



EXCHANGE REPORT

University of Warwick, UK

Warwick Business School
Spring 2022

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Monthly Activity Log	2
General Exchange Information	5
<i>Visa Procedures.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Orientation Activities</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>International Services and Activities.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Accommodations</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Courses Registration</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Teaching and Assessment Methods</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Sports and Recreation Facilities.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Finance and Banking.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Health and Safety</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Food</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Transportation</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Climate.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Communication.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Cautionary Measures.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Other notes</i>	<i>8</i>
Items to Bring	9
Useful Links and Contacts.....	9

MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG

January: Spent it in Hong Kong due to flight delays and cancellations. Arrived in London on 31st January after being threatened by Warwick to cancel my exchange position.



My dorm when I just checked in



The geese in the courtyard outside the hall

February: Attended my seminars/tutorials and met my classmates and professors for the first time. Traveled back and forth between London and Warwick, and managed to make a day trip down to Brighton.



Brighton Pier



Went horseback riding in Hyde Park

March: I submitted my first assignment for my marketing module and went to Venice for the weekend.

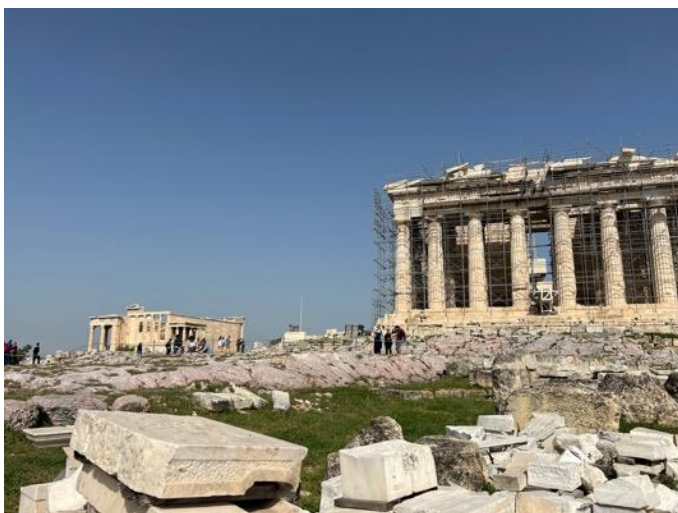


Rialto Bridge from a gondola in Venice

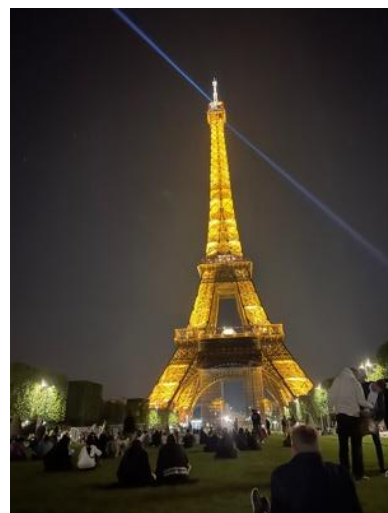


The cherry blossoms in Hyde Park

April: As classes had ended by this time, I traveled to Greece and France and completed my remaining assignments while traveling.



The Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens



Do I really need to caption this?

May: I traveled to Italy where I met up with some of my HKUST friends on exchange in Europe.



Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan



Villa Carlotta in Tremezzo, Como, Italy

June: After seeing my mum in London, I flew to Thailand for a 2-week stay in Phuket.



Visited the Yayoi Kusama exhibit in the Tate Modern



Lilypads at Ma Doo Bua Phuket

July: Finally returned to Hong Kong by the 1st of July and quarantined for 1 week.

GENERAL EXCHANGE INFORMATION

VISA PROCEDURES

I visited the UK on a UK passport, so I did not need to apply for a visa to enter or study there. One thing to note is that if you need a visa to attend Warwick, any absences might impact your ability to continue your exchange there.

ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

As I joined the semester late (about 1 month into the start of the Spring semester), I missed all of the orientation activities.

I was able to speak to the exchange course coordinator and my personal tutor, who were both very helpful in making sure I got to campus and could keep up with my studies while I was still in Hong Kong.

INTERNATIONAL SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

I received an invitation from a Warwick Student Ambassador to attend a short meeting online to see how I was adjusting to Warwick. However, as attendance was not compulsory, I did not meet with them.

ACCOMMODATIONS

I started applying for accommodation right when the applications for the Spring term started. Be sure how long you will be staying on campus, as I was only able to get "Spring term only" housing, which is right up until Easter break (35 weeks). It would be more convenient for you, especially if you are doing the full term (including spring and summer term), to apply for housing that lasts for that period, which is up till the end of July.

There is a separate portal on which to apply for accommodation, and you can browse through which accommodations are to your liking. You can choose up to 6 halls, of which 3 must be ensuite. My recommendation is to choose ensuite options close to WBS, Lakeside, Sherbourne, and Heronbank.

