



EXCHANGE REPORT

University of Warwick, UK

Warwick Business School
Spring 2025

Johnathan Chu
BSc in Economics and Finance

Study Abroad Experience – Monthly Activity Log

January

I landed Birmingham International Airport on 3rd January. I then took the train to Coventry and checked in for my accommodation. I spent the first few days getting myself familiarize with the environment, and getting used to cook by myself. It was a mess the first few days cooking by myself and I had to replace frying pan very soon. Luckily, I learnt cooking quickly and was able to cook foods that can get myself full. 6th January was the first day of the semester, and I attend a few lectures and the orientation session, knowing more about WBS and the semester ahead. Over the weekends, I went to Lemington Spa, Northampton, Oxford and London for sightseeing. When we were sightseeing in London, another exchange student from UST got his phone stolen, and we went to the nearest police station for help. However, the police couldn't offer much help as it is too common to have phone stolen in UK, especially in London. As a result, he had to buy a new phone and get the new sim card sent to the student accommodation. It definitely warned me as I did not think the public order in UK was this poor. I was very much aware of my phone and my safety overall after that till the end of the exchange. After a short trip to London, I was feeling unwell as soon as I got back to Coventry. I was vomiting and having diarrhea the whole night. Luckily, other exchange students from UST took care of me, and helped me looking for hospitals. However, after multiple rounds of phone calls, I was told that my situation was not enough to be sent to hospital, so I had to go to a clinic nearby by myself at 2 a.m. It turned out that I was having food poisoning and that I couldn't eat anything except for liquid for the next couple of days to get well. Much thanks to other exchange students for taking care of me those days. Besides these experiences, I attend to lectures and seminars regularly and getting increasingly used to the exchange life.



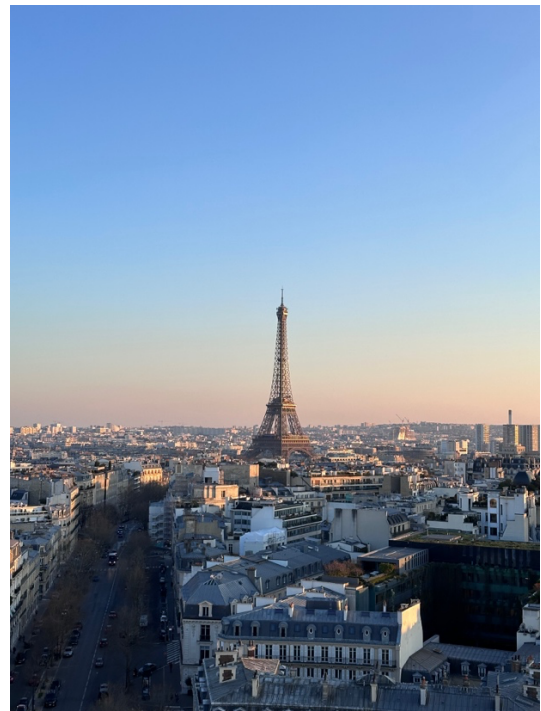
February

Compared to January, this month was rather normal. I spent most of the time in Warwick attending lectures, seminars and completing weekly tasks. From the mid of February, I went on a trip to the northern Europe with my secondary school classmates. We went to Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland. It was the coldest weather I have ever experienced. We went to see northern lights, having dog sledding and much more.



March

This month marks the end of the semester. The lectures and seminars end at the second week of March. My contract for the accommodation also comes to an end at the same week. So I moved out of the student accommodation and stored my luggage in a luggage storage, before I went on a non-stop two-and-a-half-month travel. I travelled to France and Switzerland.



April

I continue with my travel while completing my essays for the modules this month. I went to Germany, Italy, Vatican City and Spain. When we were in Barcelona going to Madrid by train, accident happened. We were eating at a restaurant before getting on the train, the lights suddenly popped off. We thought it was just the issue of the restaurant, but when we went out

the traffic lights went off one by one just as the disaster film in the cinema. We promptly used the last bit of internet to locate the nearest hotel and book a room to secure the bedspace. Then, we went out to buy dry food as we could not cook anything without electricity. Luckily, the power resumed the same night although we had our plan to Madrid two days delayed.



May

This month marks the end of my exchange as I continue my travel. I went to Portugal, Belgium, Netherlands, Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic, and Croatia. Luckily the travel this month was very smooth, no accidents happened, and I enjoyed the whole journey. I got back to Birmingham after travelling around Croatia and took my flight back to Hong Kong at the end of May.



General Exchange Information

1. Visa Procedures

I am a Hong Kong passport holder and I did not stay in the UK for more than 6 months, so I did not apply for any visa. You can do this quiz: <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa> to check if you need a visa for your specific situation. As for traveling around Europe, HK passport holder can travel in the EU for a total of no more than 90 days. It's important to check the visa requirements for the countries you plan to visit as different passport varies.

2. Orientation Activities

Orientation activities for exchange students at Warwick were limited in Spring to a general induction session that explained the module selection process and expectations for the semester. Each student was assigned a personal tutor who was approachable and helpful, ensuring that students had the support they needed. The personal tutor was available for students to speak to throughout the exchange term. This was a good way to find someone who could answer their questions and offer support during their time abroad.

3. International Services & Activities

University of Warwick offers an Airport Transfer Service allowing students travel directly to campus from London Heathrow Airport or Birmingham International Airport after touching down. I did not take the service as my accommodation was near the airport.

