

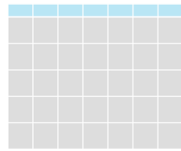
EXCHANGE REPORT: BI NORWEGIAN BUSINESS SCHOOL

Spring 2021–2022



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MONTHLY LOG : JAN

On January 5th, 2022 I landed in Oslo and kickstarted my exchange journey. At the time, it was peak winter, resulting in lots of snowfall and minimal daylight. The sun would rise at around 9 am and set by 3:30 pm. I would recommend vitamin pills to help adjust to this change. I made my very first friends in the three-day quarantine, which was a compulsion given the pandemic. All costs from meals to living were borne by the university as long as we kept our receipts and asked for reimbursements. In quarantine, we were allowed to go for walks with others in the hotel but had to stay away from public areas. After 3 days, we were allowed to go to our respective accommodations. I had a single studio in Bjolsen. As it was not communal, I had to get my own cutlery and router. Since most stores are shut on Sunday, I would recommend making a list of things you need to get and planning around the weekend.



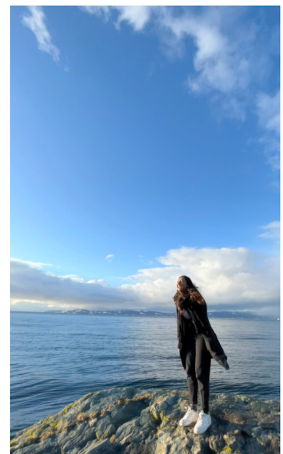
From January 10th, we had many orientation activities all of which were planned by the school. These activities allowed us to familiarize ourselves with the campus, the city, and the transportation, and meet new faces.

MONTHLY LOG : FEB

This was the month we caught the Northern Lights and I made domestic trips in Norway (Tromsø and Trondheim). Tromsø is a city where the Northern lights are said to have high visibility. That being said, we did not plan our trip completely around the Northern Lights as we didn't want to come back disappointed in case of bad weather. We got an Airbnb on an island which allowed us to go on many hikes and cross many borders (Finland and Sweden: The Cairn). We got to see the Northern Lights from the cable car on our last night :) I recommend getting cold cream as it is a lot colder and sensitive skin does react.



Following my Tromsø trip, I took a trip to Trondheim where I met some of my high school friends. Trondheim is known to be the Technology capital and the former capital. One can get from one end of the city to the other by simply just walking. The old town has a compact center and unique architecture. On the second day, we went skiing! Skiing in Trondheim was fun as it is rich with snow and not too icy:)



