

NEOMA BUSINESS SCHOOL SPRING 2022 EXCHANGE REPORT

Name: Wong Ho Heng Ivor
Year 3 BBA (MGMT & IS)



MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG

JANUARY

After a grueling 15 hours long flight, I arrived at Paris CDG Airport on the morning of Jan 6th. I then proceed to take the Metro from the Airport to arrive at Saint Lazare Train Station and take the train to Rouen which take around 1.5 hours. Although according to the fact sheet the semester starts on Jan 3rd, the actual start date of the semester depends on the course you register, so please be sure to check the official email for NEOMA to know the actual date. For me since I register a mixture of GBBA Y3 & Y4 courses my earliest course started on Jan 10. However, since the orientation day for exchange students are on Jan 8th, I arrived on the 6th.



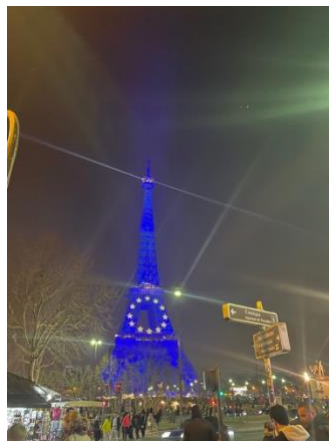
How to get to Rouen from Paris:

Flixbus: provides a direct bus from Paris CDG airport to Rouen which takes around 2 hours and 40 mins however there are usually only 2 – 3 rides per day so it might be a bit difficult to match the timing depending on your flight. Alternatively, you can also take the more frequent Flixbus from Paris La Defense to Rouen, although you would need to find your own way to Flixbus La Defense Station.

Metro + TER: Take line B (Massy – Palaiseau) to Chatelet Les Halles station, change line to RER A (Poissy) to Auber Station then walk 6 mins to Saint-Lazare Station. There you can go buy a ticket to Rouen from the counter or online through the SNCF Connect app.



For the first week, through the orientation I got to meet some other Hong Kong students that are also exchanging at NEOMA. It always good to have friends from Hong Kong and relate to the struggles in a foreign country. Local student from NEOMA also took us around Rouen and showed us the Rouen's Cathedral which is the tallest cathedral in France. Since most of us still have a few days before the semester starts, we all went down to Paris which is only 1.5 hours away by train to visit the Eiffel tower, the Louvre, and more. Paris although might not be as romantic and beautiful as the media portrays is still an amazing city



FEBRUARY

In early February, since I have a few days off I went to Spain with some of my friends, we visited Madrid, Segovia, and Toledo. Segovia and Toledo are smaller towns near Madrid and are perfect for a day trip worth a visit if you are run out of things to do in Madrid. Spanish food is one of my favorite cuisines from Tepas to Tacos all of them are amazing. A restaurant I recommend is Takos Al Pastor, amazing tacos for 1 euro. During the mid-term break (12-21/2), together with some of the exchange student in NEOMA we went on a trip in Faro in Portugal and Chamonix in France.



MARCH

For March, I figured to go a bit more travelling before I get hit with all the project/presentation and final exam deadlines. So I went to Barcelona, Porto, and Amsterdam.



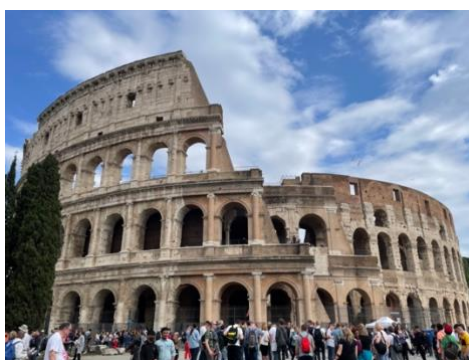
APRIL

April is the last month of the semester in NEOMA, so I took the time to explore more of France. I went to Disneyland Paris, Mont Saint Michel, Loire Valley to visit the various renowned chateaus of French monarchies. Most of the finals are scheduled between 11-22/4



MAY

After my last exam on 20/4, I checked out of my accommodation (Ango), and took the Eurostar to London from Paris. I stayed and store most of my luggage at my friends' place and also stayed in the UK for a week, where I went to Cambridge and Oxford. I then proceed to my three-week European trip. I went to Rome, Venice, Munich, Zurich, Lucerne, Interlaken, Geneva, Athens, Budapest and Madrid. My two favorite countries in Europe would definitely be Italy for its amazing food (pasta and pizza) and Switzerland for their amazing landscape and views of the nature.



After my last trip in Madrid, I headed back to London to pack my things and took the flight back to Hong Kong from London on 22/5.

