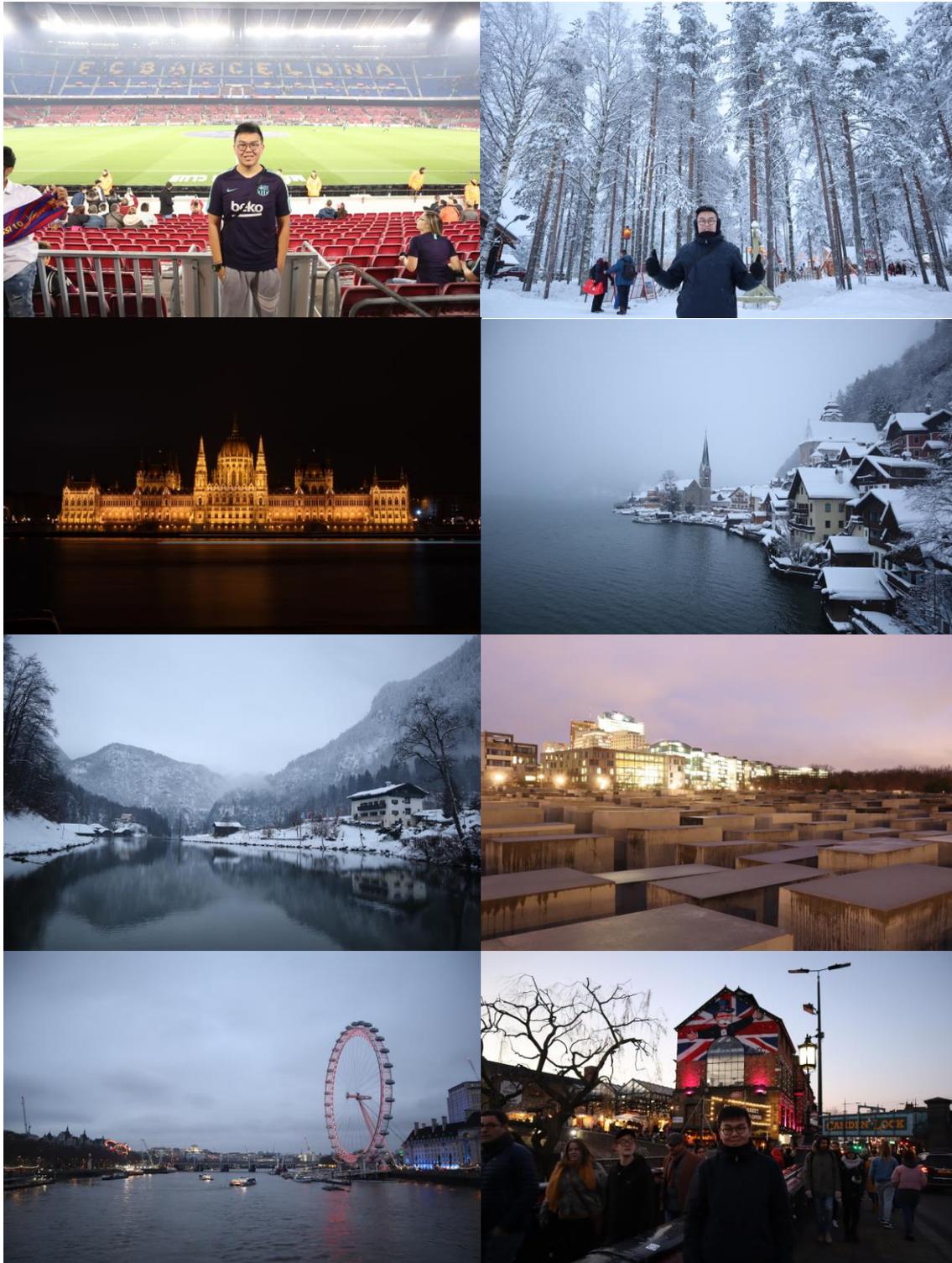


This is the mid-term period and lots of project presentation were due around that month. I only managed to travel to Italy for first few days and I had to stay in Madrid most of the time in November. I watched a football match with Atletico Madrid playing against FC Barcelona, it was an unforgettable night with lots of memories. In the last few days of November and beginning of December, I travelled to Lisbon alone and visited my friends in Bordeaux afterwards. I also watched a football match in Bordeaux which the home team played against PSG.

December 2018

Finals and presentations are arranged in early and Mid-December usually held in the last lesson of each course. Yet, there were day-off between finals and presentations

so I managed to take overnight bus to Barcelona for a Copa Del Rey match in Camp Nou and took overnight bus back to Madrid right after the match. My semester ended on Dec12 and I left right away to start off my 1-month travel around Europe.



General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

Apply as soon as your exchange confirmation letter is ready as most people miss the submission of some important documents the first time they go to consulate. In case you haven't bought flights ticket, try to buy a 24-hour-refundable ticket just to get the receipt for reference to apply for visa. If you haven't booked accommodation, email the consulate and they might allow you to provide the housing details afterwards. Check carefully what documents you have to submit for application. The visa will be ready in 2-3 weeks after submission of all documents.

Orientation Activities

IEU organizes a tapas night for exchange students who is studying in Madrid campus. On the first day of school, several orientation sessions would be held on campus to provide important information regarding academics and extracurricular activities, and you just need to attend one of them. During the session, they will give out your IE student card.

