



EXCHANGE REPORT

# BI NORWEGIAN BUSINESS SCHOOL

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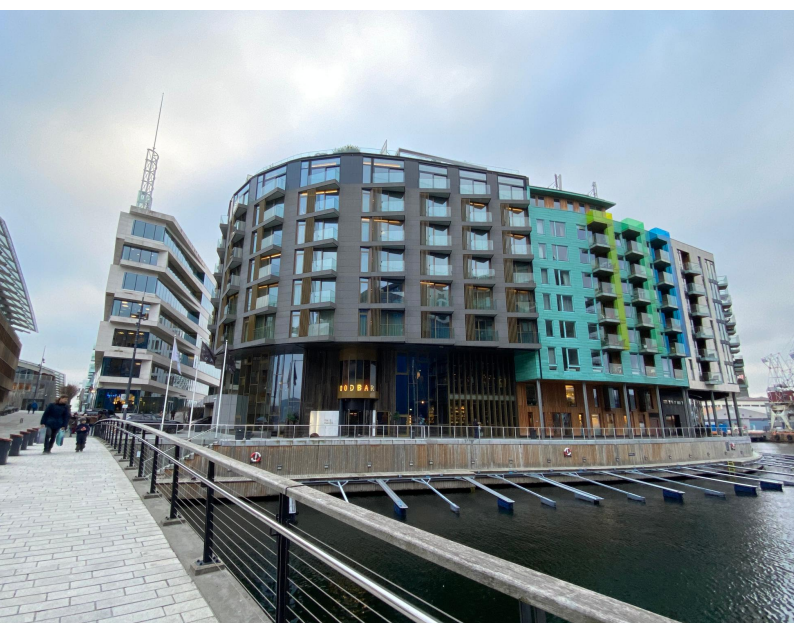
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## January

My exchange mates and I arrived Oslo at 4 Jan. To be honest, it is advised to arrive prior to 3 Jan as the orientation starts at 5 Jan, so to make sure you have enough time to settle down after a 20-hour flight. The first 2 weeks are stuffed with orientation activities. For example, on the first day, we formed groups with other exchange students and 1-2 local students, who gave us campus tour and a guide to BI.

There were tons of orientation activities held by BI, ranging from Norwegian crash course, ice skating and party. I enjoyed joining these events.

Unlike universities in Hong Kong, BI has a loosely packed schedule. So, my exchange mates and I visited most of the attractions in Oslo in the first month. To me, the most interesting attractions in Oslo are Oslo Opera House, Fram Museum and Vigeland Sculpture Park. Moreover, in Kringsjå Student Village, I could always embrace the stunning sunset outside my window.

## February

The semester has already started for a month. I continued to explore every part of Oslo, where we found the most amazing coastline, Aker Brygge. It was a harbor filled with luxurious hotels, shopping malls, bars and an art museum. During sunset, every single spot on that harbor is instagrammable. Next to Aker Brygge, the Royal Palace, the University of Oslo and National Theatre are all places that worth a visit.

Apart from Norway, I also travelled to Copenhagen. We went to the famous shopping street and pedestrian walkway, Strøget, which has a total length of 1.1 kilometers. Not to mention we visited some of the iconic places in Copenhagen, such as the little mermaid, the Carlsberg Factory, the Carlsberg Museum and finally, Nyhavn, the most colorful harbour that made us wonder if it was real.

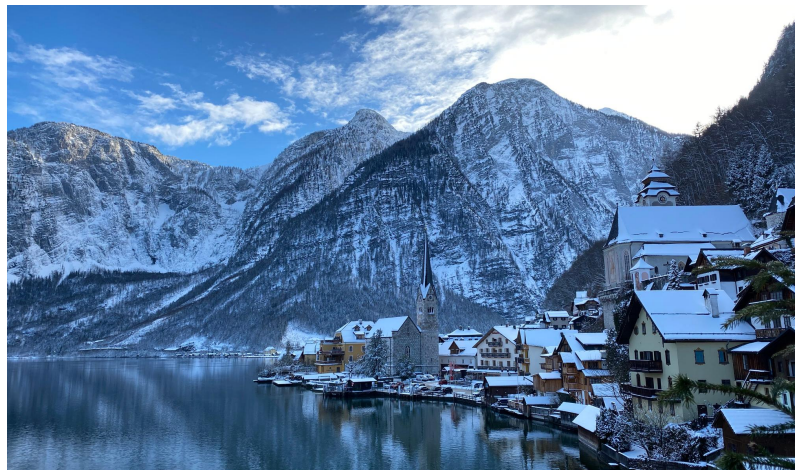


In Copenhagen, we stayed in an Airbnb near Assistens Cemetery. However, I have lived in that area for 2 times. The interiors and surroundings are poor, I don't recommend anyone to live in that area while traveling to Copenhagen, your holiday mood will be spoiled.

