

Exchange Report

Fall 2023

New York University

United States

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Monthly Activity Log

Write a log of one paragraph for each month highlighting some of your interesting exchange experiences, activities, impressions & places of interest. Please describe your study, learning and life experience. This section should be at least 600 words long.

August

On August 23, I arrived in New York. During the first few days, I stayed in my family friends place in Brooklyn since my actual apartment lease starts only on August 26. I spent these few days adjusting to my jet lag, exploring Brooklyn, and familiarizing myself with the "city campus" for the first time.

After I moved into my actual apartment in Jersey City for the coming semester, I met my housemates and explored the neighborhood with them. I also take advantage of these few free days to handle logistic matters - such as opening my bank account, getting my student card, and buying a SIM card for my phone.

September

There are quite a lot of welcoming activities for new students during the first week. Apart from the in campus orientation meetings, I especially LOVE the NYU Presidential Welcome Reality show. It gave me such an eye-opening experience and first impression that is still ingrained in me till now - diversity and passion.

I knew that I should explore more of the city during the first month while the school work would be relatively light, I actually went to quite some places - time square, wall street, the Whitney museum, little islands, the High-line, my first ever broadway show - A Beautiful Noise - The Neil Diamond Musical. All of these places are worth going to, even though time square is indeed a bit overrated, it is still worth-it to take a few photos there after a broadway show the theater district is very close to the famous tourist attraction.

Among them, I especially like the highline. The highline is an elevated linear park that spans through the west side of Manhattan. When we walk on the bridge we can see loads of graffiti on older buildings, installation arts or statues and sculptures, and even see through some of the big glass windows of the luxurious buildings. The bridge leads to the Whitney museum and the little Islands if you start from the north. The museum is free for NYU students and has lots of modern and contemporary art pieces.

October

My friend came and visited me during the start of October. Together, we went to a lot of places and by the end of her trip, I almost went to every possible attraction in Manhattan - New York Public library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Museum of Natural History, and the brooklyn bridge. I really enjoyed all of them.

The 2 museums are the "must go" of Manhattan or New York. I enjoyed looking at the little insects, the dinosaur fossils, the gem stones in the Natural History museum. As for the Met, I just can't really move my eyes away from the sculptures. Both of them are also free to NYU students! The brooklyn bridge is also a nice walk, although it is quite crowded during the weekends.

The rest of October is rather uneventful for me, since I did not plan any out-of-state trips. I also put in quite some effort to keep up with the finance courses at NYU and prepare for midterms given my relatively weak background in finance. Although the transferred credits do not count towards my CGA at UST, I guess my perfectionist mindset came into effect. Looking back, I probably should have spent more time exploring the U.S.

November

The temperature is getting colder this month, together with the fact that midterms are still going, they really deterred my mood of even getting out of the house on weekends. Although I did start to appreciate the Washington Square park a lot more. I kind of enjoy just wandering around the park listening to musicians, looking at performances, and just admiring the adorable pets of the people there.

Luckily, during thanksgiving several friends came and visited me to bring me out of my lazy routine. We again went to some of the remaining attractions such as the Central Park which I adore (the lakes and trees in autumn are so pretty) and another 2 musicals "Here Lies Love" and "Chicago" which sparks my interest to watch a LOT more broadways. We also tried to cook our own Thanksgiving dinner which turns out great!

December

This month I went to a lot of Broadway musicals. I tried various methods to get better and cheaper tickets which I intend to talk about in a separate section. Although the finals are there, I realized I should make use of this last opportunity to explore more of what I like here in New York so I actually watched them both before and after my exams - though I did fall sick a week before my exams which disrupted some of my plans. Luckily I got better and got through the Exams alright. After that, I spent my last few days in NY to sort out admin things like closing my bank account, and also to just get out and enjoy anything. MoMa is the last museum I went to which has some of the most famous and extraordinary collections of art pieces. Also, Christmas was coming so there were quite a lot of pretty decorations along Fifth Avenue.

As my New York stay came to an end, I traveled to Vancouver to visit my aunt before returning to Hong Kong.

