

FALL 2019 EXCHANGE REPORT
BI NORWEGIAN BUSINESS SCHOOL



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Monthly Activity Log

August

Oslo (Norway) | Warsaw (Poland)

I arrived on 12/8 with 3 other students from ust, which was just a day before the start of the orientation week. Upon arrival, we went to the SiO office to take our key and settle down in our dorm (make sure to apply for the late arrival service if you are arriving Oslo after their office hour, as the office closes quite early and you may not be able to get the key card if you haven't applied for it.)

The orientation week started the day after our arrival and it was a week full of orientation talks, student gatherings, city tours, hikes etc. We got to know some more exchange students from Hong Kong and also other countries during the week. As school commenced on 19/8, we basically spent this month exploring Oslo, buying everything we need from IKEA and getting ourselves prepared for school and the rest of the exchange. By the end of August, we went on our first trip to Warsaw, Poland.



*First hike with other exchange students
in Sognsvann, Norway*



First exchange trip to Warsaw, Poland

September

Kyiv (Ukraine) | Vilnius (Lithuania) | Riga (Latvia) | Tallinn (Estonia)

Bergen & Odda(Norway) | Copenhagen(Denmark)

The workload in BI is not heavy and we got plenty of time to travel around especially during the beginning of semester. Therefore, I went on a few trips with other exchange students from Hong Kong this month. Our visit to the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant in Ukraine was the most unforgettable experience among all, as we went to the actual site of where the Chernobyl disaster occurred and learnt a lot about the tragedy. We also went for a long and demanding hike in Odda to find one of the most famous rocks in Norway, Trolltunga. It took us around 12 hours to complete the hike but the process and the mesmerizing view we saw when we reached our destination were absolutely rewarding.



12-hour hike to Trolltunga, Odda



View from Tallinn, Estonia

October

Amsterdam & Rotterdam (Netherlands) | Iceland | Berlin (Germany)

As the courses I enrolled only got projects as assignments which can be done remotely with a computer, I got to travel to a few more places this month. I went to Iceland with some of my flatmates in Norway and we booked a camping car to travel around Iceland. I highly

recommend going to Iceland if you or your friends know how to drive, it saves you a lot of time and cost as you don't have to book the hotel and day tours. The museums in Berlin are also worth going especially for the Pergamon Museum, they house monumental buildings which are really spectacular. If you are an animal lover, the Zoo in Berlin is also something you cannot miss. It is the oldest and best-known Zoo in Germany.



Sólheimasandur plane wreckage, Iceland



'My God, Help Me to Survive This Deadly Love'

East Side Gallery, Berlin

November

Budapest (Hungary) | Helsinki (Finland)

This month, we have to start working on our projects. I went on two short trips to Finland and Hungary at the beginning of November and spent the rest of the month in Oslo catching up with schoolwork. I also visited the Oslo christmas market --- Jul i Vinterland that opened early on 16/11 with my friends and enjoyed some delicious food there. A point to note is that Norway's winter comes quite early, it starts to snow in November and the temperature drops really fast, so make sure you bring enough warm clothing.



Moomin Cafe, Helsinki



Matthias Church, Budapest



Candy apples in christmas market, Oslo

December

Prague (Czechia) | Vienna (Austria) | Bratislava (Slovakia) | Budapest (Hungary)

The beginning of the month was full of exams and project deadlines, but I was lucky to have all my exams finished on the first week. I went on my last exchange trip to Central Europe right after my last exam on 11/12. As it was nearly Christmas, all the Christmas Markets has started and Europe got a really strong Christmas vibe. We spent our time enjoying the great atmosphere and delicious food there. After that, we went back to Oslo to pack all our stuff and returned to Hong Kong on 23/12 right before Christmas.



Building snowman with my flatmates



Largest Christmas Market in Vienna, Austria

General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

After you receive the admission letter from BI, you can apply for the study permit online by making an appointment with the Norwegian Consulate. They will send you an email about the list of documents and photos you have to prepare for the application. After you arrived Oslo, BI will help you to arrange an appointment with the police station and you just have to bring the study permit you applied in Hong Kong to get the residence card. The whole Visa application process costs around \$5300.

Orientation Activities

The week before school commence is the orientation week for international students. You will be arranged in groups with other exchange students from different places and group leaders from BI will stay with the group for the week. They will arrange parties for the whole week so feel free to join them if you like to drink and meet some new friends. But if you are not a party person and would prefer other activities more, there is also a get-to-know-the-city event called Studentslippet organized by a few University in Oslo together. During the events, you can visit different cultural attractions for free, explore around the city and enjoy free or discounted food with your friends.

International Services & Activities

You can join the BI Facebook exchange group to know more about the details of events arranged for international students and you can also raise question on the Facebook page. There is an event called BI-nner which is a free dinner provided by BI every month, you just have to register in the link provided on their Facebook page to enjoy the meal. Registration is on a first-come-first-serve basis but there may still be leftover tickets in BI before the dinner starts. I would recommend to join one of the BI-nner as they did provide really delicious and traditional food to students. (They got different theme every month so make sure to check on their page to learn about the details of the dinner.)

Accomodations

There are 3 housing suppliers you can choose from including SiO, BSN and Diakonhjemmet. After choosing the supplier, you still have to decide which dorm you would like to live in and I lived in the Bjolsen Student Village operated by SiO. I chose to rent a private room and private bathroom while sharing kitchen with 5 other person. It is nice to have a shared kitchen and living room that allowed me to communicate more with other exchange students and we often have meals together during lessons break. There are two supermarkets (KIWI and MENY) in the student village and it is really convenient to do our groceries.

