

# Exchange Report

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**CASS Business School, City University of London**



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**BBA in Finance and Information Systems**

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# Part I. Monthly Activity Log

January 2019

I flew to London few days earlier than the orientation week. In first few days, I settled down and bought daily necessities from supermarket. The orientation day was held on 16 January. I met friends from other Hong Kong universities and South Korea. The semester started on 21 January. In first weeks in London, I explored London with my friends. We went to Pakenham Palace to watch the changing of the guard. We also visited Big Ben, Tower Bridge, Tower of London and Palace of Westminster.



## February 2019

The workload is not heavy in the beginning of the semester. I usually went out to take photos. I celebrated Lunar New Year with other Asian exchange students from Hong Kong, South Korea and America. We had a hotpot night at China Town. It was the first time for me to stay away from my family in Chinese New Year.



After the great hotpot in China Town. I flew to Berlin to start my first European trip with friends. The food and beer in Germany are awesome. However, I had seen a lot of crimes in Germany (fake police officers and pickpockets). Luckily, we did not lose anything in this trip.



Other than the Germany trip, I also went to other cities in UK like Cambridge and Hampton Court Palace. As a football fan, I watched first match of UEFA Champions League round of 16 Spurs vs Dortmund at Wembley Stadium. The atmosphere was so great. Everyone just yelled all the time.



## March 2019

In the middle of the semester, I had some group assignments and presentations. The workload was still acceptable. I went to Luxembourg and Belgium for a week.



Then I returned back and started my Scandinavian trip few days after I flew back from Brussels. I visited Copenhagen and Stockholm. The price level in Northern Europe is insane.



In late March, I went to chase the aurora in Tromsø (northern city in Norway). Unfortunately, I did not see it clearly. The trip was still wonderful because I met a lot of huskies and tried dog sledding.



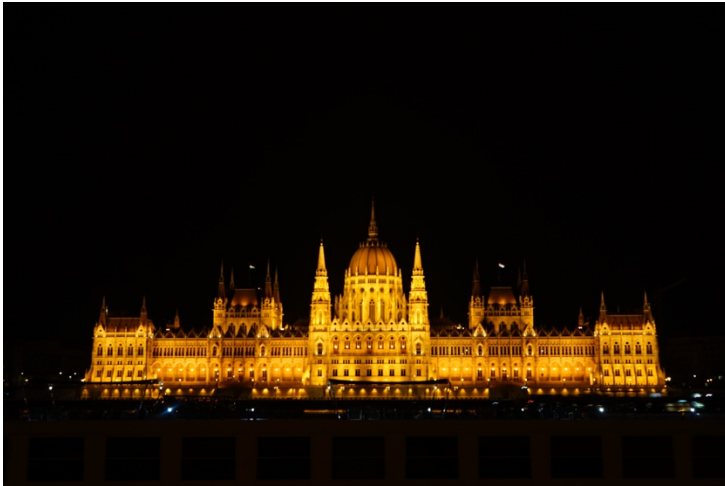
During my time in UK, the lecturer of Performing Arts in London brought us to famous theatre in London. We watched Frankenstein at Royal Opera House and visited English National Opera. I also had short trips to other cities like Bath and Bristol.



## April 2019

At the end of semester, I spent most of the time on finishing essays and studying for final exam. We went to Alton Tower (famous theme park in UK) to celebrate the end of semester.

After I finished the final exam on 8 April. I travelled Austria, Czech and Hungary. The food is delicious and cheap.





In late April, I rushed the final essay and found summer internship in Hong Kong. After finishing all the stuff, I visited Seven Sisters Cliffs and Brighton to embrace the sunshine at the southern part of UK.



In last week, I took overnight bus from London to Amsterdam which spent over 10 hours. The Netherlands gave me a crazy journey!



## May 2019

My exchange journey in Europe nearly came to an end so I spent all the time on travelling in May. I flew to Barcelona and Portugal. The people were energetic and enthusiastic.