I was initially placed in Westwood accommodation. All the rooms at Warwick are single rooms, meaning you don't have any roommates, but this particular hall had a bathroom shared between 4 people. I applied to swap my hall to the 3 options mentioned above and managed to get Heronbank, an ensuite much closer to WBS. One quirk about the doors is that they lock from the inside, and when you leave, you need to lock the door again with another swipe of the key fob. I lived with an unlocked door for a few days before figuring out this system. Nothing is provided in the room except toilet paper, so maybe bring a set of bed sheets and towels for your first few days and decide if you need to buy more from town later on.

Warwick students are expected to cook more as there isn't any place for food on campus. Deliveroo is quite good there though, and it's a short walk to the bus stop at the main campus area if you want to go out.

COURSES REGISTRATION

Unlike HKUST, it is quite easy to be assigned to modules. You simply need to apply on the my.wbs portal during the stipulated time frame and you will most likely be put into the module if there are no time clashes. I selected based on my personal preference after doing course mapping back at HKUST. I was in Global Issues in Marketing and Business Law 2. You don't have to fulfill the prerequisite to join modules listed as "2", as confirmed several times with the WBS office and my personal tutor. It was a bit more challenging, but I still obtained decent grades in the course.

On the my.wbs portal, you can apply for an Unusual Option, meaning a course carried by another school. I applied for the Clinical Microbiology course held by the Life Sciences school after contacting their exchange director. However, I eventually was taken out of the module due to the WBS office later deciding that I should "never have been put in the module" as it had assessment methods that didn't apply to my term of study. My advice is to try to make friends with the WBS Undergraduate office employees, so they will respond to your emails faster. It takes about 4 business days for them to respond, so sometimes I would make an appointment with the WBS UG team on the WBS website.

TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

As I had applied to be a Spring Term only student, my term essentially ended by late March. Usually, the term ends in July, so if that's a concern, especially for those of you who will be interning in the summer starting June, you can apply for a summer term exclusion. In perusing the course list, I made sure to choose not only courses that could be transferred back to HKUST but also those that had Spring Term only assessment methods and all individual assignments. These are not exams but usually are written assignments. I had 3 written assignments across two modules and no group projects. It was quite a change from the assessment methods at HKUST, which are usually MCQ. My final assignment for Business Law was a 3,000-word essay. For Global Issues in Marketing, I initially wrote an assignment on a case study for 1,500 words. After receiving feedback, I completed the "Visiting Student Assessment" which was another essay of 2,000 words.

Face-to-face teaching had completely resumed at Warwick, but lectures are usually recorded and reuploaded online. Sometimes they are even recordings from the previous year. Attendance at lectures is not required. Usually, they are held about once a week.

The remaining teaching is done by tutorials in small groups. You are encouraged to prepare for the tutorials by reading material uploaded by the TA, and you have the chance to answer questions and discuss with other students. However, the quality of your participation was not counted in my tutorial sessions. On the my.wbs portal class forum, you can try to swap tutorial sessions with other students. Attendance is strongly encouraged at these, and your attendance will be formally monitored every other week (i.e. 2, 4, 6, 8), etc. and this is called a "monitoring point". Over the academic year, you can miss 8 monitoring points. It will be recorded by your personal tutor. According to my personal tutor, missing more than 3 monitoring points may impact your visa.

SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

I lived in Heronbank and had a great view of the Sports Hall from my window. However, due to COVID concerns, I did not really visit the Sports Hall or gym.

I had the chance to visit Moor Farm Stables, which was the place that the Warwick Horse Club rides regularly. While it was quite a rewarding lesson, it was a bit of a hassle getting there without a car.

There are also other things to do in Coventry or Royal Leamington Spa, such as go-karting or ice skating.

FINANCE AND BANKING

Within a few days of arriving in the UK, I applied for a Monzo card. Monzo is a fluorescent pink debit card that sends you real-time spending notifications and provides a budget for your reference via their app. It was my go-to card while I was in the UK and Europe, and it offers the BEST exchange rate you can imagine. Exchange your HKD into GBP and put it all into Monzo. You won't regret it. However, you have to be in the UK and have a contact address there to apply for one successfully. My friends who study in the UK on a visa also agree that Monzo is a great choice and easy to use. Another reliable virtual bank is Revolut, but I've personally had no experience using it.

Shops and services in the UK are pretty much cashless unless they are trying to evade taxes. You only need to go out with your debit card or your mobile phone and you are set. Try to avoid using your Hong Kong credit card as that incurs a fee of 2.5% per transaction. It's more cost-effective to pay the bank transfer fees in one go and just use a local debit card all the way.

I applied for the HSBC World Debit card, but I quickly abandoned it in favor of using Monzo. However, you can look into that if you're an existing HSBC customer and are against applying for another card.

Things are way more expensive in the UK than in Hong Kong, so be prepared and budget for that when you get there. I spent quite a bit of time in London as well, so that was significantly more expensive than Warwick, which is in the UK Midlands area.

