

A nighttime photograph of the Coventry skyline. The Shard skyscraper is illuminated and stands prominently on the left. In the foreground, a modern, multi-story building with a glass facade is lit up, reflecting on the water of the Riverbank. The sky is a deep blue with some clouds, and the sun has set, creating a warm orange glow on the horizon. A large ship is docked at a pier on the right side of the river.

Undergraduate Exchange Report

# University of Warwick

*Spring 2022-23, Coventry, United Kingdom*

Prepared By: LI, Fuk Sang

# Monthly Activity Log

## January

*Coventry – Birmingham – London – Brighton – Oxford*

On a cold rainy day, I arrived at Claycroft Residence, the place which I would call home for the next 5 months. I was greeted warmly by my roommate Jaasiel – A first year student from the island nation of Trinidad and Tobago. In the first couple days, me and other exchange students from UST familiarized ourselves with the university campus and Coventry.

The semester soon began, and I made friends with exchange students from other Hong Kong universities. The teaching style in Warwick was different from that in UST, where the lectures focused heavily on discussions and debates. Professors also assigned additional readings of academic papers, which were necessary for engaging in seminar discussions.

It wasn't long before I headed off to explore the other parts of the UK. I went to Brighton where I walked along the coastline on the seven sister cliffs. I also went to Oxford where I joined some of my Hong Kong friends. We made a several trips to London, where we checked out spots like the British Museum and the graffiti tunnels. The city was truly lively, diverse, and filled with cultural activities to engage in.



### **Somewhere Above Birmingham, UK**

After almost 22 hours of flight, the Emirates jet finally broke through the clouds, revealing the landscape below. Having been the UK twice previously, it felt good to be back.

## February

*Eastbourne – Edinburgh – Manchester*



### **Cuckmere Haven – Eastbourne, UK**

The late afternoon sun gradually dips into the horizon, casting long golden shadows in the British coastal wetland.

Within less than one month, I have developed my daily routine. In the daytime, I would attend lectures and seminars. In between lectures, we would spend our time playing pool in the university's pool room and socializing with other people. For dinner, I would either get groceries from Tesco and prepare my meals or eat out with friends in Coventry.

During weekends, we did go on a couple short trips around the UK. We followed the South Downs way from Eastbourne to Cuckmere Haven along the seven sister's cliff. We also went to Edinburgh, where we savored the most iconic Scottish cuisine with a stopover in Manchester, where we tried out the most iconic local cafes.

## March

*Penzance – St. Ives – Leeds – Sheffield – Jersey*

Warwick's semester only lasted for 10 weeks and there was a 1-month long semester break starting mid-March. Quite a number of deadlines and group presentations were due in the beginning of March. After those were concluded, we planned trips to the other parts of the UK.

We took a sleeper train, the Night Riviera, across the country from London to Penzance in Cornwall. This southwestern tip of the UK is famous for its coastal towns and seafood. Later that month, we flew to the island of Jersey – a British Crown Dependency just off the coast of France. We explored the historic city of St Helier, before heading off to stay at a seaside resort in St Brelade's Bay.



**San Giorgio Maggiore– Venice, Italy**  
Glitters of the golden sunset poured over the  
Canals of Venice as the fragrance of Aperitivo

## April

*Bergen - Nærøysfjord – Oslo – Copenhagen – Malmo – Geneva – Jungfrau – Milan – Venice*

In April, we set off on the long-awaited Europe trip which we had been planning since the beginning of the semester. We went see the majestic mountains of Nærøysfjorden Verdsarvpark and took the Bergen line across the frozen tundra of Norway into Oslo. We took a few days rest in a suburban Airbnb in Malmo, before setting off again for Switzerland. Deep within the Swiss Alps, we stayed in a cozy wooden cabin overlooking the lively yet serene slopes of Lauterbrunnen.

After conquering the Top of Europe at a height of 11,782ft, we took a bus down to Milan and then onwards to Venice. As we indulged in the country's signature pastas and aperitivos, we watched the sun set over St Mark's Square. The skyline of Venice was beyond enchanting, and a part of me wanted moments like this to last a little longer.

After the trip concluded, the due dates of my assignments were soon approaching. I had to submit three papers of around 3000 words each. Academic writing in WBS requires quality citation of peer-reviewed literature, which meant countless nights of reading and writing in the library. Eventually, I was able to submit all of them on time and in good quality.

## May

*Valencia – Tenerife – Gran Canaria - Fuerteventura – Milan – Zurich*

When May came around, it was almost time to leave the UK. I spent most of my time clearing out my room and bidding farewell to my flat mates and exchange buddies. Before I knew it, I was on a flight out of Heathrow, watching the UK coastline disappear off the horizon. Nonetheless, we decided to embark on one final adventure before heading back.