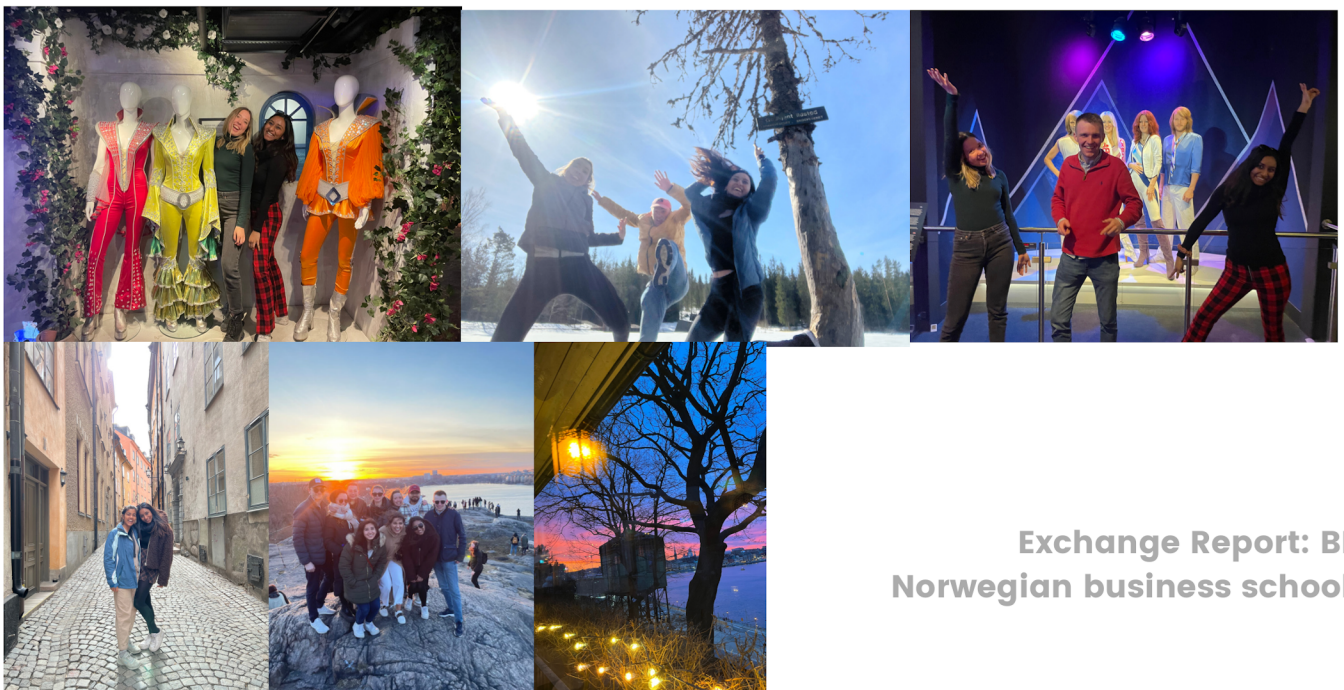
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MONTHLY LOG : MARCH

At the beginning of this month, I experienced my very first Biathlon! Being brought up in Asia my entire life, I had never heard of this sport but since my friend was volunteering, I got free tickets. In the eyes of Europeans, this seemed to be as big as Olympics as it was competitive yet friendly. This was an experience in which I not only got to learn a new sport but also meet people from many different backgrounds!



Towards the end of March, we took our first trip out of Norway to Stockholm Sweden. We went there by train and came back via flight as that was the most cost-efficient way. Our trip to Stockholm was relatively short (3 days 2 nights) but we explored several places such as but not limited to the Avicii Museum, ABBA museum, and Gala Stan. Since we were blessed with good weather, we got to do an early morning hike as well! As there were many HKUST students who were on exchange in Sweden, we also got to coordinate with them and catch up with them for a short period of time!



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MONTHLY LOG : APRIL



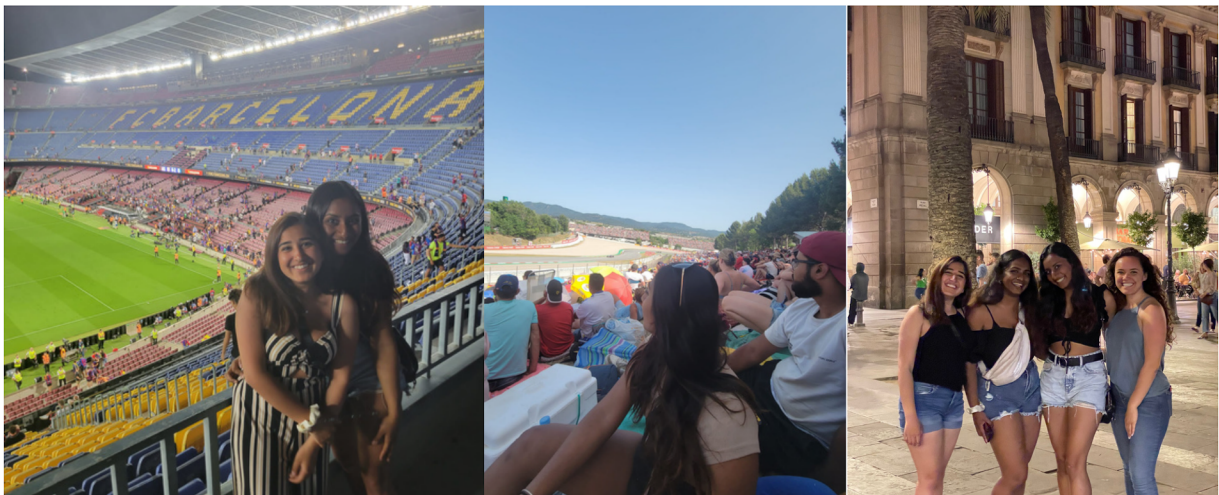
During our 10-day spring break, a bunch of friends and me planned a trip to Paris and Milan. In Paris, we got to enjoy many touristy activities such as the Louvre museum, Arc de Triomphe, and Eiffel Tower. In Milan, we saw the Duomo and then planned a day trip to Lake Como! Most importantly we had a lot of Gelato throughout the trip :) At the time, both Paris and Milan required individuals to be vaccinated with EU certification. Hence, I got my HK vaccination EU certified prior to the trip!



