

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

ALLIANCE MANCHESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL

EXCHANGE REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

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YEAR 3, MARKETING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

FALL 2019

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MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG

September

Since Welcome Week started on September 16th, I arrived a few days earlier on the 13th to settle in. I was surprised to be welcomed with blue skies and a very comfortable breeze upon my arrival. As it was the Mid-Autumn Festival, I hopped on the train down to London to see some friends the day after my arrival before the Welcome week. I also visited The Tate Modern Museum during my first visit to London. There are many welcome parties and social events around the university for all students to register and attend. Make sure to check out the events from your student accommodation and the student union, the first few weeks of school are packed with activities for you to explore the city and nightlife. The business school will organize various socials catered entirely to exchange students to attend. We went on an amazing hike in the Peak District area with lunch in an ancient restaurant organized by the university. Manchester is a fairly small city with clean air and spacious surroundings, so I do enjoy walking around town. This month is mostly about meeting new people, adapting to the new environment and planning where I would want to travel around Europe.





October

My class schedule was very well planned where most of my classes are on Mondays and Tuesdays with one small lecture on Fridays. With this schedule, I was able to arrange many four to five-day trips around Europe where I have never missed any of my seminars. When I organized my trips, I try to visit countries where I have friends living there so I experience the authentic local culture and taste without investing so much research time. It is also cost-effective to do so. Several of my close friends were studying in Bocconi, hence, Milan was my first step out of the UK. I was unmindful about the pickpocketing and scamming practices around Europe which as a result, put myself into an unpleasant situation where I almost got pickpocketed (caught them in the act) and scammed in the underground metro. So please beware of your surroundings when traveling and do not carry a bag without a zipper. Although Milan did not love me, my friends and gelatos compensated for all the distress. The midterm break was at the end of October, but I did not have any midterms except for an essay to complete. Therefore, I traveled from Manchester with my friend from primary who coincidentally studies in UoM, up to Edinburgh and St. Andrews to visit other friends that study there.



November

The study break continued until the beginning of November which allowed me to squeeze in another trip to Amsterdam. Their fresh stroopwafles and Dutch pancakes are certainly worth the travel. Visiting Anne Frank House was also one of the highlights that I would recommend. Remember not to miss out on Bonfire Night/Guy Fawkes Day on November 5th for big fireworks and carnival games in Platt Fields Park. I promised my exchange friend from Norway in HKUST that I would visit her when I had the time to. Hence, Trondheim was next on the list. My trip to Norway was by far one of the best trips I have ever had with authentic Norwegian experience and I even had the chance to visit the rural areas of Skogn to visit my friend's grandparents and farm. Then, it was Greece, but none of the islands were on my agenda, instead, I visited my friend in Thessaloniki and did a road trip down to a rocky city between sky and earth - Meteora. I managed to juggle with my classwork and visit a different country almost every week this month. My birthday was at the end of the month in which my best friend flew over to celebrate with me and all the others down in London. It was another unforgettable and special birthday.





December

School is getting busier especially right before Christmas break. Three essays were packed on neighboring due dates with one group essay and two individuals. I am constantly on the “work hard, play hard” mode where time management is the key to success. Remember to plan your trips and schedule well so you will not be cramming too much when the due dates are approaching. Manchester is known for its football teams, but I am a Liverpool supporter, so I have never been to Old Trafford, and instead made a trip to Liverpool for their derby match against Everton. When Christmas is around the corner, Manchester is filled with festive vibes and Christmas markets. Their Dutch mini pancakes and mulled wine truly bring out the holiday joy within you. I applied for the alternative assessments, so I do not need to return to January to complete the exams and be with my family for Christmas and Lunar New Years. Before meeting my family in Germany, I flew to Barcelona for some iberico ham, seafood paella and tapas. Christmas was in the snowy mountains of Austria and skiing was absolutely amazing around Ellmau, Brixen and Söll. Snow sledding is also something you should definitely try when you can.



January

Before returning, I toured around Portugal and said good-byes to my friends in London. Portugal is another must-go country for any food lovers. Thanks to my travel partner, the trip was filled with constant excitement and delicious food especially. There was another essay due on the 17th of January for one of the alternative assessments which I had to complete before my flight back home on the 16th. As I had many luggage that would be a hassle to carry around, I returned back to Manchester a few days before my departure to finish packing and farewells with my friends. Saying good-bye was hard when I was leaving but I know that I can meet those that I miss sooner or later.



GENERAL EXCHANGE INFORMATION

VISA Procedures

The University of Manchester provided specific visa information through email before arrival. Please read all the emails sent from the university carefully and follow the given instructions to obtain a short-term student visa. I misunderstood and completed a survey on the official UK government website which indicated that I did not require a visa to stay in the UK. For that reason, I accidentally traveled through the e-gate with my Canadian passport before acquiring the required visa. To obtain the visa, I went through to see the Broader Force and had my exchange acceptance letter sent from The University of Manchester printed as proof to exchange the stamp.

Orientation Activities

Emails will be sent out from the University regarding orientation activities. There may be some activities that may require prior confirmation or extra costs. For example, I went on the ramble in Peak District where we needed to get our own train tickets but lunch was included after the hike. The activities within the Welcome week is compulsory and there will be a schedule provided with the specifics details.

International Services & Activities

There is an International Society at The University of Manchester which organizes many activities such as weekend trips to various cities in England, Festive Parties, cultural nights and more. However, these events tend to be very popular and spots fill up fairly quickly once the application opens so if you are interested, it is best to register early. Besides that, there is also an international team located in the Alliance Manchester Business School where you can seek assistance if needed.