My flight soon landed in the Canary Islands – Volcanic Islands off the Moroccan coast. We spent a few days enjoying the coast and the sunshine in Costa Adeje, Tenerife. We then headed off to Gran Canaria in a propeller plane, where we traversed the desolate dunes of Maspalomas. Our last stop in the canaries was Fuerteventura, an even less developed desert island, where we rode bicycles along the coastal highway with the Atlantic Ocean on one side and deserts on the other.

The last stop of the trip took me to Zurich, where we attended Hans Zimmer's Concert. And as the sublime melody of Hans Zimmer's Time filled the Hallenstadion, it also symbolized my exchange coming to an end. What an adventure this was, what an exchange.



**Dunes De Maspalomas – Gran Canaria**  
The sky lit up with the vibrant colors of the  
evening sun.

# General Study Abroad Information

## 1. Visa Procedure

If you are a permanent Hong Kong resident, you will be entering the UK with a “*standard visitor Visa*”, which meant that you would **not** need to apply for a visa in advance. When you land in the UK, the immigration officer will stamp your passport, and that will be your permission to stay. For this type of visa, the total length of stay must be less than 180 days. So do keep this in mind if you plan to enter the UK earlier for vacation.

When you are passing through the UK border, you must bring with your acceptance letter from Warwick. In my case, that is the unconditional offer email I received. The immigration officer might also ask for documents such as proof of accommodation (your hall offer), proof of onward travel (your return ticket) and proof of finance (your bank statement). You should bring these documents with you whenever you leave the UK.

## 2. Orientation Activities/International Services and Activities

The only orientation activity is a welcoming session hosted by WBS on the first day of the term. All exchange students are required to attend so it is a good chance to make friends.

It is held in a lecture hall where the speaker will provide you with information concerning course registration, assignment submission and academic integrity etc. Refreshments were also provided.

## 3. Accommodation

The university allows you to indicate your preference of up to 6 halls. They are mainly classified into En suite (Private Bathroom) and shared bathrooms, with the former usually being more expensive. They will also ask for your hobbies and whether you preferred to be in a quieter area. They will assign your roommates based on this information.

My top choices were all En suite but I ended up getting Claycroft with a shared bathroom anyways. The bathroom was shared between me and my roommate and was relatively clean. The bathroom was cleaned by staff every day, but the bedrooms weren't. Exchange students are almost always guaranteed accommodation, and the results are available around one month before your exchange. The accommodation cost me £165 per week. The rooms are simple but tidy. A bed, a closet, a table, and a chair are provided, although you do have to bring your own pillow and duvet. Laundry will cost £3.5 for washing and £1.7 for drying. No meals are provided in any halls.

## 4. Course Registration

Course registration will begin around one month before the exchange. You must therefore ensure that the course mappings are approved by HKUST credit transfer system before this enrolment. Do keep in mind that most courses are only offered in the spring/autumn semester but not both. The course registration is done via an online portal and is **not** first-come-first-served. I was successfully enrolled into all four of my desired courses without complications. Also note that as an exchange student, you must select at least one course with an examination in the summer term (This can be an online examination).

The exchange handbook by WBS is comprehensive and well written. You will find most information about course registration there.

## 5. Teaching and Assessment Methods

For most courses, there are lectures and seminars. For lectures, no attendance is recorded, and lecture videos are provided (Although you are generally encouraged to attend in person). You must however attend seminars as attendance is recorded. In a seminar, the tutor will usually encourage discussion/debate and participation is sometimes recorded. Do show up to a seminar prepared.

If you join the exchange with HKUST SBM during the spring term, you will be studying at Warwick for both the spring and summer term. This meant that for examination, you will be assessed as a full-time student. Some examinations are held online, and some are held in person. Precise examination dates are usually not released until April.

## 6. Finance and Banking

Some Hong Kong banks offers global debit card with no overseas transaction fees. Therefore, there was no reason for me to have a UK bank account. The vast majority of business accepts credit cards although most Chinese restaurants only take cash.

## 7. Climate

The temperature in Coventry in the winter is around 0 degrees Celsius. Which combined with rain and wind meant that it would get really cold. So please bring adequate clothing and a scarf and gloves will come in handy. Since most places provide indoor heating, it can at times feel less cold than a Hong Kong winter.

## 8. Health & Safety

Although Coventry and Birmingham are safe to travel, they are relatively more dangerous when compared to Hong Kong. You should in general avoid travelling alone late at night and stay away from areas that feel dangerous. It is also important to keep an eye on your personal belongings.

The university campus, on the other hand, is far away from city center and is very safe. Community safety officers (campus police) are there to help with most safety issues. Their phone number is printed at the back of your Warwick student card.

