

EXCHANGE REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER (UNITED KINGDOM)
SPRING TERM 2022-23

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1. Monthly Activity Log

January

I arrived London on 12/1 for sightseeing. After that, I took train from London Paddington station to Exeter St David's station, and checked in my accommodation at James Owen Court. The first week of the semester is mostly about settling down, purchasing the daily necessities, and familiarizing with the environment. Orientation talks were organized for exchange students, and I had to visit their office to get my student ID card. I enrolled in a campus tour, but it was cancelled in short notice because of snow. At the first weekend of the semester, I joined a trip organized by the university for exchange students and visited St Ives, a nearby coastal city. Coach was arranged and it took around 2 hours to arrive.

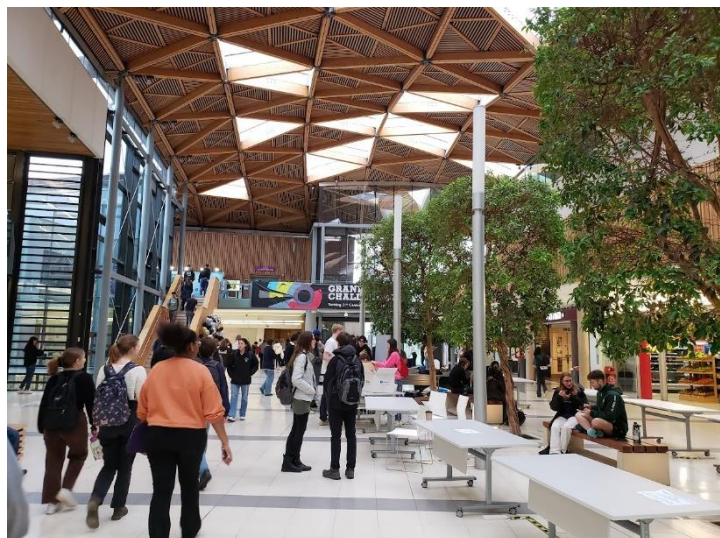


St Ives

February

While some other students may have midterm examinations in February, I do not have any but only need to submit an essay. There are also weekly readings which I had to go through after class and prepare for a short sharing in the seminar.

I joined the university's badminton club. It costs £47 for membership that lasts for one semester only (from January to 31 March). There were 4 sessions per week, in which you could join and play badminton with other members. Each session lasts for two to three hours, at the Sports Hall, and you can borrow rackets and shuttlecocks for free. Since membership is quite expensive, I would recommend you to



Forum, one of the major academic buildings

join the club only if you would be playing very frequently. For most of the time, I would join two sessions per week.

I visited Paris and Barcelona with other friends, who are also exchange students from Hong Kong. We spent around 2 weeks in total and visited the major attractions and museums.

March

I spent the entire March in Exeter, busy with the assignments which were due at the end of the month. I got to work on two essays, and one database project. Yet, there are still a lot to explore in Exeter. I visited the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum on the campus. It is a small museum which collects a number of artifacts related to the filmmaking industry. I also went bowling, kayaking, and cycling in Exeter.



Bill Douglas Cinema Museum

Apart from coursework, I was busy with applications for summer internships as well. There were aptitude tests to complete, and online interviews to attend.

April

The semester break started on 1 April and ended in mid-May. All assignments were submitted and there was no teaching during the break. I took the time and visited Netherlands and Belgium. The trip lasted for a week before I returned to the UK.

Back to the UK, I visited London again and watched The Phantom of the Opera. Then I travelled North to meet my friend, and we visited other cities in the UK, such as Leeds, Manchester, York, and Birmingham. We also visited Edinburgh and Glasgow in Scotland.



Leeds

May

I had three take-home online final exams. Two of them were essay writing, with 24 hours given to complete. The other is a 1.5-hour exam with multiple choice and short answer questions.

I also visited some cities close to Exeter for hiking. Exmouth is just thirty minutes away by train from Exeter and has a long, beautiful beach. Brixham has a nice harbour and an abandoned fort on the mountain.



Brixham

June

I further explored some other attractions in Exeter, including the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery, and Underground Passages. There was an Exeter Respect Festival over the weekend in a nearby park, with music performances and food stalls promoting cultures from all over the world.

The English Riviera Airshow on Paignton beach is the most unforgettable event. There were astonishing aerobatic displays that stunned everyone. On 17/6, a military parade was held in London to celebrate the King's official birthday. I went to Buckingham Palace and had a glimpse of the royal family on the palace balcony.



The Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team performing in the English Riviera Airshow

2. General Study Abroad Information

Visa Procedures

Holders of HKSAR Passport can stay in the UK as a student for up to 6 months without a visa. You can apply for a visa if you intend to stay longer than 6 months. Bear in mind you should always carry a hard copy of UoE's acceptance letter with you whenever you are entering the UK border. I was asked to show the acceptance letter almost every time when I was entering the border.

Orientation Activities

An email listing all orientation activities will be sent to you. All these activities are held in January. I joined the orientation talk, and a trip to St Ives. Some other orientation activities include a quiz night, campus tour, trip to IKEA, and trip to Exeter Cathedral.

International Services & Activities

There are not many exclusive services provided for exchange students.

Accommodations

All exchange students that I have met lived in James Owen Court. En-suite rooms were offered, with toilets in your own room. Each flat has a pantry shared by six people. It is 20 minutes' walk away from the main campus, but it is quite close to the city center. It is a self-catered accommodation, which means there were no meal plans offered.