MONTHLY LOG : MAY



May was an eventful month as we were constantly traveling but also managed to make it back in time for the national day. May 17th gave us first-hand experience of Norwegian culture from Norwegian traditional clothing to the Norwegian parade in the parliament and wrapping it up with Norwegian picnics. A lot of stores are shut on this day, so make sure to stock up! Additionally, I traveled to 3 different countries: The Netherlands, Denmark, and Spain. Amsterdam: we attended the tulip festival and cycled around the city. Copenhagen: Cheered our friend while he ran the marathon and enjoyed Tivoli (amusement park). Barcelona: F1 weekend + Barca football match: definitely a magical weekend!



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MONTHLY LOG : JUNE

June was the month of farewells :(In the start of the month, I thought I had two whole weeks. However, time flew by in no time. Hence, I would suggest making a to-do list for the last month or 3 weeks so you can optimize your time. I spent my last month enjoying the little things in Oslo. This included taking strolls in the city, around the Opera house, and visiting the Botanic garden, all of which were low effort but allowed me to spend quality time with my exchange friends. June 14th, is when I said my goodbyes and took my flight back home :(This chapter of life may have come to an end, but the memories and people I have come across are all that will forever hold a special place in my heart! Tusen Tak Oslo <3



GENERAL INFORMATION

ORIENTATION

In the first week, BI organizes a bunch of activities led by buddy leaders. This gives students the opportunity to meet new people and simultaneously familiarize themselves with the city. The 2022 buddy schedule is evident on the right and states all the activities we participated in. Participation is all optional but is a lot of fun and gives us many free experiences:)

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Monday 10 January | Get to know your buddy group: Campus tours & Buns at BI 18:00-20:00 |
| Tuesday 11 January | Discover Oslo City: Scavenger Hunt with your Buddy Group 18:00-21:00 |
| Wednesday 12 January | Relax and reload (or do something with fellow students if you want) |
| Thursday 13 January | (Digital) Buddy Group challenge: May the best buddy group win! 19:00-20:30 |
| Friday 14 January | Relax and Reload (or do something fun with fellow students if you want) |
| Saturday 15 January | Museum Visit: Roseslottet (Rose Castle) Join your buddy group on top of Oslo to get lovely views of the city surrounded by a beautiful art installation |
| Sunday 16 January | Museum Visit: Guided tour at Norwegian Museum for Cultural History Join us for a guided tour to experience what life in Norway used to be like. Sign up required. |

Health and Safety

Norway is a very safe country and people are very helpful. Most people also speak English, making it a lot easier to seek help. In terms of medical help, the procedure can often be timely and expensive. Thus, whenever I had skin problems or injuries, I would ask for help from Apotek. Apotek is the local pharmacy where the staff are relatively educated on the products and can suggest appropriate treatment. Many times they also provide trials so that you can test the product for a few days before purchase. This was very beneficial for me as it was not only cost effective but also allowed me to recover quickly.