Please briefly describe the visa application procedures, including

- 1) Type of passport/travel document you are holding
- 2) Type of visa you are required
- 3) Required documents
- 4) Visa fees

Most of us would be applying for the J1 Visa. The NYU Office of Global Service (OGS) gave very detailed guidelines on the procedure, and it is quite easy for me to follow through.

At around the end of April, after midterms, I applied for a DS-2019 as per their instructions. They then mailed the physical copy of the form to me in around 2 weeks. This is a very important document that is required for applying for the Visa, opening Bank accounts etc. so please bear in mind to keep it secure. The next stages of application are very smooth, just make sure you have all the documents required, pay the SEVIS fee and schedule an interview timely.

I had my interview (remember to bring everything mentioned, the appointment schedule confirmation, SEVIS fee receipt and your Passport) just after I finished my finals, the interview itself lasted like 5 mins and I was told the application was successful. The whole visa process cost around \$400 USD.

What are the course(s) that you have enrolled at the host institution?

ACCT-UB 23 Financial Modeling and Analysis

In this course we have to choose a company and analyze it using DCF valuation, relative valuations, and technical analysis. We have to build up our model from scratch based on the breakdown of accounting statements and this course really solidifies our knowledge on the 4 statements.

Professor Perkal had many industry experience and shared with us a lot about his company and some common industry practices. He encourages classroom participation especially during the presentation stage during the last month of the course. He urges us to ask questions and give opinions on various companies and industries.

ECON-UA 231 Money and Banking

I did not plan to take this course but decided to ask the IBEX team to help me enroll in it since I won't have any useful credit transferred towards my major if I do not take this course. This is a course in the College of Arts and Science, the course is not at all as engaging as my other Stern courses and the professor is strict. Course content includes present values, yield curves, and financial bubbles.

FINC-UB 26 Debt Instruments and Markets

This is my favorite course during my exchange and it is mostly due to the professor. Professor Carpenter is an excellent professor who is knowledgeable, kind, and easy-going. She went out of her way to memorize our names and while some might think that her way of calling out students to answer questions is too "childish", I think she really acted like our parents. She explained difficult concepts and mathematics in great detail if any of us asked any questions and made sure we actually understood everything, she introduced to us music that her daughter likes before class, she even sent us thanksgiving recipes during the holiday.

The course content is quite difficult but she made it very enjoyable in my opinion. The homework and assessments are mostly mathematics utilizing excel to calculate prices and durations of bonds, floaters, options, swaps etc. During the second last course she invited 2 industry experts to talk about the Silicon Valley bank failure.

FINC-UB 41 Equity Valuation

Many say that this course shouldn't be missed if you go on exchange during the Spring semester, but I think it is still quite worth-it to take the course in the Fall semester. Professor Segram made the course very fun, engaging, and interesting in general after all he is an aspiring comedian. He answered everyone's questions patiently and I'd argue a significant portion of our lecture is actually Q&A times.

The course content includes walking us through every step of a standard DCF and relative valuation. We are required to choose a company and form groups to apply what we learnt in class.

MULT-UB 7 Decision Models and Analytics

This course walk us through how to utilize excel's solver and crystal ball to answer linear and non-linear optimization problems. I enjoyed the course content overall and the professor is also quite engaging. We had a taste of solving the simplified version of some of the very common optimisation problem faced by real life companies

Please briefly describe the course registration procedures, such as

- 1) When did you receive the course registration details**
- 2) What is the course registration procedures**
- 3) Where can you access information related to course registration (e.g. websites)**

The course registration started at March, and we have to submit our intended courses to the IBEX Office by 7 April. They will double check your timetable and prerequisite then help you enroll the courses in order. Courses information can be searched on the Albert website, and professor information can be found on both NYU and the rate my professor website.

Where did you live during the program?

