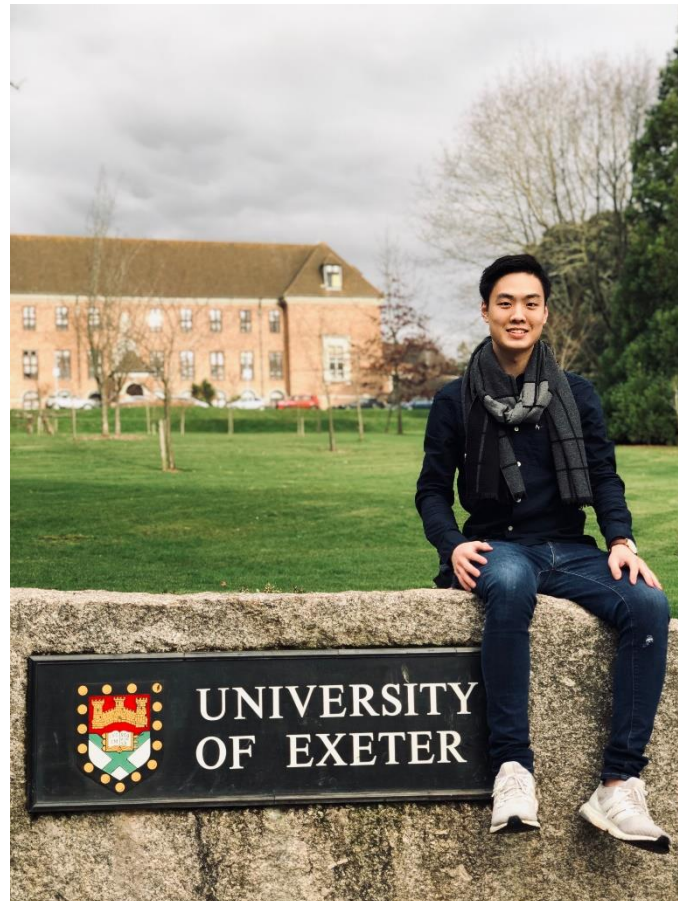


University of Exeter, U.K.

Fall 2018



EXCHANGE REPORT

CHAU Tsz Wah
Year 4
GBUS & IS

Monthly Activity Log

September

I reached Heathrow on 14th Sep 2018 and meet up with another student from HKUST at Exeter before the start of the fresher week of the University of Exeter. During the fresher week, after attending some of the compulsory information session and meet up all the HKUST exchange students on that day, I travelled to the Stonehenge and the Salisbury Cathedral with 2 other students from HKUST before the commence of semester. The first month of the semester is not that demanding except the morning classes as some of their classes could be started from 08:30 in the morning. My friend and I bought a second-handed bike at a local social enterprise Ride On, which is located at the opposite side of the River of Exe. By the end of the month, we went on a 2-hour cruise trip to the Jurassic Coast from Exmouth, a seaside town located at the southeast of Exeter.



October

As there is no mid-term test for my modules, the whole October is quite flexible for me which I could afford to travel around. During the midterm break in mid-October, we went for a 4-day trip. We visited Bristol, Bath, and Cardiff by train. In late October, I went to Luxembourg and Brussels. October is quite a busy month for most of the students as assignment deadlines usually come across around the mid-term period. Sometimes I will have to handle my coursework during travelling.

November

There were not many holidays during November. Therefore, I only visited London throughout the month. I have visited the British Museum and saw the ancient Egyptian mummies, saw the Changing of the Guards at the Buckingham Palace and the Lord Mayor's show parade in the City of London, visited the Greenwich Observatory and the King's Cross Station where the Harry Potter shop locates in. I also watched a football match at the Wembley Stadium.



December

This was the last month where regular classes held at the University. I completed my final class and started to travel around Europe during the Christmas break. I went to Reykjavik in Iceland, Basel and Zurich in Switzerland, and Amsterdam in the Netherlands. At the end of 2018, I was in London and watched the new year fireworks.



January

I went back to Exeter after countdown and start preparing for the examinations and final assessments. I travel back to Hong Kong on 12th January.



General Exchange Information

- Visa Procedures

If you are holding a HKSAR passport (or if you are lucky enough to possess a BNO passport, which the chance is slim for students who born after the handover), you will not need to apply a visa to enter UK. You are just required to bring along the **letter of acceptance** issued by the University of Exeter to get through the immigration. It will grant you six months of stay per entrance (In case you will leave UK and travel to another countries). Remember to bring along the letter with you when you are planned to travel to anywhere outside UK border within your exchange period or else you will risk of being expelled from the country if you are not doing so.

- Orientation Activities

You will have a lot of chances to participate in different societies and school teams during the fresher week, which is held on the prior week right before the commence of semester. However, most of the societies will require you to pay an upfront fee to join them.

Besides, there are lots of orientation events held by the school before you arrive the University, such as the welcoming dinner, fresher's night, and the short cruise trip to the Jurassic Coast. You can apply those events on the University's official website and emails sent to your email. Those events will usually cost from £2-10 and you can settle the bill before you go to UK through credit cards.

- **International Services and Activities**

University of Exeter offers a Global Chums Mentoring program where exchange students will be matched up to a mentor to help you to settle into the University life in Exeter. For details, please refer to the university's official website.

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/internationalstudents/newstudents/globalchumsmentoring/>

- **Accommodations**

Unfortunately, I was not being allocated to the James Owen Court. Just like most of the other students come from HKUST. I was staying at the Iron Bridge Studios which is located from a 15-minute walk to the University and a 5-minute walk to the High Street where you can buy everything you need in there.

