

# **Exchange Report**

Spring 2025

The University of Warwick (Warwick Business School)

United Kingdom

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# Monthly Activity Log

## January

I arrived in the UK on January 1st and moved into City Village a few days later, which is an off-campus student accommodation in Coventry's city center, referred to by Warwick. Unlike previous years, spring-only exchange students were not offered on-campus housing, so we were directed to private accommodations managed by external organizations. However, I really liked the arrangement as there are more grocery stores and restaurants when compared to on-campus dormitories. During the orientation meet-up session, I met other exchange students, and together we arranged short trips to London, Leamington Spa, and Northampton. These early adventures not only helped me settle into a new environment but also built a lot of great friendships.

## February

By the second month, courses were in full swing, and group projects started to take shape. A memorable experience was my Marketing Research project with Warwick students, where we analyzed the Lacuna Magazine. I learned survey design, data analysis, and most importantly, how to adapt to different working styles. At first, I felt nervous about collaborating with students from such diverse backgrounds, but I quickly found it enriching to combine our perspectives. I was grateful that our teamwork flowed smoothly.

Outside academics, I had the chance to travel to Copenhagen with my HKUST friends, where we even celebrated Lunar New Year together with hotpot and sweet dumplings. Another highlight was visiting Bordeaux, which allowed me to connect my WSET Level 1 studies with real-world vineyard tours. Cycling eight hours through the Saint-Émilion vineyards was both exhausting and exhilarating, and I came away with a deeper appreciation for wine as a cultural and historical artifact, not just an academic subject.

## March

Time flew quickly, and by March 15th my spring semester at Warwick had officially ended. However, there were still group projects to complete. The most challenging one was for Derivatives and Risk Management, where only another exchange student and I contributed, despite being in a group of five. This was a difficult experience, but it taught me resilience and the importance of focusing on what I could control rather than being weighed down by unmotivated teammates. It was also a reminder that not every collaboration will be ideal, and success sometimes requires carrying extra responsibility.

After the group project submissions, I took the opportunity to explore more before final exams and individual essay submissions in late April. A highlight was travelling to Iceland, where I witnessed the northern lights for the first time, it was really magical. I also went whale watching, explored an ice cave,

and marveled at the raw beauty of nature. Later, I visited Cambridge, where I attended a traditional formal dinner at Queen's College and went punting along the River Cam, experiencing centuries-old traditions in such a historic setting.

## **April**

April was a month of both study and exploration. I travelled to Italy, where I enjoyed the sun on the beach at Camogli, ate pesto pasta in Genoa, visited the Saint Peter's Basilica in Vatican, walked through the Colosseum in Rome, hiked the cliffs of Capri, ate authentic Neapolitan pizza in Naples, and admired the Duomo in Milan. Each city had its own rhythm and story, and I learned to slow down, appreciate small moments, and connect history with everyday life. Even more excitingly, I travelled to Africa for the first time. In Morocco, I experienced the Sahara Desert — driving buggies across sand dunes, riding camels, and dancing around the campfire under a starry sky with African music playing in the background. It was surreal, and I felt a mix of wonder and gratitude for being able to step into such a different cultural environment.

Mid-April, I returned to the UK to study for my online final exam for Principles of Finance 2 and to finish my individual essays. After the exam and deadlines, I travelled again — this time to Barcelona. Visiting the Sagrada Família was one of the highlights of my entire exchange. Learning about Gaudí's vision and symbolism left me in awe of how architecture can be both spiritual and artistic. An unexpected power outage during this trip meant we had no mobile data or access to online payments, which at first felt inconvenient. But this “digital detox” reminded me of the importance of being present, relying on human interactions, and finding joy in simple connections.

## **May**

I concluded my exchange with trips to Switzerland and Croatia. In Interlaken, Switzerland, I went paragliding over turquoise lakes and magnificent mountains. I also visited Jungfrauoch, the “Top of Europe,” where I was struck by the sheer majesty of nature. My last destination was Croatia, where I explored Dubrovnik and Split. I especially loved Split, where I joined an island-hopping trip. Jumping off a two-storey boat into crystal-clear waters and swimming in the Adriatic Sea was pure joy.

Finally, I returned to the UK to pack up and meet some of my high school friends. Before leaving, I also attended the musicals *Matilda* and *Hamilton*, bookending my exchange with theatre experiences that deepened my appreciation for art as storytelling. On May 27th, I flew back to Hong Kong, carrying with me not just memories of travel, but strengthened adaptability, cultural awareness, and a renewed global perspective.

# General Study Abroad Information

## 1. **Visa Procedures**

No visa is required for me as a HKSAR passport holder who is travelling for less than 6 months. However, a one-off ETA is required, which costs 16 pounds. Details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/eta/apply>

You can also check if you need to apply for visa & ETA here: <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>

## 2. **Orientation Activities**

Only one orientation activity was arranged, where I met the staff from the exchange office, who talked about some key information and logistics. I also met all other exchange students during this event with light snacks and drinks.