GENERAL EXCHANGE INFORMATION

VISA PROCEDURES

Since you would be staying in France for over 90 days, you would need to apply for an EU Long stay visa from the French consulate. The application process can be daunting and time consuming therefore I would recommend starting to prepare and the application as soon as possible and follow the steps I list below.

1. Start preparing the documents required for the academic interview. For the proof of accommodation you would need to send an email to NEOMA to request for a provisional accommodation certificate if you are staying in accommodation associated with NEOMA. I would also recommend to request the insurance certificate from HKUST just in case they request for it.

Required Documents	For the visa section	For Campus France (Academic interview)
Long-stay visa application form, duly completed and signed (available to download, or at the French Consulate)	2 originals	
Colour ID photograph, passport size with white background (35x45mm)	2 originals	1 original
Valid passport (more than 3 months after the date of return from the journey)	original + 1 copy of identity page	original + 1 copy of identity page
Hong Kong and/or Macau ID card	original + 1 copy	1 copy
Resume (CV) with previous studies/work experiences	1 copy	1 copy
Admission letter from the academic institution in France AND payment receipt of tuition fees, if relevant	1 copy of each	original + 1 copy of each
Letter from your university/school in Hong Kong or Macau confirming your studies in France, if you are going on exchange	1 copy	original + 1 copy
Most recent official transcripts from your last place of study		original + 1 copy
If you are financing your stay: your last 3 months bank statements or bankbook in Hong Kong/Macau. If your parents finance your stay: their last 3 months bank statements or bankbook + your birth certificate + their latest income tax + the financial guarantee form. Note1: you need to have a minimum available amount of 650 EUR, or equivalent, per month of stay in France. Certificates of deposit are not accepted.	1 copy	
Proof of accommodation, or intention of stay for your first weeks in France: rental agreement or original housing certificate or a hotel booking or a letter from your host with a copy of his/her identity document and proof of address (bill less than 3 months old)	1 copy	
Round trip airline ticket or confirmed booking	1 copy	

2. After preparing the required documents send an email to study@consulfrance-hongkong.org to request for an academic interview. Don't worry the interview last around 15 mins and only ask simple questions.
3. Book an visa appointment here: [Rendez-vous \(diplomatie.gouv.fr\)](https://rendez-vous.diplomatie.gouv.fr/), after submission of all required documents, it takes roughly 14 working days for the visa to be approved. The French consulate would notify you through email and you can collect your passport at their opening hours. There is also an administration fee which is around \$500 HKD in total.
4. I also recommend checking out NEOMA Welcome site to prepare for your semester at Rouen. [Home - Welcome NEOMA Business SchoolWelcome NEOMA Business School \(neoma-bs.com\)](https://neoma-bs.com/)

ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

The International Welcome Day is held on the 8th of January, during the day they would introduce you to about the school, give you a free ISIC student card (so don't pay and apply for one in HK), the various societies, and information for you to settle in such as bank account application, CAF subsidy, transpiration pass (ASTUCE).

Virtual Tour of NEOMA Rouen Campus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-UKNcPZoe4>

INTERNATIONAL SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

The NEOMA international hub the office that are responsible for international and exchange student so if you have any questions or problems I would recommend going to their office (next to the counter at the front entrance of the school) or emailing them (though it might take a while for them to respond).

ACCOMMODATIONS

NEOMA will send you an email about accommodation around early November. There are 3 “On-Campus” options provide by NEOMA’s partner CROUS:

Ango: 9m² single rooms (shared bathroom and toilet with neighbouring room). It includes a Kitchenette (Sink, fridge, hot plate), desk, closet, WIFI, and bed. I personally lived here for the duration of my stay.

Despite its cons, I think it is a great choice especially if you are travelling and away from Rouen often since it is cheap and close to the school.

Virtual Tour of Ango: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1fst9XEc9c>

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Close to the school (10 mins walk)-An international/exchange students only dorm so great way to meet new friends-private kitchen, can cook in your room anytime-Cheap (248 euros monthly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-very small-Have to share bathroom and toilet-WIFI can be slow sometimes-Kind of far from city centre (20 mins bus)-no elevator-kind of old and dirty

Note: For checking out of Ango, you must contact the cleaning lady in advance to book your appointment. They are only available on week days 9am – 4pm excluding lunch time.

Bois: 9m² single rooms. It includes fridge, bathroom, desk, closet and bed. However you would need to share common kitchen per floor (30 rooms per floor).