I started another adventure in Scotland immediately after enjoying the food and drinks in Porto. The Highlands are a mystical location and we visited to the iconic landmarks in Scotland like Loch Ness and Glencoe.



I enjoyed my last European trip in 2019 with my family. We went to Paris and Switzerland to visit snow mountains and famous landmarks. After half-year wonderful experience, I flew back to Hong Kong on 23 May.



## **Part II. General Exchange Information**

### **Visa Procedure**

Hong Kong residents do not have to apply for Visa to stay in UK if the duration is less than 6 months. However, exchange students still have to bring the exchange program confirmation letter from the host university. We must fill in the application form provided by UK border every time when we enter UK. Also, we have to provide the supporting document (exchange program confirmation letter). The student exchange coordinator will then provide you a six-month short term visa. I need to fill in the form every time we fly back to UK from Europe.

### **Orientation Activities**

CityU provided a series of orientation activities in first few weeks. Most students attended the registration on 16 January. The student exchange coordinator would introduce Moodle (similar to Canvas) and distribute exchange student ID card. After that, international students at CityU shared their wonderful school life in London. Finally the student exchange coordinator generally presented all the things we should know such as healthcare, safety and school affairs. Some optional orientation activities were provided including campus tour, city walks and fairs held by Students' Union.

### **International Services & Activities**

Different student societies always provided self-organizing tour to other cities in UK like Brighton and Bath. Students can spend one to two days with other international students over the weekend.

### **Accommodations**

There is not enough accommodations for all exchange student. Luckily all UST students lived in Liberty Hall which is a private accommodation provided by CityU. It costs about 4500 pounds. I lived in a single room with a private bathroom on 2/F. There is no air-conditioner in the room. Around 10 students shared a kitchen and common area. However, it had a bad sound insulation. We can always hear someone

speaking in the room and outside the building. For the location, I just spent 10 minutes walking to the campus from the hall. It is located in Zone 1 area in London which is the central area. We can easily go to popular attractions in just 10 minutes like British Museum and King's Cross Station.

## Courses Registration

Exchange students can register at most 5 modules. I have taken 3 modules at CASS business school and 2 cultural modules at CityU.

Courses Taken	Equivalent HKUST Course
BS3200 International Financial Management	FINA4403 (3 credits) International Finance
BS3218 Mergers & Acquisitions	FINA4203 (3 credits) Mergers, Acquisitions, and Corporate Restructuring
IF1204 Banking and Financial Institutions	FINA4503 (3 credits) Banking and Financial Intermediation
LA2017 Performing Arts in London	HUMA1000HMCC (3 credits) 1000-level Course in Humanities
LA2018 Historic London	HUMA1000HMCC (3 credits) 1000-level Course in Humanities

I started planning my study path one year before I went to UK. I researched the credit transfer database to select the course at CASS. Then, I applied for the course mapping. I strongly recommend students to plan their exchange study as soon as possible because the course mapping application would last 3-4 months. Also, students should check whether it would have time clash between the courses that you want to study. My timetable was nearly perfect. I only had lectures from Monday to Wednesday. So I always spent my weekend on travelling.

## Teaching & Assessment Methods

The lecturer at CASS encouraged interactive learning. They inspire students to think deeply and discuss with others. The school just have one lecture per week throughout the semester. It has seven weeks in total. The course material is quite easy which is different from UST.

I have no exams at all for the business modules (three fina courses). They allow students to take the alternative assessment to replace the exam. It includes presentations, essays and case studies. We still needed to do the course work but the workload was not heavy. For the cultural modules, it was far more interesting. The class had regular City Walk for understanding history in London and regular performance at the most famous theatres in London for appreciating performing art like Shakespeare's production and ballet. It had a final exam for both cultural modules. It was a two-hour essay writing exam.

## **Sports & Recreation Facilities**

CitySport is the official sports center for students which is located near the campus. If students want to use the facilities, they have to pay for a monthly membership fee. It costs about 50 pounds. I just went to the free gym regularly in Liberty Court (another student accommodation near the campus). Exchange student can join the university sports team including badminton, football and hockey. They have promotions in the orientation fair.

