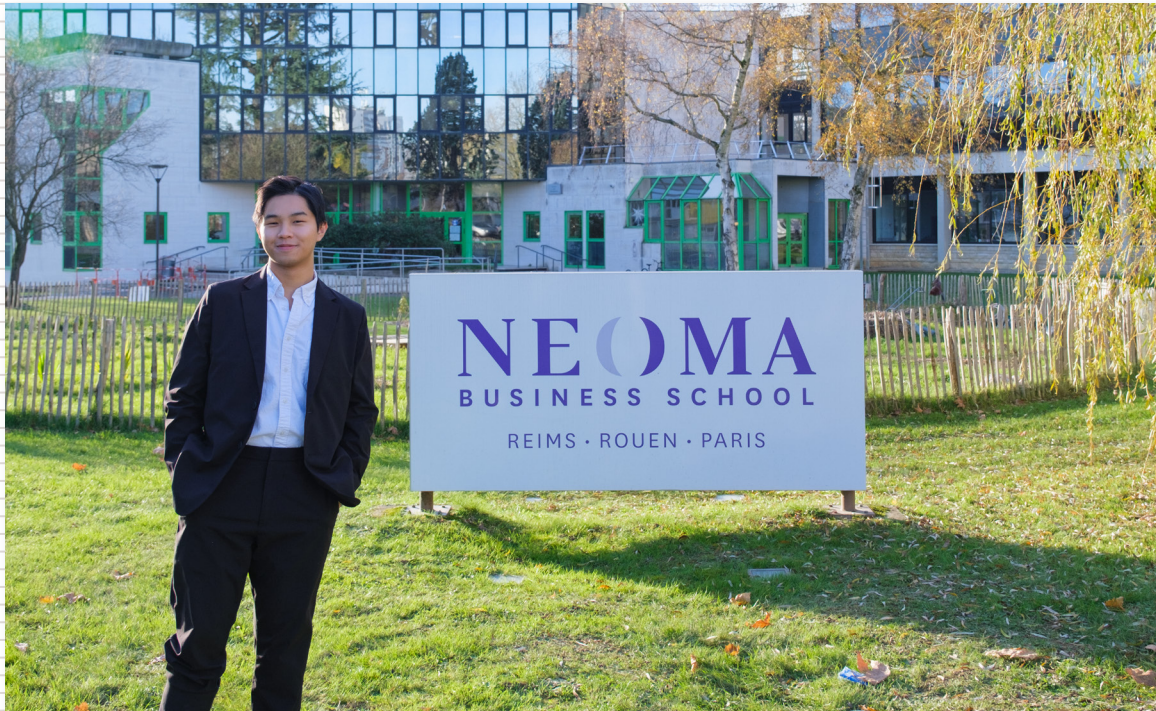


# NEOMA

BUSINESS SCHOOL

REIMS • ROUEN • PARIS



# EXCHANGE REPORT

*NEOMA Business School  
Rouen, France  
Fall 2022*

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# MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG

SEPTEMBER 2022

I arrived in Rouen on 1st September, which is also the same day I checked in to the CROUS student residence - Ango. Luckily, I met some exchange students from other Hong Kong universities in the building, and we were able to take care of each other throughout the exchange.

As the semester started on the third week, I had plenty of time to unpack and settle down before the International Welcome Day. Apart from doing grocery shopping and setting up my room, there were several administrative tasks to be done, such as French bank account opening, visa validation (OFII procedure), apply for French National Health Insurance and CAF subsidy, etc. Besides, I was able to spare some time to explore the Rouen downtown and went on a day trip to a nearby town called Giverny, where the Monet's Garden locates. After the Welcome Day, my friends and I went on a Normandy day tour to visit Etretat and Fécamp.

With classes on Mondays and Wednesdays only, I was able to arrange week-end trips to different places. In September, I went on two 4-day solo trips to Copenhagen and Munich. Since it was the season of Oktoberfest in Munich, the tickets and accommodations were very expensive. Despite that, I had a great time enjoying the beer festival with the locals and even met new friends.





## OCTOBER 2022

Although I have taken full vaccination before leaving Hong Kong, I caught COVID on the first week of October. Fortunately, the French health insurance had covered the PCR test fee and the school allowed me to take 1-week sick leave. With sufficient rest and medication, I was able to recover quickly.

During the month, I went on a 1-week solo trip to Edinburgh and London. I visited my high school friends in London and had a great time with their local recommendations. The best part of the trip was watching the musical *Phantom of the Opera*, as that night happened to be their 36th anniversary! My friend and I were very lucky to buy the tickets at the last minute and enjoy the spectacular show. Apart from the UK, my friends and I went on another Normandy day tour to Mont Saint Michel, and a weekend trip to Budapest.

Since the workload at NEOMA is not as heavy as HKUST, and there were no midterm exams for all courses, I was able to go on a long trip during the mid-term break with my friends. We went to Madrid and Segovia in Spain as well as Porto and Lisbon in Portugal for a total of 7 days. The food and scenery in Portugal were amazing – highly recommended.



