



NEOMA Business School (France) Exchange Report

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BBA in IS & MGMT
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Part 1 – Monthly Activity Log

January:

I arrived in Rouen on 5th January with another exchange student from HKUST. On 7th January, we had our orientation at NEOMA. After that, the Cultural Co. gave us a campus tour and organized crepe-making and cheese-tasting activities. The day ended with a bar party with my newly-made international friends! The next day, we joined a city tour around Rouen organized by Rouen Erasmus Fun to explore the city further. We started regular classes next week as well.

In mid-January, my mum came to Paris to visit me during the Chinese New Year. After our time in Paris, we travelled to Switzerland for another 5 days. I highly recommend visiting Interlaken for its glamorous views and Jungfrauoch – the Top of Europe! It fulfilled one of my bucket list items as I got to go paragliding as well.



February:

After the trip to Switzerland, I went on another journey with my friend to Venice, Italy. It was my first time riding a 16-hour Flixbus to another country! Flixbus is a very affordable option for travelling in Europe, other than by plane. We visited Venice during the Venice Carnival, where we witnessed many participants wearing beautiful costumes with masks, and grand parades took place. I also bought a mask to immerse myself in the festivities – it was an extraordinary experience!

School holidays were on the last week of February, so I went on a one-week trip to tour around Northern Europe with my friend – Norway, Sweden, and Finland. I tried

Tobogganing in Lillehammer. We also visited Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi, where we had the opportunity to meet our childhood memory of Santa Claus, as well as his reindeer and huskies in the nearby park. I highly recommend trying reindeer meat and going for husky rides – they were amazing experiences! However, it was a pity that we couldn't see the Northern Lights during our trip.



March:

In the first week of March, I embarked on my first solo long trip to Munich, Germany. Unfortunately, during my stay, Munich experienced a 2-day strike that halted most of the metro services, resulting in extra expenses for taxi rides to the main train station from my hotel. Despite this inconvenience, I thoroughly enjoyed visiting Königssee, with its stunning mountain and lake views, as well as the Neuschwanstein Castle, with its captivating story. I also discovered a newfound love for beer after indulging in it during my meals!





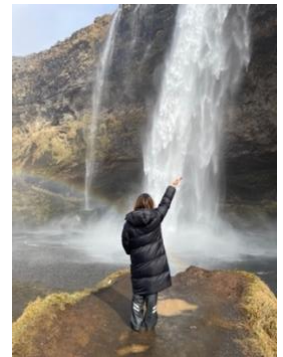
At the end of March, after attending my final lessons at NEOMA, I embarked on another solo trip to Nice, France. It is a city full of sunlight and an absolute must-visit place for beach lovers! During my trip, I also explored nearby cities like Menton and Eze Village, as well as the country of Monaco. Among all the cities, my favourite turned out to be Menton, with its charming yellow and orange-toned buildings. I also had the chance to meet another solo traveller from the mainland, and we ended up walking together to visit the remaining cities.



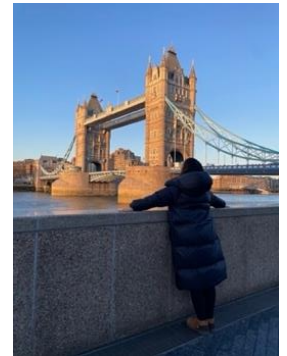
April:

Final exams took place in early April, so I did not travel until they were over. After the exams, I embarked on a trip to London and Iceland with my friend. We watched the Phantom of the Opera in London and visited the Borough Market for its street food.

During my visit to Iceland, I was thrilled with the once-in-a-lifetime experiences it offered! Apart from exploring Reykjavik, I joined a three-day tour of the Golden Circle and the South Coast. It was an unforgettable experience when I entered an ice cave and witnessed the beauty of the waterfalls. I saw rainbows near the waterfalls as well! I realised that I have a strong preference for visiting places with natural beauty rather than city centres.

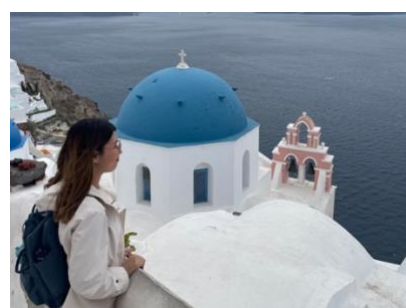


At the end of April, I returned to Rouen and participated in a one-day tour organized by Erasmus to Mont-Saint-Michel. The island's uniqueness lies in its limited accessibility due to natural circumstances.



May:

I began my last solo trip to Santorini at the beginning of May. It was a pity that Santorini was cloudy and rainy until the day I left. However, Santorini turned out not as dangerous as I had thought, and I took a lot of photos of the Blue Domed Church. I recommend trying local food and watching the sunset in Oia!