Others, please specify

Please briefly describe the accommodation at the host destination, including

- 1) What type of accommodation**
- 2) What is the application procedures (If you are staying at accommodation offered by the host institution)**
- 3) How did you search for the accommodation and where did you book your accommodation (If you need to arrange your own accommodation)**
- 4) Facilities in the accommodation**

We were told that we will likely not have any on-campus accommodation starting from March. Thus, I am always prepared to look for off-campus housing. Since I am just spending one semester there, after reaching out to a couple landlords, I realized it is difficult for me to find a short term lease. Unless I am willing to rent for a year and try to transfer the lease to another person, which is not ideal in my opinion. Thus, I ended up searching on AirBnB as well as VRBO. I ended up finding a house (for 4 people) in Jersey city, which is around 45 mins to Stern taking the PATH trains from NJ to NY. While it is not as convenient as living in Manhattan, and that I have to share the house with the other exchange student from UST and other students in NY, the rent is approximately \$1400 USD per month which is quite cheap and the house is very spacious compared to apartments in Manhattan.

As a side note, around August after we already confirmed all our off-campus housing, the NYU housing office told us that we are offered a place at the dorms.

Please briefly describe the health and safety support provided at the host institution, including

- 1) Whether there is health centers or clinics available on campus**
- 2) Any safety matters that you are concerned about**

There is a NYU student health center. Health insurance is required for us. We can purchase the NYU one when they bill us, or purchase a third party insurance that satisfies NYU's requirements. I recommend finding a third party one since usually they would be cheaper, just double check that it satisfied all requirements and remember to waive it before the deadline. NYC is quite safe in my opinion, but we do need to be careful and alert. People in general just mind their own business.

Finances

How much did you spend (in HKD) on the following items? (Please input "0" if not applicable to you)

Air ticket between the place of departure and destination (round trip)

HKD 19,692

Accommodation (for the entire study abroad period)

HKD 39,502

Program fee (if applicable)

N/A

Personal expenses

HKD 42,267

Others, please specify

Broadway: HKD 5,000

My Top 3s

Please share with students some of your top 3s. If it is best to provide the information in the language of the host destination, please do so, but provide an explanation in English.

Courses at the host institution

FINC-UB 26 Debt Instruments and Markets d

FINC-UB 41 Equity Valuation

MULT-UB 7 Decision Models and Analytics

Favourite Food

Thanksgiving dinner we cooked together

Mitr thai, a restaurant around time square

The Halal Food Truck outside of Stern

Hang-outs places on campus

WSQ Park

Matto Cafe in Stern

Library

Must-dos in the city

Broadway! Soo Fun and Entertaining, Performers are excellent.

Some Cheap ticket tips:

NYU ScholasTix provides tickets at various discount levels, sometimes even free tickets. You can ask to be added to the weekly mailing list to get the newest information on any activities. Broadway brunch activities are also pretty good in terms of cost saving.

Some Shows have student tickets (for instance Wicked), usually they need to be bought in person at the box office.

If your goal is to watch cheaper Broadway shows, going by your own is easier to get cheaper tickets.

There are lottery tickets/ cheaper tickets on the following platforms, the price ranges from around \$20 to \$50:

<https://rush.telecharge.com/>

<https://www.luckyseat.com/>

<https://lottery.broadwaydirect.com/>

Hamilton App Lottery

<https://www.broadwayroulette.com/>

Lotteries can be entered as early as 2 weeks (lucky seats) or 2 days (other platforms) before the show. Usually the result will be announced 1 day before the show, and you have to pay the fee before knowing what seats you get. One trick is to take a look at the seating plan to see what seats are still available so you can have a rough idea what kind of seats you might get. During the whole exchange, you can very well enter the lotteries every single day and then decide whether or not to go, since each lottery are considered independently. 1 ticket lottery is easier than 2 ticket ones.

Promotional codes might be available for some online purchases from both the telecharge offers and seatgeek website (New user offers etc.).

Buying the ticket at the box office (the theater) would be cheaper since you do not need to pay the ~\$15 online platform fee.

Last minute tickets (around an hour before the show), just directly go and ask whether or not they have tickets left for the nights' show.

For shows with rush ticket policy, it is possible to get tickets as cheap as \$49 if you are willing to line up early (at least around 9am) to wait for the box office opening at 10 to buy the rush tickets.

Central Park

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Not-to-dos in the city

Time Square

Wall Street

Subway, but we kind of cannot avoid it

Useful local apps or websites

Banking Apps, e.g. Chase

Yelp for restaurant

NYC Subway website

Words to describe my study abroad experience

Independent

Friendship

Music