## NOVEMBER 2022

Right after the Spain and Portugal trip, I joined my high school friend to visit Switzerland for another 5 days. We visited Geneva, Grindelwald, Jungfrau, Lungern and Luzern. The nature scenery was breathtaking, especially with the Alps.

Upon return from Switzerland, since the assignments and projects were due by the end of November, I spent most of the time finishing my essay and preparing for presentations before the end of the semester. Despite the busy schedule, I was able to visit the funfair and Christmas market in downtown Rouen.





## DECEMBER 2022

December was the last month of my semester. Classes were ended on 1st December, and there was a 1-week study break before the exams. Hence, I managed to do a day trip to Paris with my friends before the exams started. The exams were quite easy compared to those in HKUST, hence I finished all exams with ease.

After the exams, I went on another solo day trip to Paris and visited the Christmas market and a number of attractions and museums. Besides, it was the time for FIFA World Cup 2022, so I have watched the matches with the French locals to support the French football team and enjoy the atmosphere. As I planned to leave the residence a week after my exams, I spent the remaining time packing and cleaning my room before checking out.

Right after the check out, I had a Christmas trip with my friends to Finland and Norway. We visited several places including Helsinki, Rovaniemi, Tromsø and Bergen. We were also fortunate enough to visit the Santa Claus Village on Christmas day and catch northern lights during the trip.



## JANUARY 2023

After visiting Scandinavia, my friend and I flew to London and visited a number of attractions including the Winter Wonderland funfair. We also watched the fireworks in the city and joined the countdown to celebrate new year.

I returned to Paris from London on 2nd January, via Eurostar. I spent the last 4 days wandering around Paris, including Disneyland Paris. I left France on 7th January.



# GENERAL EXCHANGE INFORMATION

## 1 VISA PROCEDURES

As a Hong Kong Permanent Resident, a **Long Stay Student Visa (VLS-TS)** is required to stay in France for more than three months. Here are the steps to apply for a French student visa in Hong Kong:

### 1) Book a 15-minute academic interview with Campus France Office

> The purpose of the interview is mainly to understand the reason of studying in France and the level of understanding in French culture

### 2) Book an appointment at the visa section of Consulate General of France in Hong Kong to submit visa application and required documents

The visa application fee (discounted) was HKD422, along with a visa tourist tax of EUR50 to be paid during visa validation in France. For more details and latest procedure, please visit <https://www.hongkong.campus-france.org/long-stay-student-visa-vls-ts-more-than-90-days>

## 2 ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

At NEOMA, an **International Welcome Day** was organized by the school before the semester starts. There is a welcoming talk introducing the campus, course registrations and student societies. After the orientation lunch, there was a campus tour, followed by some ice-breaking activities organized by Culture Connection.



## 3 INTERNATIONAL SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

**Culture Connection** is a student organization at NEOMA which provides various activities for exchange students. They organize events and day trips every semester for international students in campus.

Besides, there is an **exchange buddy system** provided by the school. The system would match international students with a French local student as a buddy. It is a great way to learn more about French culture and adapt to the French lifestyle.

## 4 SOCIAL CLUBS AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Apart from Culture Connection, there is a regional student club for international students called **Erasmus Fun**. It is considered to be a more popular society compared to Culture Connection due to more choices of day trips and cheaper fees. Besides, most exchange students would join their weekly party in Rouen downtown, you can meet some new friends from other universities over there and have fun.

## 5 ACCOMMODATIONS

**On-campus accommodations are provided by the CROUS**, which is separated from NEOMA. You could receive offers and guidelines in applying for CROUS accommodations from NEOMA via email, however you need to complete the application in the CROUS system.

For my semester, the following residences were offered:

BUILDING	ROOM TYPE	BATHROOM	KITCHEN	LAUNDRY ROOM
Ango	9m <sup>2</sup> single	2 rooms share 1	private	located in another building
	16m <sup>2</sup> single	private	private	
Bois	9m <sup>2</sup> single	private	share per floor	G/F of the same building
Pleiade	20m <sup>2</sup> single	private	private	located in another building

I stayed in Ango 9m<sup>2</sup> for my semester, as it has a close distance to the campus and the bus stop of bus T1, with the cheapest rent. Although Bois is a newer building which is also closer to the campus, Ango is recommended as it is a building reserved for international students. Therefore, you can meet a lot of new friends living in the same residence and share great memories.



## 6 COURSES REGISTRATION

Course registration would be done before departure. The course catalogue would be released around April, where you could have a look at the courses offered in Rouen campus during the semester. In May, there is a pre-course registration session to choose between the set-schedule track or Mix & Match offer. If Mix & Match offer was chosen, a final course registration session will be held in June to select courses in the NEOMA system. The class schedule would be finalized after getting the approval from HKUST in the add-drop period in July.

