

EXCHANGE REPORT SPRING TERM 2021-22

Northumbria university, United Kingdom

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MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG

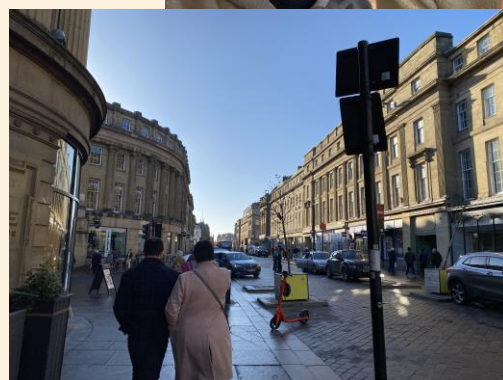
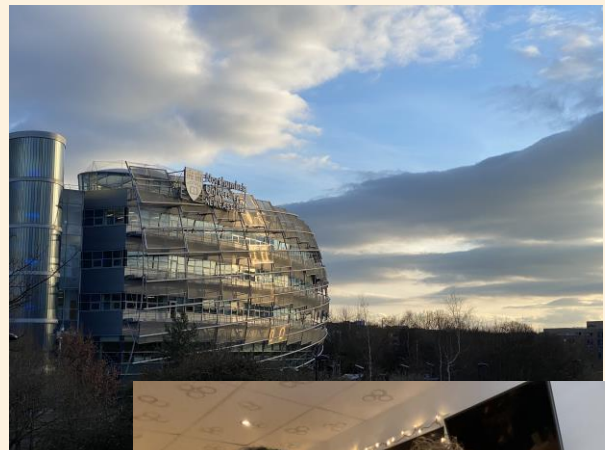
January

My original plan was to arrive early in the month and explore the city before the semester starts. However, due to flight disruptions, many flights were cancelled. At the end, I refunded both British Airways and Cathay Pacific flights and booked a KLM flight at the end of the month. (Try your best to call the airline if you need to rebook as they sometimes charge extra fees if you do it online)



The Student Union at Northumbria University provides a free of charge taxi service to the dormitory, so do remember to contact them! I

booked the New Bridge Street accommodation, which is shared by 3 other flat mates and has a private bathroom. The downside is you need buy basically everything from toilet paper to blankets. When I first arrived, the semester had not started so the city was empty. The French may disagree, but I would say that British people are one of the NICEST people out there. They showed me around the city and introduced me to the university.



February

Every Sunday there is also a Sunday Market near the Quayside. Here I got to try the famous Fish & Chips, which I later found is literally in every city or town in the UK. The bright side is you get to try food from other countries as well! Personal recommendation is the German Sausage.



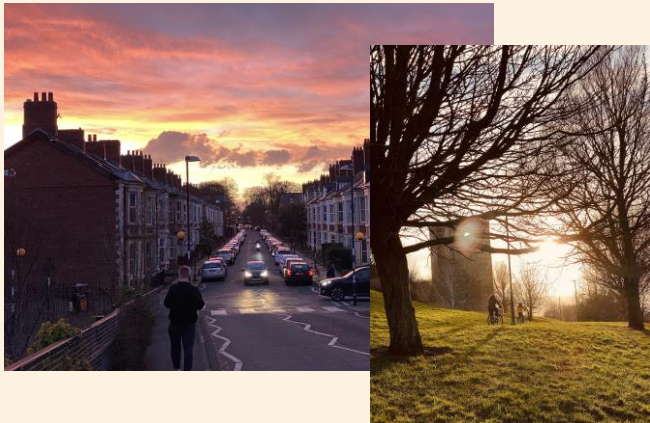
I missed the orientation held by Northumbria due to flight disruptions, but luckily there is this Erasmus Student Network (ESN) WhatsApp Group which both Northumbria and Newcastle University students can join and learn about latest activities. I joined the ESN International Welcome Party, where I met and chatted with lots of people!



(People can be quite crazy there haha but try to enjoy!) There is also this organization called Lundgren Tours which hosts guided tours to nearby cities. Best tour to travel and make friends! You may think



You may ask, what about studies? Well, the professors were nice! I became more interested in the economy after chatting with professors. However, the main point is that the workload is INCOMPARABLE to the UST workload (at least before the final exams and projects). This flexible timetable allowed me to spend a lot of time exploring the country.



If you feel homesick, there are plenty of options, for example 爆大鑊 and Bubble Cha, which greets you with Canto-pop.



February is a great time for you to make friends, especially those who are also passionate about traveling in the UK or even Europe! (Or to play Switch together) Exchange is all about getting out of your comfort zone and chat with people.



One of the things I like to do is to discuss with my flatmate Ben about all sorts of things on the news. Of course, with a cup of tea and hobnobs.



March

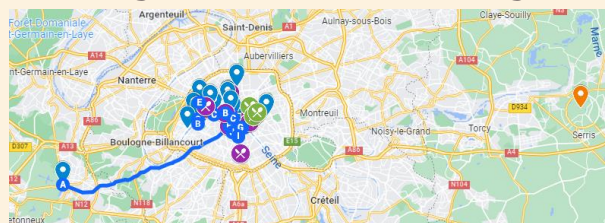
We managed to squeeze 5 days of free-time and went to Iceland.