Virtual Tour of Bois: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lPoxCqDOFI>

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Close to the school (10 mins walk)-private bathroom-newer dorm/modern design-Cheap (235 euros monthly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-very small-Have to share kitchen among 30 people-Kitchen is very dirty-Kind of far from city centre (20 mins bus)

Pleiade: 20m² single rooms. By far the largest and best on campus accommodation. It includes private kitchen, bathroom, desk, storage room, and bed.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Close to the school (15 mins walk)-private bathroom and kitchen-newer dorm/modern design-huge room	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-only 5 rooms available-Slightly further away from school-Kind of far from city centre (20 mins bus)-Expensive (329.7 euros monthly)-no elevator

Private Housing Option through STUDPART or Airbnb: Alternatively, you can also find private accommodations through third party providers. Although these are usually bigger and better equipped and more variety of choice, it can be expensive and a hassle to deal the landlord yourself.

COURSE REGISTRATION

NEOMA will send you an email about course registration with the course catalogue around early November. You can check out course catalogue of previous semester for reference. Exchange student are allowed to mix & match courses either in the undergraduate or postgraduate (only applicable to Y4 exchange students) tracks. The course add-drop period is around early December and start at 1pm French time (i.e. 8pm HKT). NEOMA website is kind

of confusing and slow, there is no confirmation email/notification after successfully registration so you just got to wait and trust that you did it right.

Be sure to refer to the Course Equivalence Database or request for new course mappings to plan your credit transfers to full fill your major requirements.

TEACHING & ASSESSMENT METHODS

Most courses have one class every week, each class is 3 hours long with a break in the middle, so maximum of three classes per day. Teaching atmosphere in NEOMA is pretty chill and most professor encourage participation and attendance. Overall compared to HKUST workload is pretty light.

Data Analysis & Business Intelligence (ISOM 3000+ Elective): The course is an overview of the various important concept and theories in data analysis and business intelligence, including basic excel pivot table/charts skills, data mining concepts, and database structure etc... No coding experience/knowledge is required. No attendance required. Case study homework every week, a case study presentation and a final exam.

Leadership and Organization Development (MGMT 3120) : The course goes over several leadership theories such as resonate leadership, equality and inclusion etc... This course only have in person class every other week with a e-session in between. E-session consist of required readings/videos and worksheets to complete. Attendance and participation is required. Bi-weekly group work, final group presentation and final exam.

Strategic Management (MGMT 4230) : The course content have many overlaps with MGMT 3140, teaches you mainly corporate strategy. Attendance and participation is encouraged. Weekly quiz, final group presentation and final exam.

Corporate Social Responsibility (MGMT 3170): Course content is taught through weekly case studies, teaches similar concepts to MGMT 2130 however in a deeper level. This course is slightly more demanding than other course and attendance and participation is encouraged. Weekly case study write-up, and final exam.

French for Communication (A1): Unless you are extremely passionate about French culture and language I would NOT recommend taking this course. It has a high workload (Mid-term, Oral presentation, weekly homework and final exam), Attendance and participation is required.

SPORTS & RECREATION FACILITIES

NEOMA does have a Multisport hall – salle de musculation, it is equipped with basic running machines, workout machines and is free, however there aren't any free weights (i.e. dumbbell and barbells).



If you really want to work out with free weights you can head to commercial gyms in the city centre. One of my friend went to Planet Bien Etre which is around 23 euros a month.

FINANCE & BANKING

NEOMA will send you an email and on the Orientation Day instructing you how to open a French bank account (BNP Paribas). The process is pretty straight forward you just need to fill in the required documents and give them to the BNP Paribas branch near the school. Although getting your debit card and the account activated might take at least two weeks since they send it by mail. A French account is necessary to get your housing deposit back if you are living in CROUS accommodations and also very convenient for you to deposit your Euro cash and just pay via your debit card as almost everywhere accepts contactless payment in Europe.

Alternatively, I recommend to use debit cards from HK virtual banks (Mox, WeLab etc..) or HSBC One. This is extremely convenient and unlike credit cards there is no transaction fees.

Expenses	(HKD)
Accommodation (4 months + Housing Insurance)	\$ 9,000
Tuition	\$ 21,050
Travel	\$ 70,000
Living	\$ 20,000
Others (Insurance, COVID testing, Visa etc...)	\$ 1,000
Total	\$ 121,050

SOCIAL CLUBS & NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

In terms of student societies, Cultural Connection is the student organization in NEOMA specifically to help exchange students to connect with local students. They organize events and trips for exchange students throughout the semester. Alternatively there is also Erasmus Rouen, a cross school society for exchange student in Rouen, they also hold events and trips such as to Disneyland Paris or Mont Saint Michel and organize weekly parties for all exchange students. Participating in these societies is great way to socialize with students.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

I have not been to the doctor/hospital during my exchange. When I got sick I mostly just went to the Pharmacy to buy some medicines and they are usually not that expensive but still be sure to bring some medication (Panadol etc..) with you.