## 3. **International Services & Activities**

N/A

## 4. **Accommodations**

As a spring-only exchange student, I was not offered on-campus housing. Instead, Warwick referred us to two partner student accommodations located in Coventry's city center: City Village (where I stayed) and Albany Student Village. Both were very convenient in terms of location and accessibility to daily necessities.

Although I applied for on-campus housing, my application was redirected to these residences. Once I selected City Village, I followed the application process according to the instructions provided by the residence.

One important reminder is to negotiate the contract terms, as the default lease was only three months starting just before the semester. You can negotiate for an earlier start date and a longer term.

## 5. **Course Registration**

I received the student handbook in late November, which contained information about all the courses offered for the year. I completed my course registration through Warwick's student portal in early December. The process was simple, just follow the instructions provided by Warwick via email. The email also provided instructions for me to secure specific courses that I want to register for.

## 6. **Courses Taken**

- IB3M70 - Alternative and Responsible Investments (individual essay & group project)
- IB3590 - Derivatives and Risk Management (individual essay & group project)
- IB3680 - International Business Strategy (individual essay & group project)
- IB2B60 - Marketing Research (individual essay & group project)
- IB2540 - Principles of Finance 2 (participation & online exam)

All of them are quite manageable in terms of workload and difficulty.

## 7. **Finance & Banking**

Pounds are used in the UK. I used HSBC's world debit card, it supports both Pound and Euro.

## 8. **Climate**

The UK was pretty cold during winter, so a down jacket is definitely needed. You might also bring heat packs for your hands. During summer time, it was pretty sunny, and wasn't too cold. I heard that the UK used to be pretty rainy and moody, but fortunately it was not my case.

## 9. **Health & Safety**

International SOS, which has collaborated with HKUST, can provide assistance in regards.

## 10. **Food**

I cooked most of my time in Coventry, as there were plenty of grocery stores nearby like Sainsbury's, Iceland and M&S etc. There is also a Coventry Market and many Asian groceries

stores near City Village. The cost is much lower than dining out.

#### **11. Transportation**

I took the bus to travel to school from my accommodation. You can download “NX Bus mTicket” for travel cards. They also accept payments by credit/ debit card.

For trains and airline tickets, I mostly used Trip.com and Trainline.

For UK transportation, you can consider purchasing the Rail Card, which provides discounts for tubes and trains. I think it is worth the price as I often travel between Coventry and London.

#### **12. Communication**

I purchased the SIM card from Lebara, which includes both UK data and other EU region roaming data. Both Warwick and City Village have free wifi.

#### **13. Sports & Recreation Facilities**

There was a gym for free access in City Village. For the gym on campus, it was only available for free for a week.

#### **14. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities**

N/A

#### **15. Cautionary Measures**

Think twice before eating raw oysters, a lot of my friends got food poisoning after eating.

## 16. Other Notes

Remember to hold your phone tight and best if you do not always take it out while walking. The UK, especially London, has a lot of phone thieves.

## Items to Bring

- Clothing & Accessories
  - Clothes & trousers (both summer and winter)
  - Jacket (down jacket, windproof jacket)
  - Swimwear
  - Snow shoes (if going to Northern europe)
  - Cap / Hat
  - Sunglasses
  
- Toiletries & Personal Care
  - Skincare (including acne care)
  - Sunscreen
  - Toiletries (shampoo, body wash, toothpaste, etc.)
  - Toothbrush
  - Tissue & wet wipes
  - Laundry bag
  
- Bedding & Room Essentials
  - Bedsheet
  - Duvet
  - Pillow
  - Towels
  - Hangers
  
- Electronics & Gadgets
  - Power bank
  - Phone Strap (phone stealing and robbing is very common in the UK)
  
- Travel & Documents
  - Passport, ID card

- SIM card / Phone card
- Cash (although most of the places accept e-payment)
- A copy of the admission letter (can be digital)
  
- Health & Medicine
  - Basic medicines
  - Vitamins
  - First-aid kit (bandages, etc.)
  
- Miscellaneous
  - Umbrella
  - Cup / Mug
  - Hairdryer
  - Water boiler and filter

However, you can get most of the items easily in the grocery stores.

## Useful Links & Contacts

Warwick Business School exchange website:

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

Contact of Warwick exchange office: [undergraduate@wbs.ac.uk](mailto:undergraduate@wbs.ac.uk)

Visa/ ETA: <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>

UK Railcard: <https://www.railcard.co.uk/>

UK coaches: <https://www.nationalexpress.com/en>

Cross country coaches: <https://global.flixbus.com/>

International student card (for discounts): <https://www.isic.org/>