Keeping an eye on flight prices really help us to find cheap flights to places like Iceland. I would recommend doing so in March as it is one of the months with highest chances of seeing an aurora in a year. We booked a package of tours from GetYourGuide as it will be difficult to get to places like the blue lagoon or ice caves. Do expect tours disruptions due to the infamous weather in Iceland, we for example got rescheduled or even cancelled for 3 of our day tours. Anyhow, it is worth it to pay a visit to this wondrous country.



March is also a month when should plan your easter break, which is a staggering 1 month long! Planning can be a huge headache so remember to split the work well and book tickets early for cheaper price. We used Google Map to plan our routes and an app called Tricount to split the bill. It was also convenient for us to use Apple Shared Album, which does not count against our iCloud Storage.



April

Traveling around the Europe! It is also a great time when you can meet friends who have gone abroad. There will always be ways you can save costs, for example the London pass. So never hesitate to embark on an adventure! I went to France, Spain, Italy and Croatia, which is a lot of countries and a whole lot more planning, but it was worth it. This is also a great chance for you to collect souvenirs from various countries, or to write postcards.



May & June

After a whole month of traveling, you will miss Newcastle.



May is also a month of deadlines. I wouldn't say it is as tiring as studying in UST, but I did have to write essays for every course. If you want to take a break, just go to nearby cities!



The sad thing is by the end of the month when most exams and deadlines are over, friends who are from the UK will leave and go back to their city like Leeds.



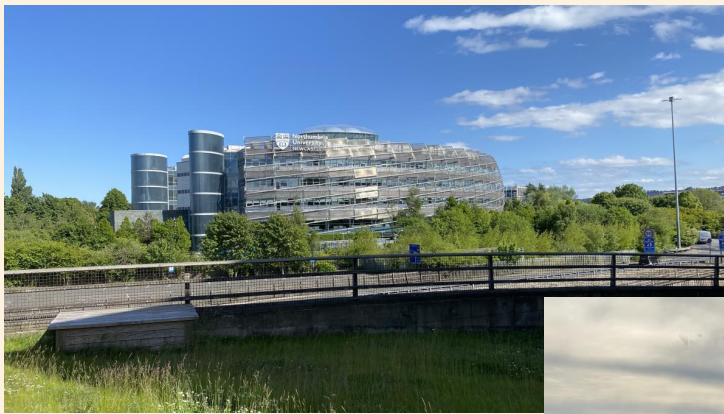
After exams and essays, I hangout with my friends for the last few times before they return to their country.



Coming back was a challenge as well. My original flight was from Newcastle to Amsterdam then back to Hong Kong, but because of flight rescheduling I must spend a night in Amsterdam and then catch a plane to Frankfurt and then finally back to Hong Kong.

TL; DR

Should you choose Northumbria University? It may not be a well-known university, but it did give me this once-in-a-lifetime journey. I had the opportunity to make friends with people from around the world and explore Europe. Before the exchange program, I challenged myself to talk with strangers, to step out of my comfort zone. This pushed me to be courageous and to practice using English. At the end, I have learned more than I expect. So, remember to **Challenge Yourself!**



RECOMMENDATIONS

NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY

1. Accommodation

This was a hard decision to make for me (and I am sure it will be for you as well haha). Personally, I chose the New Bridge Street Residence. There is a total of 7 accommodations for you to choose from. The university's website gives a detailed look at the rooms (even a 360 virtual tours) so definitely check it out. Other than that, I have concluded a few points for you to consider.

a. Check-in Date and Time

To check-in you need to go to the reception of your accommodation, which has an opening time of something like 8am to 5pm and closed for the weekends. If you miss timeslots, you will have to call the security for help.

b. Location

The so-called city centre is in the Northumberland St, which is to the left of Northumbria University. Here you can find most of the restaurants and retail stores. I will recommend choosing one that is near campus or near the city centre. It is also best to have a grocery store near your accommodation. For me, the Sainsbury's and the

Business School Campus is within 1 min walk.



c. Making Friends with Flatmates

My flatmates are all British and it was already spring semester, so they all have their own social circle. And for British people, they are less likely wanting to visit other cities in the UK. However, I am still able to chat with them in the flat common room and even join their group from time to time. If you want to meet more international students, you can choose a flat with more people.

d. Cooking

While it seems like a good opportunity to learn cooking, it can be troublesome to buy all the utensils and then having to give them away in 6 months time. It is better if you already know someone who can cook together.

e. Air-conditioner

There is a heater in the room but NO air-conditioner. The window does not fully open as well.