FOOD

Dining out in France is quite expensive average dinner can cost around 12-30 euros per person. So I would definitely recommend you to cook most of your meals to save money. I had zero experience in cooking before exchange but I think I managed pretty well. Most of the time I just cook simple pasta or steak with the occasionally fried rice or noodles here and there.

The school also has a cafeteria open on weekdays till 3pm. The food is decent and cheap (3-8 euros) a good choice if you are feeling lazy to cook lunch or you just finished your lesson and want to eat with your classmates.

Note: In France it is illegal to work on Sunday more than a certain amount of hours so most stores are closed. Supermarkets open only for the morning from 9 – 12pm, so make sure to stock up on groceries before Sunday.

TRANSPORTATION

There are two main public transportation in Rouen, the bus and Metro. The monthly pass/tickets from Astuce works for both.

If you live in Ango/Bois/Pleiade there are really three lines of bus you need to know F2, T1 and 8.

Both F2 and T1 can take you to the city centre in around 20 mins. F2 station is closer to the school while T1 is close to Ango inside University of Rouen. F2 takes you to the train station near uptown while T1 takes you more down town going alongside the river. While 8 passes by Bois and Pleiade has a similar route as F2 however slower taking around 30 mins to the city centre.

There is metro system that run across the city centre from uptown to across the river. It is a good way to travel across the city centre when you are too lazy to walk. However does not go up Mont-Saint-Aignan so you probably won't use it a lot if you live near the school.

Transportation Outside of Rouen:

SNCF: is a national train service, it is possible to take the train almost everywhere in France but it comes with a hefty price, sometime more expensive than a plane ticket. A ticket to from Rouen to Paris cost around 9-13 euros depending on the date and when you buy. Although a bit expensive it is a lot more comfortable, faster (Roughly takes an hour and 15 mins to Paris) and takes you directly to the city centre.

Flixbus: the most popular and reliable long-distance coach/bus across Europe. Prices are usually quite cheap especially if you buy it early. I do recommend downloading the app on your phone and getting the 10-15% discount code from ISIC using your student card. Although cheap I do not recommend traveling on a Flixbus over 10 hours as it is very uncomfortable.

Flights: Similar to Flixbus usually you can get cheap deals the earlier you buy your tickets especially from budget airlines like Ryanair and Easyjet. Round way tickets are usually offer a better deal as well. Other than going on various airlines website, I recommend using Google Flight or Skyscanner to search for cheap deals across different airlines.

CLIMATE

Jan – Mar: So it quite cold (0 – 15 degrees) during the early months of the year, it also rains quite a lot in Rouen so remember bring an umbrella or a water resistance jacket. During March there might be a 1-2 days of snow but not a lot.

Apr – May: The weather starts to become warmer (15-24 degrees), so remember to pack some t-shirt or spring clothes instead of all winter clothing.

COMMUNICATION

I brought the international Europe plan from my existing carrier (Smartone), with data for Europe and the UK. Alternatively you can buy sim cards in France such as from FREE or Vodaphone. I recommend getting a plan with data across Europe as it will be annoying to not have data when you are travelling outside of France.

Outside of NEOMA or touristy areas in Paris it will be quite difficult to find people that speak English (or they refuse to speak it). French people are very proud of their culture and language so I would recommend learn a few simple French phrases would probably help. Google Translate would become your most used app.

CAUTIONARY MEASURES

Although I haven't had anything stolen from me, I have heard from friends and locals that thief is quite common especially in crowded areas like Paris. Please take care of your belongings and keep them close with you at all times.

OTHERS

Items to bring:

Passport	HKID	Computer
Calculator + Stationary	Formal Shirt (For formal events)	Water proof/resistance jacket
Medicines	Hoodies	T-shirts/shorts
Copies of important documents	Water bottle	Some Asian snacks/food
Anti-thief bag	Credit/debit cards	Nail clippers
Cash (You don't need a lot)	Adaptor	Portable chargers

Useful apps/websites:

NEOMA homepage: <https://neomascol.neoma-bs.fr>

MYNEOMAGORA: [MyNEOMAGora - Accueil \(sharepoint.com\)](https://myneomagora.sharepoint.com)

Courses (NEOMA's CANVAS): [COURSES - NEOMA-BS: Log in to the site](#)

ISIC (For student discounts): [Isic.fr : La carte d'étudiant internationale](https://www.isic.fr/)

Flixbus: [Bus travel through Europe | FlixBus](#)

Skyscanner: [Book Hotels & Accommodation | Skyscanner](#)

Trainline: [SNCF Trains | Buy SNCF Train Tickets for France Online | Trainline \(thetrainline.com\)](#)

Booking.com / Trip.com

Airbnb

Google Maps and Translate