Towards mid-February, I took a trip to Austria and Czech with my friend in Poland. Our first station is Vienna, the capital of Austria. Although I only stayed in Vienna for 3 days, it was undeniably my favourite city. We have visited the old town, where most of the attractions are located, including the National Theatre, St. Stephen's Church and Café Central. Walking in the old town was like taking a tour of the most beautiful architectures of Europe side by side, that even a man will be astonished and grasped his camera from start to finish. Yet, none of these compared to the astounding Schönbrunn Palace.

After that, we took a train to Hallstatt, another breathtaking city of Austria. It was a fiord surrounded by snow mountains with the most spectacular view. It was a once-of-a-lifetime opportunity to embrace the natural beauty of Hallstatt. But in Winter, many attractions were closed, therefore I recommend coming to Hallstatt after late February.

After another long trip from Hallstatt, we arrived at Prague. To me, the most fascinating part of Prague was the Prague Castle and the surroundings, as it was the most preserved place. Similar to Vienna, Prague had a strong culture of café, which had become a hang out spot for the locals and an attraction to tourists. Café Louvre and Imperial Café were a must to visit in Prague as they are the oldest cafés in Europe. Yet, Czech is a considerably dangerous place, so beware of pickpocketing and always look out for your friends.







## March

While the majority of courses in BI does not consist of a mid-term examination, I had an exam in early March. Following the mid-term, I planned a trip to Stockholm, Copenhagen and London with my friend in Poland. In Gamla Stan, the old town of Stockholm, we joined a tour that walked us through the historic and touching moments of this island, like the Stockholm Massacre and the later vengeance by the Swedish Nobles. This time in Copenhagen, we took a boat in Nyhavn to view the city from the lake and visited new places such as Kastellet and Changing the Guard Ceremony of Amalienborg Palace.

Originally, London was not part of the journey. But at that time, COVID-19 was storming some of the major cities in Europe and our universities announced the arrangement of online lecture. So, we decided to seize the chance and go to as many places as we can before the pandemic spreads. In my opinion, London was second to Vienna. My beloved attractions were the Westminster Abbey, London Tower Bridge and the British Museum. The city was so fantastic that you can find all sorts of entertainment in the heart of London, football, opera, countless number of museums and literature. Yet, towards the end of our trip, the virus was spreading like wildfire and our host countries decided to close the border. Therefore, we were forced to return to Oslo.

During late March, we were under home quarantine in Oslo. It was a tough time as we were only allowed go out on the first day for grocery shopping. Luckily, we have thoroughly explored the city. Something really funny happened back then though, my friend decided to suspend her exchange program and resume online study of HKUST. In light of the time difference, she had to get up at 5 and take an hour and a half lecture, then go back to sleep until afternoon.



## April

It was the last month of the semester in BI so I was busy studying for finals. Meanwhile, we were still under home quarantine, but we finally managed to contact the airline and reschedule our flight to April 7. After coming back to Hong Kong, we went to an Airbnb to continue our home quarantine in Hong Kong.

## May

\*not much information can be provided due to COVID-19\*



## *1. VISA Procedures*

VISA application starts from the UDI website. The website contains all information and also a step-by-step guide to apply for each type of VISA. On the website, you will be given a checklist of documents to prepare and an online application form, then you will be asked to register in the application portal of another website, the VFS.GLOBAL, where you can schedule an appointment to VISA application centre in North Point. On that day, bring along the required documents and the application fee (around \$3200 at my time) to the centre. Generally, the application process is really fast, only takes 1 month. Mine only took me 15 days. After arriving at Oslo, you are required to apply for the residence permit at the local police station, more information will be provided in the campus on the first day of orientation week. Most importantly, remember to bring the study permit along with you to Norway.