2. Courses Registration

An email with detailed instructions will be sent for you. Northumbria University provides 9 modules for business students to choose. If you cannot find courses that matches your major or common core in the credit transfer mapping, you will need to request for a new mapping. (Common

cores will usually have a higher chance of successful mapping) The whole process of requesting new mapping can take months to complete. For me, I started applying in October and got the approval in March, so apply as early as possible. Early in the process, you wouldn't have many materials about the courses, but you can email the bc.exchangeapplicantservices@northumbria.ac.uk for more information about the courses. Below are my courses.

Module	Module Name Component Name	Year	Sem or YL	Level
GA5002	Academic Language Skills for Business <i>70% attendance required</i> <i>10 minute small group presentation</i> <i>300 word written assignment - individual</i>	2021/2	SEM2	5
SM9529	Modern Macroeconomics: Theory and Policy Implications <i>Closed book examination with multiple choice questions</i> <i>Empirical research project/paper</i>	2021/2	SEM2	5
SM9629	Economic Growth and Development <i>Closed book exam with MCQs</i> <i>Individual written assignment 2000 words 2000 words</i>	2021/2	SEM2	6
SM9636	Strategic Management for Sustainable Leadership <i>3000 (+/- 10%) Word Assignment</i>	2021/2	SEM2	6

3. Orientation Activities

As mentioned in the monthly activity log, I missed the official orientation held by the university due to flight delays. You can check the dates in the calendar section of your student portal. They will also invite you through email. Even though I missed the orientation activities, I was still able to contact the person in charge and joined the exchange student WhatsApp Group.

4. International Services & Activities

There is free pick-up service by the student council, so do remember to contact them! There are also plenty of opportunities outside the school, for example the Erasmus Student Network. I joined their WhatsApp group,

which promotes activities for students from both Northumbria and Newcastle University. Sometimes, students will just ask in the group if anyone want to join small events like having a walk along the river! I will also recommend the Lundgren Tours which tours you around Newcastle. It is also a great way to make friends.

5. Teaching & Assessment Methods

The university uses Blackboard for teaching materials, online lectures, assessment submission and online exams. However, you wouldn't have access to Blackboard until you have received the student card. Compared to UST, there are more essays-type assessment.

6. Sports & Recreation Facilities

The facilities I used the most is probably the common room for the entire New Bridge Street Accommodation. There are Pool (Snooker) and Ping-pong for you to play for free. Other facilities like gym can be quite costly.

7. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

In the beginning of the semester there is orientation for you to try the club activities. I recommend downloading the NU Connect or NU Sport app to check them out.

UNITED KINGDOM

1. Visa Procedures

If you are a holder of a Hong Kong passport, you do not need to apply for any visa. However, do remember to have documents like offer letter from Northumbria University and Tenancy Agreement from your accommodation. Even if you ask the university, they will still recommend you not to apply for visa as it is unnecessary.

2. Finance & Banking

I opened a HSBC UK account for the exchange program. This should be done early in your application as it takes a long time to set up an account. Also, if you do it early, you can request that the card be mailed to Hong Kong, so you don't have to worry about paying anything right after you landed. This card can also be used in other parts of Europe.

3. Communication

I use VOXI for my sim card. The benefit is that using social media does not count towards my data limit. If you are planning to travel around Europe, do check if your sim card supports cross Europe data plan.

4. Transportation

In general, the prices are quite expensive compared to living in Hong Kong, which is why most of the time people walk to destinations. Applying for a railcard can really help lower cost for inter-city travel.

5. Food

Again, prices are expensive in the UK. At first, I was feeling uneasy choosing any items on the menu as well. The best way to save money for food is to find someone to cook with you. Usually, a meal will cost around £10-15. Other countries in the Europe have similar price range. If you want to travel cheap, I will recommend Croatia as you can expect similar price as Hong Kong.

6. Climate

Despite the infamous UK weather, it is more comfortable to live in Newcastle than HK if you prefer cool than hot. You will need to wear a coat for February and March. And in April and May, it will just be like the winter of HK (~15C) with sun. Compared with other city in the UK, Newcastle

seldom rains but rather have strong winds. Nevertheless, global warming does make the climate a bit unpredictable even for my British friends.

7. Health and Safety

Since I did not obtain a visa, I bought a health insurance to cover my medical situations. You can always call NHS even if you have not registered with them and enquire your situation. Newcastle is safe. The only thing about walking in the night is that drunk people may yell or chat with you.

8. Cautionary measures

Take care of your belongings. My friend had her phone stolen in Spain and had to go through a lot of troubles but still cannot retrieve the phone. Be nice to people!

9. Things to bring

You can consider buying a student package and have it pre-deliver to your accommodation. I ordered a package from Noah's box with items like blankets and towels. Example of other items like

1. Medicine
2. Mainly winter clothes and some summer clothes
3. Socket
4. Souvenirs from Hong Kong to share with friends
5. Adaptor
6. Passport and documents

In general, I would recommend bringing important items instead of buying them in the UK as it is more expensive.

USEFUL LINKS & CONTACTS



Accommodations Map



Get railcard for cheap rides



Check events in Newcastle



An app to check school stuff



Campus Security
(General Enquiries)
Find them if the
reception of the
accommodation is closed



Package of necessity be
delivered before you
arrive in the UK