## 9. Food

Food options in Warwick is a very important topic that not a lot of people talk about. Dining halls like HKUST's LG7 does not exist on campus so finding food can be troublesome. Here is a list of restaurants on campus:

- **Benugo Bar & Kitchen:** The only full-service restaurant on campus, around £20 per meal.
- **The Dirty Duck:** Fast food restaurant serving chips, pizza and smash burger, around £15 per meal.
- **Varsity:** More of a pub than a restaurant. Around £20 per meal. Food is subjectively mediocre.
- **WBS café:** Does serve some hot food such as curry rice for £7 although it is subjectively mediocre.
- **Fast food chains:** Starbucks, Pret A Manger, Café Nero, Subway. No explanation needed.

Eating out is evidently expensive and therefore most exchange students buy material from Tesco and prepare their own meals. Coventry and Birmingham city centre does have some decent Chinese and Korean food although they are on the expensive side.

## 10. Transportation

**Bus:** You will mainly use the bus to get to Coventry or nearby towns. It is around £1-2 per ride, and you can pay by contactless.

**Trains:** The quickest way to surrounding cities. Trains in the UK are quite expensive, and they can cost you around £20-50 one way. Do get the rail card – it will cost you £30 but will give you a 30% off discount for any train ticket you buy. If you are anywhere between 16–25-year-old, you will be eligible for a railcard.

**Coach:** An alternative way to travel between cities. It is usually cheaper than trains and cost no more than £10.

**Flights:** Some flights by budget airlines are quite cheap and can take you to another European destination for even less than £10.

## 11. Communication

Most buildings around campus have Wi-Fi coverage. As for which telecom provider have the best data plan – different people have different opinion. For reference, £20 will get you 50GB of data in the UK and 12GB of data roaming in Europe. Do note that the reception in the UK is not as good as HK and some places (e.g., The bus ride between University and Coventry) does not have 4G coverage.

## 12. Sports and Recreational Facilities

The university's sport's center is located next to the Heronbank hall, which can be quite far from the university center. Access to the university gym will cost you about £40 a month.

There is also a pool (snooker) room in the SU building in the center of the campus with around 10 pool tables. It costs £1 per game, and it is a good place to play pool and meet friends.

## 13. Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

Most opportunities of joining social clubs and communities are held in the first week of the academic year (September). There will also be a variety of induction and networking events for the newcomers. However, since my exchange was in the spring term, I could not join those events.

## 14. Cautionary Measures

The culture and customs of UK people are largely similar to those in Hong Kong. It is nonetheless always important to respect others' beliefs and values wherever you go. For safety information, refer to the section on health and safety.

## 15. Other notes

### WBS Deadline Policies

If you cannot submit your coursework or attend examinations on time due to personal difficulties, you can submit a “**mitigating circumstances**” request and the undergraduate team will provide support. WBS also allows a “**Self-Certification**”, where you can extend the deadlines of your assignments for one week without needing to provide any reasons. You will be briefed on these policies on your orientation day and can read more about them on the WBS portal once you have gotten your account.

### **Credit Transfer with HKUST**

It is important to request credit transfer mapping early as these requests can take a very long time to approve. You should raise the request once you received the exchange offer from UST (Even if the host institute has not yet released their timetable). After the exchange, you must submit the credit transfer application within one month.

### **Caveats on Online Examination**

If you are holding a **student visa**, you should note that you must be within the UK to take the universities' examination, even if the examination is held online. This is to fulfil visa requirements. This, however, does not apply to anyone holding a standard visitor visa.

## **Checklist**

### **Clothing**

Clothes  
Down Jackets  
Gloves and Scarfs  
Formal Wear and Leather Shoes  
A small suitcase for European travel  
Sunglasses  
Sunscreen  
Contact Lenses and Solution

### **Immigration**

Passport  
Offer Letter from University  
Return Flight tickets  
Bank Statement  
Proof of Accommodation

### **Hygiene**

Personal Medicine  
Band-Aids  
Some Cutleries  
Personal Hygiene Products  
Masks  
Hairdryer

### **Productivity**

Personal Laptop  
Computer Mouse  
Chargers and Cables  
Notebook  
Stationery

### **Finance**

Credit and Debit Card  
Bank Card  
Some GBP Cash

### **Hobbies**

Cameras  
Tripods  
Playing Cards and Board Games

### **Others**

Umbrellas  
Transcript and Certificates

### **Optional**

Beddings, Pillows and Duvet  
Cooking Utensils  
Snacks

## **Useful Links**

**Official UK Government Information on the Standard Visitor Visa:**

<https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor>

**University Immigration Page:**

<https://warwick.ac.uk/study/international/immigration/>

**List of hall options on campus for undergraduate:**

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation/students/ugresidences-2023>

**Warwick Business School Exchange Module handbook – Near the bottom of the page**

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/studentopportunity/studentmobility/studyatwarwick/moduleinformation/>

**HKUST's Information on Credit Transfer**

<https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/introduction-credit-transfer-ug>

**Information on UK's Rail Card**

<https://www.railcard.co.uk/16-25/>