## *2. Orientation Activities*

From the BI exchange program fact sheet, the orientation week is mandatory and I really recommend you to attend the activities. Orientation includes a talk of how to survive in BI and Oslo, mingling session in a bar, city tour, campus tour, ice skating and barbeque. My advice is to join the orientation activities as early as possible to make more friends.

## *3. International Services and Activities*

First of all, there is a Facebook page for exchange students. Secondly, the BI exchange office is really helpful that they will answer all your enquiries, ranging from course registration to accommodation. Also, there will be a Whatsapp group for all the exchange students in BI, which will come in handy if you are looking for groups to visit the city or any other things. However, the whatsapp group will sometimes be exploited in promoting non-BI activities or questionnaires.

## *4. Accommodation*

BI was pretty good in providing accommodations to exchange students, that all exchange students are guaranteed housing before the pre-application deadline, October 1. You should apply for housing as soon as possible after being nominated by HKUST. In terms of the choice, you have a wide range of student villages and room types to choose from. According to former HKUST exchange students, the most popular choice is Kringsjå Student Village, from SiO. In my opinion, the village was great, it consists of a huge right on the spot supermarket KIWI and a gym offered by SiO. Plus, the gym membership fee is quite cheap. Another tip is to arrive earlier. I was kind of late compared to others so I was left with an old and distant building in the village.



## 5. Course Registration

Usually, the course list is the same each year. So, you can refer to the course lists of previous years as a reference. After BI accepted your application, you will be able to login to the BI portal, where you can find a detailed course list of the coming semester. The first date of course registration is on early December and exchange students can register 4 courses only

## 6. Teaching and Assessment Method

First of all, due to COVID-19, except the mid-term exam of EXC3673 - Corporate & Financial Risk Management, all examinations are taken online. Secondly, compared to the intensity in HKUST, getting a pass in the following courses is a piece of cake. Even if you want to get good grades, all you have to do is attend lecture, revise the lecture notes and complete past papers before exam.

Course	Teaching	Assessment	Comment
<b>ELE3701 – Innovation &amp; Entrepreneurship</b>	The course consists of lectures and a mini case study in the beginning of the semester. 3 hours per lecture and 1	Project paper - 100%  The final grade is only based on the project paper. No attendance taking and the project plan and presentation does not count towards the final	This course is pretty inspirational and has a light workload because no attendance taking.
<b>FIN3617 – Behavioural Finance</b>	The course consists of lectures and case studies. 3 hours per lecture, 1 lecture per week.	4 Individual assignments – 10% 3 Group case studies – 20% Class participation – 10% Final exam – 60%  The final grade is based on 4 individual assignments, 3 group case studies, class participation marks and final exams. Class participation includes answering question and attending lessons.	This course has a rather heavy workload. Starting from the second or third week of the semester, you must hand in assignments weekly before the next lecture. Also, each lecture there will be attendance taking. The case studies are not that difficult, the questions are quite easy, the reason for these group assignments is to ensure you read the cases prior to the class. The final exam is not complicated.



<b>ELE3736 – Real Estate Finance</b>	The course only consists of lectures, although there will be instructor-guided problem solving in class. 3 hours per lecture and 1 lecture per week.	<p>Final exam - 100%</p> <p>The final grade is only based on the project paper. No attendance taking and no group projects.</p>	This course has a light workload because the assignments are optional and just for your own understanding. However, when I registered this course, it is an 8:45 session so choose wisely or you may skip some lectures. The final exam straight forward and should be easy for finance students who have studied FINA2303.
<b>EXC3673 – Corporate &amp; Financial Risk Management</b>	The course consists of lectures and a trading simulation. 3 hours per lecture, 1 lecture per week.	<p>Mid-term exam – 20%</p> <p>Final exam – 80%</p> <p>The final grade is based on mid-term and final exam. No attendance taking, no group projects.</p>	This course has a medium workload because of the extra readings and the mid-term exam. You are asked to study the readings prior to lectures and the professor will actually ask questions based on these readings. Moreover, the final exam consists of a considerable amount of conceptual questions, and the exam covers both readings and lecture notes. Also, as I recall the comments from previous years exchange students, this course is quite demanding because in order to pass the course, you must pass the mid-term exam. From my own observations, there are a few students in the class who are retaking the course.