International Services and Activities

There is a student coordinator who deal with all affairs of exchange students, he/ she will be in contact with you by email as soon as they start registration for exchange students. Do contact him/ her in case you have any concerns and enquiries before or during exchange.

Accommodations

IEU will provide suggestions on accommodation option. The price range for rent would be around 700€ -1200€. Sometimes you will see some options with lower price if you share flat with others. In my case, I shared a flat with 2 other exchange students from HKUST. We booked the flat from Spotahome, and I **strongly recommend you NOT to book your accommodation via Spotahome** due to the quality of landlord. The landlord treated us really bad and Spotahome did nothing to penalize the landlord even though we provide sound evidence on how he violates the contract by not providing us the weekly cleaning service. Until then we still could not get back the deposit kept by the landlord as he keeps ignoring our message. Similar things happened to other exchange friends who booked accommodation from Spotahome and it tends to protect the landlord more than us. Other options would be joining the IE housing Facebook group or booking the student accommodation(pricier option (~1200€/month)). Try to book accommodation as early as possible since the later you book, the more expensive it would be and the less available options you will have.

Courses Registration

Be careful when you are looking for credit-transferrable IE courses listed on the HKUST database, some courses (e.g. courses equivalent to econometrics and MGMT2130) do not open in Fall term and only offer in Spring instead. The course enrollment system is quite inefficient in a sense that it shuts down 3 times due to technical problem, the system finally works after changing enrollment date for 3 times, but it was unfair as some people could login earlier while some students took longer time to recover from the technical problem and login successfully.

Courses studied:

Teaching and Assessment Methods

There is a compulsory 70% attendance to pass all courses. Teaching method varies with HKUST in a way that professors stress a lot on class interaction, the class atmosphere is really engaging and students can always feel the passion of the professor. They are easy-going and approachable whenever you encounter difficulties. Almost all professors are experienced and high-achieving professionals in respective work fields, they could always share valuable insights regarding current market situation and career tips. Otherwise, assessment methods are similar to HKUST which includes midterms, projects and finals.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

There are different sports clubs and school teams available, more details would be introduced during the briefing session on the first day of school.

Finance & Banking (including currency/ expense)

Spain and most European countries use Euro as their official currencies. In previous years, people suggest opening bank account in Madrid but this year when I tried to do so, they said students with Chinese nationality could not open account in their bank due to agreements signed months ago. As a result I drew money from my Citi bank debit card (registered in HK before I go to Europe) during exchange, card holders can draw money without any handling fee from all ATMs that accept "plus" card. For expense, I spent \$100k in total (\$20k housing, \$20k living expense in Madrid, \$60k travelling).

Social Clubs & Networking Activities

Join the Madrid Life Facebook group which organize many events from time to time, it ranges from pub crawling to traveling to other countries. Other than that you could pay attention online campus which will pose different events on the calendar.

Health & Safety

Madrid is a clean and safe city in general, just beware of pickpockets especially in touristy area.

Food

Average spending for a meal would be 7-12€ in Madrid depending on restaurants. There are many restaurants opposite to campus all along the street Maria de Molina, Tierra would be one of the most economic options which a big burrito costs you around 7-8€. Otherwise, you could explore other places with spanish delicacies like seafood paella, tapas and sangria! There is quite a lot of Asian food around the city, just explore and discover more if you miss home!

Transportation

Public transport is well established and connected within the city. Apply for the student transport card as soon as you arrive Madrid. You need to reserve a timeslot online to make the card in specific station. After that you will have to pay only 20€ every month(30days since you top up) for unlimited rides of public transport. You could use the card to travel from and to airport by metro without extra charge. Otherwise, the express shuttle bus to airport/ from airport to city center costs 5€.

Climate

It is quite hot in September and early October, and it starts to turn cold since mid-October, prepare clothing for both Summer and Winter in which you might travel to some countries that is already cold in September and October. Prepare yourself with body lotion and cream as it is very dry in Winter time.

Communication

Almost all people you meet in university can speak fluent English. But outside campus, Spaniards generally speak poor English or they couldn't even speak any English at all. It is better for you to pick up some basic Spanish before arrival.

Cautionary Measures

Be cautious when you are on street, pickpockets are very common in European countries especially in Spain. Try to put important belongings on your body so you can feel them even when someone try to take it. There was one time two thieves disguised as couple and tried to steal things from my backpack, fortunately I discovered and nothing was stolen. Another advice is do not easily believe strangers. Sometimes they just pretend to be poor and ask for money and by no means should you help them by directly giving them money.

Items to bring

1. Clothing for both Summer and Winter
2. Sunglasses
3. Passport
4. VISA
5. Laptop
6. Chargers
7. Adaptor for chargers (3-pot-to-2-pot adaptor)
8. Small amount of money
9. Credit & debit card
10. Power bank (Important during travel as you will always use Google map)
11. Small suitcase/ larger backpack for short trips
12. Medicines for emergency
13. Stationery
14. Note for emergency contacts (police station, consulate, IE student service, etc.)

Useful links and contacts

Link of Spanish consulate in HK:

<http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Consulados/HONGKONG/en/Pages/inicio.aspx>

Point of contact of IE (Andreea):

Andreea.vitalaru@ie.edu

Link for IE housing Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1623557364630563/>