- **Course Registration**

The university will send you a study plan to list out the modules(courses) that you would like to enrol in the upcoming semester. (You may indicate as much courses as you want to let the university to arrange vacancies for you.)

However, it is impossible for students to pre-enrol to any modules which are designated to postgraduate students. You are required to take exactly 60 credits for one semester. (Usually one module bears 15 credits, which means 4 modules per semester) Around one month prior to the commence of semester, you will receive another confirmation email for your modules. If you are not satisfied with the schedule or else, you can still add/drop modules at the student help desk at after you have arrived at the University.

- **Teaching and Assessment Methods**

Similar to HKUST, the modules conducted in University of Exeter are mainly consisted of lectures and tutorials, sometimes workshops. All of them are compulsory unless specified. Students are required to bring along their own bluetooth-enabled devices to take attendance at the venue during the conducted time. The university offers an official web/mobile app – iExeter, which is like the UST Portal, where you can get access to the learning materials and university information from there.

For assessment methods, some modules are assessment-based which means you will not be required to attend exams for those modules; while some of

them requires you to take exams as well as hand in continuous assessments (i.e. assignments in UST context). Some exams could be exempted for exchange students and they are required to submit alternative assessments instead (most likely an essay).

- **Sports and Recreation Facilities**

There are lots of options for students to participate in sports related activities in Exeter. There are several gym centres located around the city. It costs about £20 per month. Most of them do not require you to sign annual contracts and you may just quit whenever you want. The University also have a charged gym centre. However, it is relatively more expensive than those in the city as it only offers a yearly membership.

- **Finance and Banking**

Cash (Pound sterling) is widely accepted in UK. However, some of the merchants are solely rely on e-payment methods. As Union Pay is not a viable way to conduct transactions in Exeter, and VISA credit requires an extra charge for each transaction, it is advisable to open a temporary bank account in UK for your daily transaction in to avoid queues as there are so many self-checkout counters available in UK and Europe.

Here are some suggestions of banking service providers that offers short term bank account services that you could get access to in Exeter.

Santander: It offers a basic account service that you will get a VISA debit card and a bank card. There are 2 mobile apps for you to handle personal banking services and tracking your spending.

Barclays: It offers a current account service that you will get a contactless VISA debit card and you may access to your previous spending and handles personal banking services through its mobile app.

Remember to bring along a bank letter when you are going to open a bank account. You may get it from the student help desk or generate through the student record system by yourself.

- **Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities**

There are different societies and clubs that you can join during the fresher week. You may go to the Student Guild (i.e. an organization like the student union in HKUST) for more information about them.

- **Health and Safety**

Clinics and NHS health centre is available in Exeter. However, you must register with a local general practitioner before your first medical consultation. It is advised to go to the pharmacies like Boots if you are not having serious illnesses.

In general, Exeter and the UK is a safety place. However, bike theft is common in the country. If you are planned to buy/rent a bike during your exchange, make sure you do not leave your bike unattended.

- **Food**

There are quite many restaurants in Exeter. Most of them are located on the High Street of Exeter and the Princesshay shopping mall. Most of them will cost you around £10 per entrée. Cooking is also a viable option. You can buy everything you needed in local supermarkets such as Sainsbury's, Tesco, Marks and Spencer, and Iceland. Also, there are also some Chinese food stores and a Chinese supermarket on the Summerland Street and the King William Street.

- **Transportation**

Although Exeter is a bike-friendly city, it could be tough for you to ride a bike to school as it is located on a hill. However, a bike is still a great way to get you around the city. You can get a second-handed bike at a local social enterprise called Ride-on, most of their bikes cost around £100.

Buses is the only public transportation available in Exeter. You will have to tell the driver where you would like to go to buy the bus ticket.

For travelling from London/Heathrow airport to Exeter, you could either take coaches – National express, or trains. If you are planned to travel around UK, it is advised to buy a 18-25 railcard to save more in train tickets.

- **Climate**

Exeter is often cloudy and rainy all around the year. Temperature starts to

drop after the mid-October. Strong wind together with heavy rain is common as well. Umbrella might not be a very good option under this weather.

- **Communication**

Pay as you go SIM cards will be the most viable option for exchange students. There are lots of telecommunication services provider available in UK and I bought myself a Three UK SIM before departure. However, Three UK does not perform quite well in London and European Countries as I could only receive 3G signals in most of the time. In general, it costs you around £15-20 a month for data and airtime usage.

ITEMS TO BRING

Identification Proof

- HKID
- Passport
- University acceptance letter
- HKUST Student ID (If you purchase student air ticket)

Necessities

- Pound Sterling
- Warm clothes
- Water resistant clothes
- Medicine
- Laptop Computer
- Chargers
- Adapters (If you will travel to Europe)

USEFUL LINKS

- iExeter – Student Portal
<https://i.exeter.ac.uk>
- Module list
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/international/studyabroad/inbound/moduleselection>
- Business School Modules
<http://business-school.exeter.ac.uk/study/international/modules>
- Computer Science Modules – For Information Systems major students
<http://intranet.exeter.ac.uk/empss/studentinfo/subjects/computerscience/modules/2018/>
- UK visa check
<https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>
- International Student Identity Card
<https://www.isic.hk/home/apply/isic>
- Great Western Railway Train
<https://www.gwr.com>
- National Express Coach
<https://www.nationalexpress.com/en>