After that, I came to Poland to visit my friend. I was shocked by the affordable price level in Poland! I met friendly photographers on the old streets who helped us take photos and even printed them in the newspaper. I enjoyed the slides in the water park in Warsaw and the thrilling rides in the theme park (Energylandia) in Krakow. I had never experienced so many exciting rides in a single day! While my friend returned to Warsaw, I continued my solo journey to visit the salt mine in Krakow, which turned out to be very interesting!

Besides Poland, I also visited other countries in Eastern Europe – the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Austria. The most memorable part was going to Hallstatt in Austria, which is famous for its breathtaking view that resembles scenes from the movie Frozen. The natural scenery was truly amazing! Additionally, I had the opportunity to watch a musical drama at the Vienna Opera House, and it gave me goosebumps. In Hungary, I highly recommend paying a visit to the Hungarian Parliament. It was great to understand a country from a political perspective, and its beauty is truly unique.



Before returning to Hong Kong in June, I went on a trip to Amsterdam and Lisbon with my friend. The most unforgettable were the Red-Light District in Amsterdam and the custard tarts in Lisbon. I also tried playing scooter in Lisbon as well.

After checking out from my dormitory in Rouen, we went back to Paris to visit the famous attractions for the last time. Finally, we concluded my exchange by visiting Paris Disneyland, which marked a great end to my experience.



Part 2 – General Study Abroad Information

1. Visa Procedures

The visa procedures in France are quite complicated. Before applying for a long-stay student visa, you have to schedule an appointment to attend an **academic interview** and bring all the necessary documents. After that, you need to apply for the visa online to obtain the form and reserve a time to submit your application. In case you forget any documents, you can resubmit them between 14:30-15:30 on weekdays. NEOMA gave out admission letters quickly, and you can email NEOMA for accommodation proof. **Make sure to proofread the document they sent before submission!**

2. Orientation Activities

Before the exchange, NEOMA organized a virtual orientation session to discuss the details of visa application, course registration, and housing. It was a great opportunity to ask questions directly. After arriving in France, NEOMA arranged an orientation day on 7th January to provide important information about course attendance and final exam arrangements. Cultural Connection also organized ice-breaking activities in groups. In the following week, an international forum was held to facilitate the application for a French bank account, which was compulsory to get back the housing deposit.

3. International Services & Activities

Erasmus Fun provide a range of activities for exchange students to get involved in, such as day trips to other cities in France at a cheap price, bar parties, and workshops to practice French. Through these activities, you can easily meet new international friends. There was also a buddy exchange scheme where you can get the contact information of a buddy to ask him/her anything about France.

4. Accommodations

You would receive a list of off-campus and on-campus housing offers from NEOMA in their first email. The pricing and facilities for each option would be clearly listed. You would have to finalize your choice in early November through their online system, and the results would be sent by the end of November. Most of us chose to live in Crous – Bois, which was equipped with a private bathroom and bedroom, and a shared kitchen for a floor. The F7 bus station is outside Bois as well.

After receiving the housing offers, make sure to take prompt action and pay the rent, including the deposit. Buying housing insurance is compulsory. If you cannot pay online, use VPN to assist you.

5. Courses Registration

There are two phases in the course registration. The first phase was to choose Undergraduate or Postgraduate course offerings, while the second phase was to choose the courses you study through their online system. As there is no add-drop period for NEOMA, pick your courses wisely. You can only pick a course each day for the Morning/Afternoon/Evening period.

6. Teaching & Assessment Methods

The workload is not as big as UST. I took six courses: Blockchain and Fintech (ISOM3000-level course), Corporate Social Responsibility (MGMT3170), Data Analysis & Business Intelligence (ISOM3000-level course), Strategic Innovation Management (ISOM1380), Leadership and Organization Development (MGMT1120 or MGMT3120), and FL - French for Communication A1 Beginner (LANG1310). I didn't get a credit transfer for the French course due to exceeding credits.

Most of the courses have midterms, group projects, case studies, and final exams, and the majority of courses require attendance. I recommend not skipping **more than two classes** for each course. Each lesson lasts for 3 hours each week with 15-20 minute breaks in between and is conducted on a relatively small scale. All classes were conducted in a hybrid learning mode, combining physical lessons, virtual lessons on Zoom, and self-paced lessons on the online portal. Exams mainly consist of writing and case study questions.

7. Finance & Banking

It is compulsory to open a French Bank Account to receive the housing deposit. I opened a BNP Paribas bank account in the International Forum. There is a branch at Place Colbert Station and some staff are available to speak English. Check your mailbox to receive passwords and the card. After receiving the debit card, make sure to check your online bank statement regularly and take at least two actions (Deposit money/Withdraw money/Pay using the card) each month to avoid extra fees.

Almost all shops in France accept credit cards but preparing some Euros for travelling and emergencies are better.

8. Expenses

Items	Expenses (in approximate HKD)
Accommodation (5 months)	8700
Flight tickets (Direct Return tickets between HK and CDG Airport)	15000
Daily expenses	15000
Travel expenses	75000
Visa	430
Total (approximately)	114130

9. Climate

The weather in Rouen was quite cold in Winter and Spring, usually below 15°C until mid-April. It rained a lot in Rouen, so remember to bring an umbrella with you.