## **Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)**

UK has a high cost of living. The price level is slightly higher than that in Hong Kong. Students should prepare enough budgets for the exchange program. I prepared and spent about 5000 pounds in this program. Expenses mainly included transportation, food and travelling expenses.

Regarding banking and payment, students cannot open the bank account with a short-term visa. Therefore, we can obtain bank letter from student exchange coordinator. HSBC accepted short-term visiting students to open bank account with official bank letter. I put all the cash into the bank account and used HSBC contactless debit card as the main payment method. It is convenient because UK currency has different coins of the pound sterling. I think it is difficult to recognize and carry all the coins with different face value and size.

## **Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities**

Different student societies would promote and recruit members. Also, the school has a CityBar in campus. Students can just walk in and meet friends in a relaxing way. Apart from weekend self-organized trip, business school would organize regular mingling session. We can meet experts in different areas like M&A and banking industry.

## **Health & Safety**

Liberty Hall required students to register for the medical services. If unluckily students suffer from any diseases, doctor can be found in different ways. In addition, students can find Student Exchange Coordinators for any enquiries because they are very helpful. Generally London is quite safe especially in Zone 1 area. However, we always saw beggars on the street. We must stay alert all the time.

## **Food**

London is similar to Hong Kong. It has a wide range of food options including both Eastern and Western cuisines. Dining out in London is not affordable. It usually costs at least 20 pounds. I tried to save more money by cooking for myself and having lunch at school canteen (relatively cheap).

## **Transportation**

The transportation system in London is well-developed with different bus route and underground. It costs about 2 pounds each time. Students must buy an oyster card (similar to Octopus Card in Hong Kong) to enjoy discount and facilitate the entry. Students can also buy 18-25 Railway card to have more discount by linking the card with oyster card. It costs 30 pounds and provides discount on train tickets. Coach card is also available for long-way route (to the airport or other cities).

## **Climate**

From January to March, the temperature was quite low. It stayed around 3~10 degree Celsius. In April, the temperature rose up to about 20 degree Celsius. London didn't had snows at all (just once throughout the semester). However, a rainy and cloudy day was very common in London. Strong winds would also make the umbrella completely useless. Personally I think the weather in London is worse than that in Hong Kong.

## **Communication**

I brought a one-month data usage card to UK. After I stayed for a period, I used Voxi plan provided by Vodafone. It costs 10 pounds per month. It has unlimited data usage on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) and additional 6GB 4G data usage. Customers can cancel the plan anytime.

## **Cautionary measures**

There would be some drunk people during late night in London. Try not to stay too late outside. On the other hand, students should be aware of pickpockets in Europe. Always stay alert in crowded area. Finally, doing research is important before the trip. People on the Internet would describe different frauds and crimes that tourists usually encounter.

## **Other notes (Tips for travelling)**

Try to plan your trip and pair up with friends as soon as possible. You can search for cheap flight ticket if you plan the trip earlier using Skyscanner.



## **Part III. Items to Bring**

Cash (HKD, GBP and Euro)

Credit Card and ATM Card

Passport

Confirmation Letter

Power Bank

SIM card

Backup smart phone (for receiving calls from Hong Kong)

Camera

Winter Clothing

Medicine

Laptop

## **Part IV. Useful Links and Contacts**

HKUST SBM study abroad

<http://undergrad.bm.ust.hk/exchange/outbound-exchange/exchange-choices>

City University Timetable

<https://sws.city.ac.uk/tt1819/default.aspx>

City University Courses and Syllabus for Exchange Students

<https://www.city.ac.uk/study/international/exchange-and-study-abroad/study-abroad-programme/business-finance-and-management>

Skyscanner

<https://www.skyscanner.net/>

GoEuro (to search for transportation in Europe)

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

Hotels.com

<https://zh.hotels.com/>