Transportation



By purchasing the monthly student pass (400kr), one can use all forms of transportation for a discounted price. The app is known as Ruter and once you purchase the monthly pass you must activate it. If it is not activated and you are caught, you may have to pay a fine of 1000 NOK. Travel within Europe is relatively cheap if you pre-book and use airlines such as SAS, RyanAir and Norwegian airlines.

VISA PROCEDURE

The Visa procedure is relatively straightforward but is often time consuming and hence I recommend getting to it as soon as possible. The first step would be making an application on the UDI platform. I did this early November. Upon doing so, you receive a list of documents you should prepare and bring to your VFS appointment. At the time of my application, VFS was only open Monday, Wednesday's and Friday before 12 pm. After arranging all the documents stated on UDI, I booked my VFS appointment. I received my passport within a month. The Visa you receive will be a single entry along with a temporary residence permit. After arriving in Norway, you are required to book an appointment on the UDI page to receive a permanent residence permit. (approx 5000 HKD)



STUDENT ACCOMODATION

Students are given several student housing options all of which have their own perks. I lived in a studio flat at Bjolsen Student Village. I recommend this area because it is very close to BI and has a 24 hour bus making it convenient to go home at any point of the day.

Perks of having a studio flat:

- You can decide cleanliness standards (many others don't clean up after themselves in communal situations)
- Privacy

Drawbacks of having a studio flat:

- Harder to make friends in the area you are living
- Lack of communal utensils (must invest)



- 12 minutes walk to BI
- 3 minutes bus to BI
- 20 minutes bus to the city
- Bus 37 operates 24 hours

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COURSE & TEACHING

COURSE REGISTRATION: A few weeks before classes start, you will receive an email consisting of a link and excel file. The excel file includes all the courses and their timings this semester. Once you pick courses that are suitable for you and can get transferred, you use the link to fill in the form. Exchange students get priority and get classes of preference.

TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS: All classes operated at 50% capacity where you had to sign up for in person classes. More information about each course is listed below.

| Course Name | Assessment Methods | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| ELE3710: Business and Professional Ethics = MGMT2130: Business Ethics and Social Responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation and Discussion of Chapters (20%), team based - Term Paper (60%), team based - Term Paper Presentation (20%) team based | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class wasn't as engaging as expected • Workload is very manageable |
| ELE3777: Branding (eqv code: EXC3622) = MARK4450: Brand Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loreal Brandstorm (30%): team based - Case study (20%) team based -Written Examination (50%) individual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Carlos makes the class engaging and interesting • Workload is more than manageable:) |
| ELE3766: Social Networks and Communities = MARK4000LEVEL: 4000-level Course in Marketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 Individual Essays (30%), individual -Short Presentation (30%), team based - Term Paper (40%), team based | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course is somewhat engaging • Workload is very manageable |
| EXC3602: International Marketing = MARK3430: Global Marketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 Online Quiz (20%) - Case Presentation (35%) - Case Discussion (45%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course is not as engaging but scoring • Case Exam week was a bit demanding in terms of time. |

SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Norway is a country where individuals live a very healthy life and prioritize fitness. As a result, gym membership is very accessible and reasonable. ATHLETICA is the gym I joined where the monthly fee is around 299 NOK. The gym also provides free classes such as Muay Thai, Jiu Jitsu and Ultimate Rhythm, all of which become a part of your routine overtime. These classes have a growth mentality, in the sense that you can start off at a beginner level but still leave the class feeling like you have learnt a lot. In many of these classes you can make friendships that go beyond class. There is one branch of ATHLETICA at BI, making it very convenient to incorporate gymming in your daily routine.



International Service and Activities:

There is an international exchange student page on different social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. On these platforms, they plan events such as skiing meet-ups and karaoke nights.

Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities:

BI offers many clubs, all of which you can learn about in their open club session. In the beginning of the semester, different clubs put up stalls informing students about the duration, tryouts and respective seasons. BI has everything ranging from sports teams, finance societies to ice bathing clubs.

FINANCES AND BANKING

Norway is a cash-less country so ideally you would be fine with just a credit card (Visa or Mastercard). However, I recommend having some cash in case you do a group booking and have to pay friends back. Transactions through platforms such as PayPal often charge high transaction fees across continents. The table below states my approximate expenses over the last 6 months.

| Expense | Amount (NOK) |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Flight Tickets | 7000 |
| SIM (Data and Network) | 700 |
| Travelling | 45000 |
| Housing | 35000 |
| Athletica (Gym Membership) | 800 |
| Foods | 40000 |
| Transport | 1600 |
| Total | 130100 |

Communication

Communication in Oslo is convenient as most people speak English. In terms of SIM cards, I recommend you get one from HK as the local Norwegian SIM cards are much more expensive. I bought a UK SIM card (three.co.uk) from HK for 120 HKD. This allowed me to have 8 GB roaming data and free call in most European countries. Every month I would have to pay an additional 10 pounds for which I would get 8 GB data and unlimited calls. You can pay 5 pounds and top up 3 GB at anytime.

Cautionary Measures

- Make sure you know the travel restrictions for each country
- Make sure you have food for Sunday, because almost everything is shut
- Plan your schedule in a way where you can maximize travel
- Check exchange rates before changing currencies (flat transaction rate so plan accordingly)

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FOOD

Food in Norway is extremely expensive and hence the most cost effective option would be cooking majority of your meals at home. A meal at a restaurant would be at least 120 NOK. At the school canteen, meals would be ranging from 50 NOK to 80 NOK depending on what you pick. Rema and Kiwi are local supermarkets where you can find most of what you need. Meny is also a popular supermarket but it is more expensive. For cheap groceries, one can check out Gronland. Gronland is safer to visit in the day.



Oslo Street Food is a popular food court where you get multiple cuisines and a lively environment. Once in a while there are DJ's and the floor is open for dancing.

Climate

The winter weather in Oslo can go down to -5 degrees Celsius and day light hours are relatively short from 9 am to 3 pm. To increase vitamins as a result of shorter daylight hours, I took vitamin pills and strongly recommend it. In other parts of Norway such as Trondheim and Tromsø, the colder weather is more extreme and can have skin reactions. Cold Cream is recommended as it protects the skin. In summer, the temperature is relatively pleasant so make sure to bring warm/thin clothes as well!

Other Notes

Many countries in Europe still require COVID vaccinations and do not recognize the HK vaccination. I got my HK vaccination EU certified by booking an appointment at the BI clinic. As a result, I did not have to get PCR's when traveling.

ITEMS TO BRING

- ☐ Money: Credit Card (Visa or Mastercard), some cash (both Kroner and Euros). Although it is a cashless country, some cash is good for safety
- ☐ Documentation: HKID, Study Permit, Acceptance Letter/Admission Letter, Passport, Housing proof
- ☐ WIFI Router and LAN cable (not included in the SIO housing unless left behind by prior tenant)
- ☐ Study Material: Laptop, Notebook, Pencil Case
- ☐ Technology: Adaptors (Type C and Type F) and Chargers, Humidifier
- ☐ Clothes: Winter (Ski Pants, Gloves, Scarf, Thick Jackets) and Summer Wear (swimsuits)
- ☐ Personal medicine
- ☐ Dual sim phone/ extra phone in case of OTPs

USEFUL LINKS



No. 01 – VISA

<https://www.udi.no/en/want-to-apply/>



No. 02 – BI Home Page

<https://www.bi.edu>



No. 03 – BI Its Learning

<https://bi.itslearning.com>



No. 04 – Sio Housing

<https://www.sio.no/en/housing/>