Courses Registration

A few months before the start of the semester, an email will be sent to you and ask for your course preferences. You will be able to fill in and rank 10 preferred courses, and in the end 4 courses will be allocated to you. You have to choose a minimum of 50% of modules in the same subject to prevent timetable clashes. Apart from that, as I remember, there were no major restrictions on choices of courses.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

Each course has a lecture, and a seminar. Lectures are delivered by professors, explaining general course concepts, theories, and examples. Attendance is not required, and recordings are available. Seminars are discussion-based. Students will form in small groups and complete tasks assigned by tutors, such as discussing certain topics and writing short essays. Attendance is said to be required for seminars, but tutors usually do not take attendance and there are no consequences on grading if you miss the seminars.

I took four courses and each of them have slightly different assessment methods:

BEM1018 Business and Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Weekly MC quizzes- Essay due in February- Essay due in March
BEM2040 Database Technologies for Business Analytics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Database project- 1.5-hour online exam with MC and short answer questions
PHL1004 Philosophical Problems 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 24-hour essay writing online final exam
POL1029 Introduction to Comparative Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Essay due in March- 24-hour essay writing online final exam

Finance & Banking

Most exchange students from Hong Kong to UoE, including myself, relied on HSBC HK's Mastercard Debit Card for daily transactions. I would highly recommend it because you can withdraw cash from HSBC UK's ATMs without service charge. Transactions in GBP are also free of transaction charge, given that you already have GBP in your account. There are not many occasions on which cash is needed, so I didn't carry a lot of cash with me. It would be better if you have multiple credit/debit cards with you, so you have backups even if one card is not working properly.

Climate

The temperature is quite low in Exeter from January to April. Rain is very common, so it would be better to prepare a hooded jacket that is waterproof. Throughout my stay in Exeter, although there were 2 to 3 days with snow, I was told that snow was uncommon and there was no snow in the past few years. May and June could be quite hot and short-sleeved clothing would be necessary.

Health & Safety

UoE would send an email to remind you to register with UK's National Health Service (NHS). There is a clinic on the campus, and another in the city center. From the experience of my friends who are also exchange students, they only had to pay for the medication but not the consultation fees.

Exeter is quite a safe city. There are homeless people on the streets, but they are not dangerous at all. However, stay vigilant because in January, a homeless man was stabbed in the evening, and later died. The incident happened on the same street as my accommodation.

Food

There are quite a lot of restaurants around the accommodation. An average eat-in dinner may cost you around 13 - 20 pounds. Cooking by yourself is much cheaper and definitely worth the effort. Kitchenware can be easily purchased in the grocery stores at affordable prices. There are several supermarkets within a 15-minute walk from the accommodation, offering cheap and fresh food.

Transportation

You can travel between London and Exeter by rail or by coach. There is Great Western Railway service between London Paddington station and Exeter. Remember to purchase a 16 – 25 railcard, which will give you 1/3 off most train fares. Be mindful about the dates of rail strikes, as trains could all be cancelled and significantly impact your travel. Coach is a much cheaper option for travelling across cities. There are Flixbus and National Express coach services between Exeter and London.

The campus is within walking distance from my accommodation. Although you can take a 2-pound bus to the campus, I don't find it necessary or worth the price.

Exeter has a small airport, but only has few flights to very limited range of destinations. If you are travelling to other European countries, you can consider departing from Bristol airport, which can be reached within two and a half hours from Exeter.

Communication

I used Three UK's Pay As You Go SIM card. You top up the card every month to extend the validity. There are multiple plans with different data allowances that you can choose from. I had been paying

10 pounds for 10GB of data per month. You can either purchase the SIM card in UK or purchase it in Sham Shui Po like I did.

For Wi-Fi connection, eduroam is available on campus and in my accommodation. No ethernet connection is available in my accommodation though.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

There is a sports hall in the Streatham Campus, and a sports center in St Luke's Campus. Through the online system, you can book the badminton court, basketball court, tennis court etc. Bookings can be made at a fee, and borrowing sports gear will cost extra. Alternatively, you can join a sports club like I did. I joined the badminton club, paid £47 for membership, and could join the club's badminton sessions and borrow gear for free.



*University of Exeter Sports Hall
in Streatham Campus*

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There are a lot of clubs and societies that you can join. You can visit the Students' Guild website for a list of clubs that are available. Some clubs will offer free taster sessions, so you could decide if the club suits you or not. Most clubs charge for membership to support their operational expenses.

Cautionary Measures

There are no specific matters that you need to be cautious about.

3. Items to Bring

- Documents
 - Passport
 - HKID
 - Acceptance letter issued by UoE
- Finances
 - Cash
 - Debit and/or credit cards
- Clothing
 - Warm clothes
 - Jacket
 - Short sleeved clothes
 - Sunglasses
 - Formal shirt (for online interviews)
 - (Suit is not necessary, unless you will be going to balls)
- Daily necessities
 - Laundry bag
 - Some medicine
 - Cutlery, chopsticks
 - Water bottle
- Electronics
 - Mobile phone
 - Laptop
 - Earphones
 - Watch
 - Chargers and cables
 - Power bank
 - Hairdryer

4. Useful Links and Contacts

- Check if you need a UK visa
 - o <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>
- Accommodation information
 - o <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/accommodation/>
- Business school modules
 - o <https://business-school.exeter.ac.uk/study/international/modules/>
- Great Western Railway
 - o <https://www.gwr.com/>
- 16 – 25 railcard
 - o <https://www.railcard.co.uk/16-25/>