4. Accommodations

There are various accommodation options available on the accommodation website of the University of Warwick, differing in location, price and bathroom types. There is a separate portal on which to apply for accommodation, and you can browse through which accommodations are to your liking. In the application, there are questions about students' personal preferences, hobbies, and living habits to help match them with suitable flatmates. That being said, as the accommodation was full, I was assigned to a student accommodation in Coventry town center. It was en-suite and shared kitchen with 5 other flatmates, which are all exchange students to the WBS.

5. Courses Registration

At WBS, all module applications are submitted online through the my.wbs module application system, which will be open for 2-3 weeks. During this time, students can both submit their applications and make changes to their choices. Applications are processed instantly on a first-come, first-served basis. On the my.wbs portal, you can apply for an Unusual Option, meaning a course carried by another school. You will need to fill a form and send it to the department which the module belongs. I applied for Corporate Finance course held by the economics department.

After the modules are enrolled, the timetable for lectures and seminars will be available on the my.wbs homepage. You can swap with others regarding the seminar timeslot within a specified time period, just like the add-drop period in UST.

I suggest reading the WBS exchange student module handbook beforehand, to plan for the courses to be studied. Note that some modules are full full-year study or for a specific semester so you may not be able to study them in your semester. Remember to check the course equivalent system to see if you can transfer credits back to HKUST. It's crucial to do this before leaving for exchange to ensure that you don't end up taking courses that won't transfer back as credits.

6. Courses Taken

I have taken the following courses:

EC334: Topics in Financial Economics: Corporate Finance and Markets

IB3E60 Ethical Issues in Contemporary Business

IB3K70 Financial Markets: Organizations and Technology

IB3M70 Alternative and Responsible Investments

IB3N90 Managing People in a Complex World

The teaching in Warwick is very different from HKUST, each week students are expected to attend 1 hour of lecture, 1 hour of seminar, and 1 hour of asynchronous task. Lectures are similar to that in UST, while for seminars discussions are greatly encouraged and students often express their opinions freely. Attendance is counted in every two weeks and you need to attend one of the seminars to fulfill the requirement. As I study for spring semester only, so the assessment methods was mainly 3000-word essays, whereas the summer semester will be used for exam for those students who study for spring and summer semester.

7. Finance & Banking

Contactless payments are widely accepted in Europe, I used the HSBC Mastercard Debit Card throughout the journey. You can exchange the currency beforehand in the HSBC account to avoid the currency risks. However, there are some places accept cash only, so I recommend bringing some cash on hand to encounter these situations.

8. Climate

The weather in UK is very cold, with temperatures range from 0°C to 7°C. The daytime in winter is shorter and the sky turns black as early as 5 p.m. And it's always rainy, making the perceived temperature even lower. I didn't bring enough clothes and heattech so I was freezing the first two weeks I got to UK. So, make sure you bring more than enough warm clothing, including scarf, gloves, down jacket, etc.

9. Health & Safety

To be eligible, exchange students must study at Warwick for more than three months and register within their first week of arrival. However, I only study the spring semester which last for around three months, NHS coverage does not apply. Moreover, the efficiency in hospital in UK is worrying, I recommend bringing enough medicine with you to deal with any possible accidents.

The public order in Europe is also not as good as that in Hong Kong, so you need to be very careful about your safety and pocket picker. You can get your phone stolen in just a blink of an eye, so buying a phone strap would be better.

10. Food

On campus, there are a few restaurants and grocery stores. However, I seldom eat at restaurants and mostly cook by myself as the restaurant in UK costs a lot. In contrast, you can grab the groceries at a rather reasonable price so you can save a lot by cooking yourself. Grocery stores recommendation in general: Iceland, M&S, Sainsbury's, Tesco.

11. Transportation

The most common transportation is bus, with various routes connecting to Leamington, Kenilworth, and Coventry. There are daily, weekly, monthly, termly or yearly bus passes available which offers a discount to the expensive bus fare. You can purchase the bus passes through the app NXBus mTicket. As for travelling in the UK by train, I recommending purchasing a railcard for the first time and use it every time to get a discount.

12. Communication

I got a pay-as-you-go card from Three when I got to Birmingham, it covers the data usage in UK and also roaming data around the Europe. However, the roaming data is quite limited so you may need to opt for another SIM card if you are planning to have the whole month travelling around Europe.

13. Sports & Recreation Facilities

The Sports & Wellness Hub offers a variety of sports classes, along with facilities for the gym, swimming, etc. Additionally, The Piazza hosts an Artisan Market every Tuesday, showcasing unique products and local crafts.

14. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

Students can join various SU events or network through WBS exchange events. Meanwhile, students can voluntarily join the Buddy Scheme, which is an informal peer-to-peer support scheme where students can connect and assist each other.

15. Cautionary measures

It is essential to stay alert and keep your belongings close. Budgeting effectively can help you avoid unexpected expenses and overspending. Being responsible and representing

HKUST positively is crucial. By following these measures, you can make the most of your exchange experience and stay safe while doing so.

Items to bring:

- Passport and other identity documents
- Some cash and Credit/Debit Cards
- Gloves, scarf, heattech inner layers
- Jacket (Down)
- Laptops, electronics, chargers, adapter and extension socket
- Medicine
- Stationery

Useful Links and Contacts:

Accommodation

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation>

Email: accommodation@warwick.ac.uk

Course registration, teaching, and assessment methods

<https://my.wbs.ac.uk>

<https://www.wbs.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/exchange-students/>

Email: undergraduate@wbs.ac.uk

Communication

<https://www.three.co.uk/payg-data-packs>