Exchange Report

Warwick Business School

Fall 2025-2026

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September:

September was mainly about preparation, since the semester had not started yet. It turned out to be one of the most stressful months of my exchange. I had to keep calling the accommodation office and emailing Warwick to make sure I actually had a place to live before flying to the UK. In the end, I only managed to secure a room five days before my departure. Then something unexpected happened: a typhoon hit Hong Kong right around my original flight date, and most flights were being cancelled, including mine. I managed to switch to a flight one day earlier, but when I arrived at the airport, the airline staff told me the flight was overbooked and they could not guarantee me a seat. I had to wait until the very last moment at the gate to find out whether I could board. Fortunately, I got a seat and eventually arrived in the UK. I spent the first week settling in: buying essentials, getting used to my new place, and meeting my flatmates. We then went to Warwick together for the orientation events. That first week was really the adaptation period of the exchange—nothing very exciting, but all the small, tedious things were necessary to get life started there.

October:

The semester started in October. I went to the compulsory lectures and tutorials. During the breaks, I had time to explore the campus. Warwick's campus is huge so I almost got lost a few times while walking around.The learning experience felt more interactive compared to Hong Kong. There are more discussions during lectures and chances to speak up instead of just listening passively. Around this time, I also started travelling around the UK and Europe. I visited Paris, then Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Llandudno in North Wales. The trips were great, and I really enjoyed trying authentic Parisian food.Not everything was perfect though. Paris Beauvais Airport was probably the worst airport experience I have had.It felt a bit like something out of an apocalypse movie. Even so, the overall travel experience was fun. I studied lecture slides on the move and went back for tutorials.We even had a mid-lecture presentation where we had to prepare and present within the same class, which was a new experience for me.

November:

The learning experience in November was quite similar to October, but I started travelling even more. I visited more UK cities, like Bristol, with friends I met in my student accommodation, and we also went on a trip to the Benelux region. In Amsterdam, I got to see a different side of the city through its culture and museums. The Van Gogh Museum was one of the best museums I have ever visited, and the Anne Frank House was so powerful that I almost cried. We also had some intense moments, like meeting drug addicts on the streets of Brussels, which made the trip feel adventurous and unforgettable in many ways. Towards the end of November, as the exam period was approaching, I went to most of the lectures, but the overall study atmosphere still felt quite relaxed compared to HKUST.

December:

The only in-class coding exam was held in early December, and it was quite easy because we were allowed to vibe code and work through the task in our own way. Once that was

over, the semester basically came to an end, and I set off on my first-ever solo trip to Budapest and Vienna. Both cities were stunning and artistic, with a really romantic atmosphere that made just walking around feel special.

After that, I met up with a friend in London and got to experience the city during the Christmas period. The lights and decorations made it the most “Christmas” place I have ever been in my life. Then I went to Scandinavia for Christmas, where I tried overnight FlixBus rides, went skiing, and saw the aurora for the first time. It was a packed and unforgettable December that mixed the end of studies with some of the best travel experiences I have ever had.

1) Visa Procedures

I am a Hong Kong passport holder and I only stayed there for 3 months so I didn’t need to apply for a VISA, all I needed was ETA.The application process of ETA is simple and fast and took me 30 minutes from registration to receiving the confirmation email.

2) Orientation Activities

I arrived in October, right when the new academic year started. There were all sorts of orientation events for both exchange and local students. I only went to the compulsory ones, which were honestly pretty dull. Most of them were just faculty members giving long speeches. One session was even about discipline, and it really felt like being back in high school again. The most useful one is the WBS school for exchange students where they give out free tote bags and some useful information on course registration and grading methods. There were also other events like circling which is a big social tradition at Warwick, but I decided to skip those. My friend said it’s worth joining if you are not afraid of booze.

3) International Services & Activities

There were none. Never met the exchange team.

4) Accommodations

This was honestly one of the most challenging parts of my whole exchange experience. If you’re going to Warwick, don’t expect to be guaranteed on-campus housing. Unlike UST, where exchange students automatically get a hall offer, Warwick doesn’t provide that.

My exchange mate and I applied for on-campus accommodation back in June, even though their official deadline was in late August. We didn’t hear anything until early September, when they finally emailed us saying we should wait a few more days as there might still be rooms available. A week later,after we had already sent them three follow-up emails,they told us all on-campus options were full and gave us a referral code for private student accommodations in Coventry.

We had to apply ourselves, which meant a few stressful international calls. After a lot of hassle, we finally got a place, just five days before flying out. So if you're doing your exchange at Warwick, my advice is to skip waiting for the university allocation and go straight to private student accommodation websites.

I stayed at Trinity View. It's relatively convenient and affordable, but the management and maintenance were pretty bad, and the reception staff weren't very friendly. If you want something better, I'd recommend Infinity, which is another property under Mezzino. For reference, my ensuite room cost £150 per week on a 14-week contract, and there was no meal plan included.

5) Courses Registration

This part's actually pretty chill. You just need to log in to My.WBS, and from there it's really easy to find the course registration page. You'll most likely get into the courses you want,at least that's usually the case for business school students.
One important thing to keep in mind is that make sure you select the "exchange student" option when registering. If you don't, you might end up having to take an exam in January, which is after most exchange students have already left Warwick. Choosing the exchange student option means you'll only have to write essays instead of sitting for exams.