Course Registration

You will receive the course list and timetable from BI through email about one month before school starts. Each course carry 7.5 ECTS credits and you can enrol up to a maximum of 30 ECTS credits. Make sure to plan your timetable well and prevent overlapping of courses as there is no add/drop period in BI.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

I have enrolled in 4 courses during my exchange in BI. The duration of all lessons are the same (3 hours with a 15 mins break every 45 mins). The workload is generally not high and attendance is not required. You are required to complete all the exams through a computer provided in the exam venue. Below are the details of each course :

ELE 3701 Innovation and Entrepreneurship

(Equivalent to ISOM 4020 Innovation Managment and Techonology Entrepreneurship)

This course addressed the basic processes of industrial evolution and development of new products. It also discussed what innovation and entrepreneurship are, and analyze the importance of these phenomena and how they are materializing in "real" life. The course is weighted 100% on the project paper (Max. 25 pages) and it can be written in groups of up to three students. There is a small presentation in the middle of the semester but it is not compulsory and attendance is not required.

EXC 2901 Norwegian Culture and History - An Introduction

(Equivalent to HUMA Common Core)

This course give us an insight into Norwegian history, culture and society with an emphasis on politics, economics and culture from 1814 until today. The course is weighted 100% on the final examination which includes two essay questions (3 hours). There is also one field trip to the Norwegian Museum of Cutural History and you will be asked to do a presentation about the visit. The presentation will not affect your final grade.

ELE 3775 Product and Price Strategy

(Equivalent to MARK4000LEVEL 4000-level Course in Marketing)

This course provides students with an understanding of elements that affect the success of products in the market place and how to develop strategies for successful pricing and product management. The course is weighted 70% on the term paper which can be written by a group of up to 3 students and 30% on an individual final exam whcih consists of a few short questions. The questions are similar to the past paper questions so make sure you did go through those papers before the exam.

ELE 3702 Social Entrepreneurship

(Equivalent to MGMT 2130 Business Ethics and Social Responsibilities)

This course is about social entrepreneurship as establishments of business with the core idea of solving a social or cultural problem through business means. This class is quite interactive as it involves a lot of discussion and the professor likes to listen to different opinions from students. The course is weighted 60% on a project paper which can be written by 3-6 students in a group and 40% on a take home final examination. The take home exam consists of one essay question and one course reflection.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

Students can join the gym membership in Athletica operated by the SiO. The gym room and sport facilities are located in the BI campus and also in some of the student villages. It is also a good idea to go skiing or ice skating during winter in Oslo.

Finance and Banking

I used the credit cards from Citibank and Hangseng Bank for almost all the transactions as it is convenient to use cards in Norway but you can still bring some Norwegian krone just in case your cards do not work. Remember to bring Euros as well if you are planning to travel around as in some places, electronic payment is not that common and they only accept cash especially in some small markets.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

During the orientation week, I have met some other exchange students that are interested in hiking and they actually created a hiking group to gather people who would like to find some hiking companions. It is a good chance to meet some new friends at the same time enjoying the beautiful scenery in Oslo.

Health & Safety

The air quality in Oslo is really good and most of us do not experienced nasal allergy there. You could bring some medicines with you just in case you get sick during your exchange. There is also a pharmacy inside the Bjolsen student village where you can buy most of the medicines you need. Norway is famous for being safe and it has a low crime rate, people are usually nice and friendly.

Food

It is quite costly to dine out in Oslo and there are not many choices of good restaurants, so we usually buy food from the supermarkets and cook by ourselves. KIWI, MENY and REMA1000 are the supermarkets that I usually go when I do my groceries, you can buy food at a lower price in KIWI and REMA1000 than in MENY. You can also download an app called Mattilbud to know about their weekly discount, this can save you a lot of money. I would recommend Alex Sushi, Fiskeriet and Pink Fish if you are tired of cooking and would like to treat yourself sometimes.

Transportation

Students can buy a monthly Ruter card at a discount price in all the convenient store/station help center. The card can be used in most of the public transportation in Oslo (train, tram, bus etc.) It costs 450NOK per month. There are often random inspection in different stations and even on the bus so remember to renew your ticket monthly and activate them after purchase, or else you will have to pay for around 1000NOK if you are caught using an invalid ticket.

Climate

The weather is nice and cool from August to early October, the temperature is around 15-20°C. You can still wear thin long sleeves clothing or shorts in this period. It started to get cooler in mid October and the temperature dropped below zero in November. The sun rises late and sets at around 3 pm during Winter. It snows quite often in Oslo starting from mid November so make sure you bring enough clothes to keep yourself warm.

Communication

The official language in Norway is Norwegian but almost every Norwegian can speak fluent English, so there is no need to worry about the communication problem.

Items to Bring

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- BI admission letter- Visa letter- Passport- HKID	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Credit/Debit cards- Norwegian krone- Euros
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Router for Wifi- LAN cable- Adapters- Laptop- Chargers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Summer and winter clothing- Water-proof jackets- Hiking boots/winter boots- Heat packs- Gloves- Sunglasses

Cautionary measures

Norway is a safe country so you don't have to worry much when you are staying in Oslo, but do pay more attention when travelling around Europe as in some places, it can be quite dangerous and pickpocketing is quite common especially in those famous tourist spots.

Useful Links and Contacts

1. BI portal : <https://www.bi.edu/>
2. Housing: : <https://www.bi.edu/study-at-bi/housing/>
3. Checklist for applying study permit:
<https://www.udi.no/en/checklists-container/studies-au-pair/checklist-student/>
4. Study permit: <https://www.udi.no/en/>