Please note that GBBA Y1-3 courses cannot be selected together with GBBA Y4 and PGE courses.

## 7 TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

During the semester, I have taken 4 courses in total – Strategic Marketing, Brand Management and Story Telling, Innovation Management, and Discovering and Understanding French Culture. With the new initiative of going digital, there were at least 1 remote session for all classes during the semester. **Attendance are required for all classes**, and valid justifications are needed for any absented sessions.

Regarding the assessments, all of them consist of continuous assessments, case study, and final exam / essay. The full score of each course is 20, and a score of 10 would be sufficient to get a pass.

## 8 SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

There is a gym operated by CROUS, which is near Bois building. A monthly fee is required to access the gym. You can also exercise and do some running along the jogging path near the campus and Ango.

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FINANCE AND BANKING

In France, Euro is the official currency. Although I made most of my expenses with my HK debit card, it is important to **set up a French bank account for getting RIB** - a document that is used in different administrative tasks and collecting payments from different entities (e.g. CROUS, CAF, L'Assurance Maladie). BNP Paribas is the bank I used, and bank account opening can be done in campus in September.

EXPENSES BREAKDOWN (IN HKD)	
Flight Ticket (Direct flight - HKG > CDG)	13,600
Accommodation	8,500
Travel Insurance	3,800
Living Expenses	12,500
Travel Expenses	76,000
Miscellaneous	860
TOTAL	115,260

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CLIMATE

Due to a lower humidity compared to Hong Kong, the temperature is relatively warm in September to October. It is cold and rainy from mid-October to December. Layering is important and it is recommended to bring water-repellent jackets or coats along with warm clothes.

For pyjamas, since the heating system in Ango would be turned on in mid-September, the room would be quite warm to stay in. Wearing t-shirts would be fine in the residence.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

There are a few clinics around the campus. Appointments are usually required in advance, hence you could find the doctors and **make online reservations via Doctolib**.

To use the French National Health Insurance and its benefits, it is important to bring along with your **Carte Vitale** to visit the clinics and pharmacies. The Carte Vitale can be applied via L'Assurance Maladie after you have successfully applied for the National Health Insurance.

The area around the campus (Mont Saint Aignan) is a safe neighbourhood. However, it is still important to be aware of pickpockets and take good care of your belongings.

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FOOD

Eating out in France is expensive. Hence, we usually do groceries and buy food from **Carrefour Market** or **Super U** nearby. I personally prefer Carrefour Market as there is a wider range of items at a reasonable price. The canteen at NEOMA also provides lunch at an affordable price, it would be a convenient choice for a quick meal before afternoon classes.



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TRANSPORTATION

**Within Rouen:** You can take **bus or metro** within Rouen downtown and to Mont Saint Aignan. Common bus routes include **F2, F7, F8 and T1**. You can purchase single tickets or 10-journey youth tickets (JEUNE 10 voyages) at selected bus stops e.g. Campus, Place Colbert. It is recommended to purchase **monthly bus card from Réseau Astuce** which allows you to take unlimited rides within 30 days.

**Within France:** You can take **Flixbus, Blablacar Bus** or **TER train** to travel between Rouen and Paris. Buses would sometimes offer cheap tickets, while trains have a more frequent schedule. It is highly recommended to purchase **Carte Avantage Jeune from SNCF**, where you can get discounted train tickets at any time.

**Other Countries:** You can take **cross-border buses** (e.g. Flixbus), **planes** (e.g. easyjet) or **train** (e.g. SNCF). For flights, it is recommended to fly from and to Paris Orly or CDG airport, where there are direct buses and convenient transportations from and to Rouen.

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COMMUNICATION

For mobile SIM card, I have subscribed to a EUR 13.99 plan from **Free Mobile** for 100GB 4G mobile data and 12GB data roaming in other European countries. Please note that **some European countries are not included in the roaming coverage list** (e.g. Switzerland).

For communication with local people, although you can communicate with English in campus, it is common that the French locals do not speak English. Therefore, I would suggest to **learn some basic French (e.g. using Duolingo) to handle some daily conversations before coming to France.**

ITEMS TO BRING

- ☒ Passport + HKID (Original + a few copies)

☒ Copies of documents and passport-size photos for admin tasks

☒ Cash (EUR), credit card, global debit card

☒ Summer and winter clothes (including scarf, beanie and gloves)

☒ Water repellent jackets/coats and umbrella

☒ Toiletries, personal care items, medicine
- ☒ Laptop, charger, USB cables

☒ Adapter / Power strip

☒ Backpack, crossbody bag

☒ Stationery

☒ Padlocks

☒ Kitchenware (optional)

☒ Pillow (optional)

USEFUL WEBSITES AND APPS

Flights	Trains	Buses	Car Rides	Accommodations
Skyscanner	SNCF	Omio	Uber	Booking.com
Easyjet	Omio	Flixbus	Bolt	Airbnb
Ryanair		Blablacar Bus	Blablacar (car pooling)	
Transavia				
Omio				