10. Health & Safety

NEOMA provides on-campus school nurse and general practitioner appointments for €25. Additionally, there are pharmacies in the city centre and virtual doctors available. Generally, it is safe in Rouen as long as you avoid walking alone at night and remain cautious. However, you should beware of pickpockets and be vigilant about your personal belongings!

11. Food

There is a canteen in NEOMA, but it opens only at lunchtime. It is cheaper to cook at your dormitory than dining out. There are a few supermarkets available by riding the bus in Rouen:

- 1) Coccinelle: The nearest supermarket from campus, but relatively small and expensive. Ride the F7 bus to Place Colbert Station.
- 2) Super U: Large supermarket with cheaper prices and a large variety of choices. Ride the F7 bus to Hotel de Ville – Belvedere.
- 3) Carrefour Mont Saint Aignan: A supermarket larger than Super U with a shopping mall nearby, and the price is similar to Super U. Ride the F2 bus to the Centre commercial station.
- 4) Action: It is the most far away from campus, but it offers very cheap daily necessities (except fresh food). Ride the F4 to Clair Joie station.

There is also an Asian restaurant in the city centre opened by people in Hong Kong, called Together Asia Fusion Food. Their food is yummy and affordable.

12. Transportation

Taking the bus is the most convenient way to commute around Rouen. You can download the app "My Astuce" to check the bus schedule and purchase bus tickets. Additionally, you can buy an Astuce monthly card for €27 at Gare de Rouen station by presenting your passport and an ID photo. Remember to validate your tickets when you board the bus.

To travel within France, you can take the SNCF train. I recommend buying a discount card for €45 and downloading the app "SNCF Connect" to purchase tickets conveniently. On the other hand, Flixbus is an affordable option for travelling around Europe. For transport from the Airport to Rouen, you can also choose to take Flixbus/Blablabus to reach Rouen directly. You can compare different transport options by downloading "Omio".

13. Communication

It can be challenging to communicate with local people as most of them don't understand English. I suggest using Google Translate for communication. Regarding the SIM card, I bought the €19.99 plan from Free Mobile. The data coverage is good, and it can be used in other European countries (some are excluded). However, I recommend not fully trusting the information on the website. One drawback is that you have to send a physical letter (not email) to cancel the subscription.

14. Sports & Recreation Facilities

Although there are no sports and recreation facilities in NEOMA, you can pay a monthly fee to use the GYM near Bois.

15. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There was a session on Orientation Day to introduce various societies to exchange students. Erasmus Fun and the Cultural Co. also organized activities to help you meet new people.

16. Cautionary measures

Beware of pickpockets in France. Consider using a shoulder bag, phone strap, and/or a jacket to conceal your personal belongings from pickpockets. As strikes in France have been frequent recently, keep an eye on the latest transport arrangements to plan your itinerary accordingly.

Part 3 – Items to bring

*Document original and a few copies

*Passport	*HKID	*Admission Letter	*Insurance Certificate
*ID Photos (Passport size)	*Housing Insurance	*International SOS Contact Information	Debit / Credit Card
Cash (Euros)	Adapters (a few)	USB and Type-C Chargers (a few)	Portable Charger
Phone Strap x2	Shoulder bag (for security)	Laptop + iPad	Stationary
Nail clipper	Hair dryer	Skin care products	Umbrella
Winter clothes + some summer clothes	Innerwear	Warm jackets + scarf + Gloves	Electric kettle
Electric pot	A set of cutlery with chopsticks	Medicine	Umbrella

Part 4 – Useful links and contacts

Category	Links / Contacts	Remarks
Visa Application	https://www.hongkong.campusfrance.org/long-stay-student-visa-vls-ts-more-than-90-days	Outline the procedures and required documents for applying Visa
	admin-etrangers.hongkong-fslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr	Request for financial guarantee form and general enquiries
NEOMA	hub.rouen@neoma-bs.fr	Email to send any requests and enquiries to NEOMA
	http://myneomagora.neoma-bs.fr	Check your timetable for each week
	https://courses.neoma-bs.fr/login/index.php	Login to view course information, submit homework etc.
	wellness@neoma-bs.fr	Book an appointment for on-campus school nurse and practitioner
Travelling	https://www.omio.co.uk/	Omio: compare transport options
	https://www.flixbus.co.uk/	Flixbus: Low cost bus travel in Europe
	https://www.blablacar.fr/bus	Blablacar: another bus travel option
Discounts	https://www.isic.fr/	With your ISIC card, you can enjoy student discounts e.g. Paris Disneyland, Flixbus, Blablabus etc.
Strikes information	https://worldinparis.com/transport-in-france-strike-news-tips-for-traveling-to-paris	A useful website to view updates about the strikes in France
International SOS	Phone: +33 155 633 155 (France phone number)	General emergency in Europe: 112