## 7. Sports & Recreation Activities

SiO provided gyms in various locations, including Kringsjå Student Village and BI campus. In my opinion, the gyms are great. The membership fee is around 200 kroner per month, the gyms are quite spacious. Even in popular locations such as Kringsjå Student Village and BI campus, you can always find vacancies. However, you have to be familiar with the terms as I got invoices from the gyms even after I terminate the housing.

## 8. Finance & Banking

Norway and the entire Scandinavia are credit-card-friendly countries that some of the place do not accept cash. As far as I know, even the locals don't have cash with them. So, make sure you have a credit card that can be used in Norway and the extra charge is not too high. Here is a rough break down of my expense:

Expense item	Amount (HKD)
<b>Flight</b>	4000
<b>Accommodation</b>	22,000
<b>Transportation (within Oslo)</b>	1600
<b>Food (within Oslo)</b>	12,000
<b>Travel (outside Oslo)</b>	30,000
<b>Others (sightseeing in Oslo, etc.)</b>	5000
<b>Total</b>	74,600

## 9. Social Clubs and Networking opportunities

I didn't join any clubs in BI, but they do have a promotion week. So, anyone interested can pay a visit. For networking opportunities, I don't think there is any.

## 10. Health and Safety

Norway and other Scandinavian countries are relatively safe, even compared to Hong Kong. Once, I lost a wallet in the metro station and didn't notice until after 30 minutes. Luckily, I was able to get it back from the lost & found. But you are strongly advised to bring your own medicines. Although there are tons of local clinics, you will have a hard time looking for the right medicine, google translate can't really help in this special situation.

## 11. Food

To be honest, eating out in Oslo is pretty expensive, nearly the most expensive place in the entire Scandinavia. For example, the local McDonald's costs around 70-100 kroner per meal, regular restaurants cost at least 150 per dish, not to mention fine dining. Even the local fast food shop costs around 70-90 kroner. So, my advice is to cook for yourself and buy groceries from Grønlands. KIWI and Rema 1000 are also pretty affordable supermarkets.



## *12. Transportation*


Transportation in Oslo is quite simple, you have to buy a travel card (Ruter). Then, top up the card every month and choose the monthly student card option, costs around 400 kroner. The travel card covers most transports in Oslo, metro, bus and tram. However, the train from Oslo airport to the central station is not included. For the airport express train, you can download an app called "Flytoget" and buy a ticket using credit card.

## *13. Climate*

Oslo has a quite unique climate. In winter, it may have as short as 6 hours of daytime, from 9 am to 3 pm. In Spring, the daytime increases around 30 minutes per week. In early April, the sun stays up until 10 pm, pretty amazing huh. Also, temperature in Winter can be as low as -15 degrees, so prepare a lot of heattech and outer wears to keep yourself warm. In Summer, it generally goes to 20-25 degrees.

## *14. Communications*

Almost all Norwegians speak English, their English level is like the Hongkongers. In terms of data network for your mobile phone, I strongly advise you to buy all the phone cards in Hong Kong or from Taobao. The local phone plans are overpriced, if not crazy. It costs around 200 kroner to get a plan with 3 gb of data.

- 1.Credit card and some euros (travel)**
  - 2.Passport and study permit**
  - 3.WIFI router and LAN cable**
  - 4.Laptop, notebook and pencil case**
  - 5.Adaptor and charger**
  - 6.Appropriate outer wear (gloves and scarves are a must)**
  - 7.Personal medicine**
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## ***UDI website***

<https://www.udi.no/en/>

## ***BI Page***

<https://www.bi.edu/>

## ***Exchange info by BI***

<https://www.bi.edu/programmes-and-individual-courses/exchange-programme/>

## ***Course list (Autumn & Spring)***

<https://www.bi.edu/programmes-and-individual-courses/exchange-programme/bachelor-course-list-autumn/>

<https://www.bi.edu/programmes-and-individual-courses/exchange-programme/bachelor-course-list-spring/>

## ***Housing***

<https://www.bi.edu/study-at-bi/housing/>

## ***Other practical info***

<https://www.bi.edu/study-at-bi/international-students/practical-info/>