Accommodations

The university gives priority to exchange students for university accommodations. There are three main locations for university accommodations: The City campus, Victoria Park Campus and Fallowfield Campus. I stayed in Whitworth Park Residence, which is one of the City campuses located right next to the student union and the main campus. It is fairly convenient with supermarkets and restaurants right across the road, but the quality of accommodation and facilities is mediocre. It is a self-catered hall with 7 people per flat where the bathrooms and showers are unisex. If you would like your own clean toilet and shower, remember to choose mostly en suites when listing your accommodation preferences. Denmark Road and the Weston Hall are high-demand accommodations with better and newer facilities.

If by any chance, you applied late or did not get assigned accommodation by the university, you can always seek student accommodations outside. The prices are around 120-150 pounds per week depending on where you are staying. Try to avoid living near Curry Mile for safety reasons.

Courses Registration

Emails will be sent from the host university with course details and syllabus attached for you to choose and register. Generally, exchange students can easily be registered in their desired courses. There is a minimum of 50 credits and a maximum of 60 credits per semester, which is equivalent to 3 - 5 courses depending on whether they are 10 or 20-credit courses. Personally, I took three 20-credit courses:

Course Code	Course Title	Assessment Method	Course Review
BMAN31461	Retail Marketing	40% Essay 60% Exam (Alternative Assessment: 100% Essay)	Generally easy
BMAN31731	Advanced Strategic Management	100% Essay	One of the best professors I have had with very interesting and applicable content. The writing assessments within the course is fairly challenging but manageable.

BMAN31911	Innovation and Markets	100% Essay	Generally easy
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Teaching & Assessment Methods

Courses are composed of lectures and seminars where attendance will always be taken during seminars. Compared to HKUST, there are more required reading materials to complete before/after class. The university focuses a lot of self-learning outside class, hence classes are very condensed. I applied for the alternative assessments for my final exams, so I could be home earlier. Therefore, my assessments were all essays based.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

The university provides one semester of free silver gym membership in the Armitage Sports Centre in Fallowfield which is around 20-30 minutes bus from the main university campus/city. There are many sports societies and even extreme sports such as the sky diving club for students to register during orientation week.

Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

With the short stay in Manchester, large banks such as HSBC and Barclays would not normally issue a card. Personally, I would advise opening a *Monzo* debit bank card to move around and these are the estimated expenses throughout my exchange:

Items	Amount (HKD)
Flight Tickets	10000
Accommodation	25000
Living Expensive	25000
Traveling	50000
Total	110000

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There are plenty of student-led clubs and societies for one to choose and join. The school also organizes events such as regular gatherings in the Business building and the annual Christmas Ball. Besides that, there are many events around the city in places like Hatch.

Health & Safety

Generally, it is advised to be registered with a GP/doctor even when you are there for one semester. The school will provide information for you to register with a GP nearby where you stay or near the campus during Welcome Week through email or physical handouts. There will be a mandatory fire safety talk that you would need to attend at the beginning of the exchange.

Food

Some students live in catered accommodation where food is included. Meanwhile, most others live in self-catered accommodations in which cooking their own meals would be commonly seen. Personally, I do a lot of cooking by myself or with friends when I am in Manchester. There are many affordable food options around the campus as well such as the KRO bar, the restaurant in the Student Union with international options and Turning Tap. If you are looking for good food options around the city, you can try Crazy Pedro's for pizza, Etc Mehmet Steakhouse and Sam's Chop House for some traditional British Steak Kidney Pudding.

Transportation

The bus 147 is free for students and will take you from the main school campus to the city. As I lived very close to school, I often walked and did not use any public transportations. It is popular for students living in Fallowfield and Victoria to purchase a bus pass to migrate around the city.

Climate

Manchester is also known as “Rain-chester”. Rain is our beloved friend and you would not be surprised to wake up to a gloomy sky three or four times a week sometimes. There are blue skies and sunny weather at times but make sure to bring one or two good umbrellas that can withstand the heavy wind around town.

Communication

I purchased Vodafone in the airport at the beginning which is not a smart choice and generally more expensive. I would recommend getting it in-store in Arndale with the VOXI phone plan from Vodafone which gives you unlimited data on social media and some extra GBs with calls and texts for 10 pounds.

Cautionary measures

Manchester is relatively safe compared to other places in Europe. However, I would advise to not to stay out too late alone when you are out at night, especially in areas near Curry Mile. Make sure to keep an eye on your belongings at all times especially when you are walking beside the bike lane on Oxford Road (my friend’s phone was snatched by one of the bikers as she was walking towards school as she was playing with her phone).

Other notes

Enjoy exchange and make sure you take the maximum advantage of the amazing geographic location of UK to travel around Europe as much as possible if that’s what you enjoy! If not, then explore around Manchester and UK itself has a lot of stories to tell.

ITEMS TO BRING

- Passport & Supplementary Visa documents
- Credit cards and UK Pounds/Euros
- Laptop
- Emergency medicine
- Warm clothes (I did not bring so much and purchased more there)
- Pillow (some say it is hard to find one that suits them in the UK)
- Adaptors

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

- Short-term Study Visa
<https://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa/overview>
- Student Accommodation
<http://www.accommodation.manchester.ac.uk/>
- University Services
<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/>
- Trainline (can download the app to check and purchase train tickets around UK)
<https://www.thetrainline.com/>
- 16-25 Railcard (for discount train tickets)
<https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>