SOCIAL CLUBS AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

I didn't join any clubs or network with many people. I only spoke to just the people I met in my tutorial discussions and some of my high-school friends who ended up studying there.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The UK was completely maskless when I was there. The people who wear masks are usually tourists or Asians. In terms of medication, they have all the Panadol that we have in HK, but drugstore brands are usually cheaper if you're looking for ibuprofen or paracetamol. Their allergy medication is slightly different as well, so be careful if you are prone to hay fever, especially with the pollen in the springtime.

In my opinion, Coventry is a bit dodgier than Royal Leamington Spa, but I would avoid being in either place alone after dark. Uber seemed reasonably okay, but I would probably opt for public transport back to Warwick as there usually are a lot of other students there waiting for a ride as well.

FOOD

As I mentioned above, there isn't any food on campus except Pret a Manger. There's a Co-Op supermarket on campus where students sometimes buy food, but it's cheaper to buy from Coventry or Leamington. Buy your own pots and pans from Poundland or something as there's only a burner provided in the shared kitchen, and the fridge is a free-for-all so just try to carve out space aggressively.

I tried a few restaurants that were good near Warwick, including Jinseon Korean BBQ and Taste Vietnam. The latter made the best spring rolls that I have ever had in my life. The KBBQ is served over real charcoal, which made for a very authentic experience. I also went to Giggling Squid in Leamington which served nice Thai food. There is a lot of Asian food in the area and many Asian supermarkets as well, but expect these items to be quite a bit pricier than in Hong Kong.

TRANSPORTATION

You can download the Warwick app and it tells you when the next buses to Coventry and Leamington Spa are due to leave/arrive. The central bus stop is quite convenient and it only takes about 20 minutes to get to town. Uber is also a good choice, but expect prices to be much more expensive compared to the 2GBP for each ride. You can look into getting a student card for an even better rate, or a railcard if you are planning to be traveling within the UK. Oyster card is good for the Tube system in London.

Other ride-sharing platforms that I used in the UK are Bolt and Freenow. The prices are similar to Uber, but Freenow also offers black-cab hailing services. I found Freenow cars to be the cleanest and Bolt cars the dirtiest. However, many drivers work for 2 or 3 companies. I sometimes checked all 3 to find the best price before choosing one.

CLIMATE

I fully expected it to be raining all day every day, but the amount of sunlight I saw really surprised me. You definitely need down jackets to swap around as I was wearing down jackets up till the end of March. After that, it gets a bit warmer, but don't expect temperatures to go above the 20s until mid/late May or early June. People don't usually bring an umbrella out, they just wait somewhere for the rain to stop. I usually went out with a hood in the rain as it's not too heavy.

COMMUNICATION

I got a pay-as-you-go card from Three when I got to London, but I've heard good things about giffgaff as well. Most of these sim cards have free data for when you travel to Europe, which is quite convenient.

CAUTIONARY MEASURES

I think my main piece of advice is to properly budget for your trip. I spent a bit more than I planned to while I was abroad, but this does happen to most people.

Also, be careful walking alone at night and try to stay in more crowded places. The security in the UK and Europe is nothing compared to that of Hong Kong; I once witnessed a robbery on the streets of Paris where a motorcyclist snatched a man's wallet right out of his hands. Don't expect the European police to be much help if any of your stuff is unfortunately stolen. Keep bags and valuable items inside your coats.

OTHER NOTES

You will receive your transcript in about mid-late July on the HEAR platform. You will receive emails about this from Warwick directly.

You can ask the Exchange office for my contact if you want to know more about my experience in Warwick, London, or traveling in Europe.

ITEMS TO BRING

1. Passport
2. Important documents
3. Debit card/ATM card
4. Clothes and shoes
5. Bedsheets, linens, duvet
6. Laptop, electronics, chargers
7. Toiletries
8. Warm jacket (down)
9. Heattech inner layers

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

Accommodation

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation/studentaccommodation/apply/22/new>

<https://www.accommodation.warwick.ac.uk/apply/>

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation/studentaccommodation/undergraduate/ugresidence>

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/residentiaallife/lifeinhalls/yourroom/#allocations>

Email: accommodation@warwick.ac.uk

Course registration, teaching, and assessment methods

<https://my.wbs.ac.uk/?event=login-direct>

<https://my.wbs.ac.uk/-/academic/20778/resources/in/1388385/>

[https://my.wbs.ac.uk/\\$/\\$/\\$/event/cmsfile/t/item/i/1400407/v/2/f/1/n/WBS-Module-Applications-2022-23-What-you-need-to-know-Warwick-Non-WBS-Students.pdf](https://my.wbs.ac.uk/$/$/$/event/cmsfile/t/item/i/1400407/v/2/f/1/n/WBS-Module-Applications-2022-23-What-you-need-to-know-Warwick-Non-WBS-Students.pdf)

Email: undergraduate@wbs.ac.uk

Finance and Banking

<https://monzo.com>

<https://www.revolut.com>

Communication

<https://www.three.co.uk/payg-data-packs>

<https://www.giffgaff.com/pay-as-you-go>