6) Courses that You Have Taken

I took three courses: IB2AD0 Data Science & Generative AI, IB2B40 Digital Business, and IB3940 International Financial Management. All of them are final year courses. For the Data Science course, there was an in-class test where we had to code a small data project within 50 minutes. The other two courses only required a few online quizzes.

All of them ended with a final essay instead of an exam. The content was pretty manageable, and I still scored quite well on all of the courses even though I didn't attend every lecture. Attendance is required. You can check how the monitoring point system works at Warwick to plan your time efficiently while keeping your attendance in good shape.

7) Finance & Banking

Most shops in the UK and Europe accept card payments, so you probably will not need to use much cash.If you do not have a credit card, a HSBC World Debit Card or similar international debit card can be useful for everyday spending abroad. If you already have a credit card that offers cashback or rewards on foreign transactions, that may be a more efficient option for most of your purchases.

If you need a UK account, Wise is a practical choice. It is an online account with good exchange rates and a straightforward setup process. It's so convenient for short-term stays like exchanges.

8) Climate

Winter in the UK was actually quite comfortable for me. It is more humid than Hong Kong, and the temperature is usually around 0 degrees.

You should expect the normal wind there to feel like Typhoon No. 3 in Hong Kong with light drizzles. A waterproof windbreaker is a practical choice because umbrellas get bent easily in the wind. A pair of waterproof sneakers is also helpful. They will make your life easier and stay comfortable in the UK weather.

9) Health & Safety

Since I was only there for three months, I was not eligible for NHS coverage.I relied on the medicine I brought from home and what I could buy locally. Pharmacies like Boots are easy to find and there is usually a pharmacist you can speak to. Getting basic medical advice is quite convenient. Painkillers are also noticeably cheaper in the UK than in Hong Kong, so you do not need to bring a large stock with you.

For safety, you need to be very cautious in Coventry. It is one of the most dangerous cities in Europe. I would strongly recommend going out in groups if you do not feel confident handling potential conflicts. You might want to avoid going out at night as much as possible. Some of my friends were involved in a fight with racist locals, and I personally witnessed a few robberies in the Sainsbury's near Pool Meadow bus station (the most dangerous neighbourhood in Coventry). I would say if someone looks suspicious, keep your distance.If they approach you, ignore them and move away. There are not many pickpockets in Coventry. If something happens, it is more likely to be direct confrontation or robbery.

10) Food

There are plenty of places to eat both in Coventry and on campus, but most of them are fast food. There is a Chinese all-you-can-eat restaurant on campus that is definitely worth trying at least once.

Personally, I cooked most of my meals in the UK because eating out did not feel worth the price. There was an Aldi next to my place, and it became my go-to for groceries.The ingredients there are generally cheaper than in Hong Kong, and the meat is noticeably fresher. There are also many Chinese supermarkets in Coventry. So if you can cook, you probably will not suffer much from food-related homesickness.

On top of that, there are some very good Hong Kong–style restaurants in Birmingham city centre, which is only about a 30-minute train ride away, so you can always make a short trip there when you miss home food. My suggestion is to either learn some basic cooking skills before going to the UK or find friends who can cook and eat together.lit saves money and makes life there much more enjoyable.

11)Transportation

There is a bus from Coventry to campus called 12X. It costs around 3 pounds per ride, or 5.7 pounds for a day of unlimited rides. You do not need to manually buy a day pass.Once you tap your card twice in one day, the system automatically caps your fare at the day ticket price, which works like a day pass.You can also buy a monthly pass, but I did not, since I did not need to go to campus that often.

The nearest airport is Birmingham International, and it is very convenient by train. From Coventry station, it is about a 10-minute train ride (my place was only about a 5 minutes walk to the station) . I strongly recommend getting a 16–25 Railcard, as it gives a good discount on train tickets and pays for itself after just a few trips. For reference, a round trip between Coventry and Birmingham International Airport cost me around 3 pounds with the discount.

12) Communication

There is eduroam on campus, but the connection is quite unstable, so you should not rely on it completely. I used Voxi as my mobile provider and got a UK number (very useful if you always do online shopping).It costs around 10 pounds per month for 100GB of 5G data, with unlimited data for social media apps. However, mobile internet in the UK is generally less stable than in Hong Kong, and I often only had 4G or even no signal at all when travelling by train.

For communication, most locals also use Instagram and WhatsApp, so you can just stick to the same apps you already use.

13) Sports & Recreation Facilities

Warwick has a huge sports centre and football pitches everywhere, so it is very easy to stay active on campus. The university also offers various paid sports classes that you can sign up for. During the first two weeks, they usually run free taster sessions, so you can try different activities first and then decide whether you want to commit to a full course.

14) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There are many societies in Warwick and you can join them even if you are an exchange student.

15) Cautionary measures

The culture in the UK is quite different from Hong Kong. For example, people on the street may suddenly stop you to talk about religion or other personal topics, which can feel unusual at first.

It is important to respect local culture, but you should also prioritise your own safety and comfort. If a situation or person makes you feel unsafe or uneasy, just walk away and avoid engaging in arguments or confrontations. In general, Europe can feel a bit more edgy than Hong Kong, and you really do not want to get involved in any unnecessary trouble.

Checklist of Items to Bring:

- Passport
- Phone
- Laptop
- Earphones
- Down Jacket
- Thermal Layers
- Credit Card or Debit Card
- Cash for emergency circumstance
- Gloves
- Travelling Socket Adapter
- Medicine

Contact List:

Warwick exchange & academics
Warwick Business School exchange information:
https://www.wbs.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/exchange-students/

Warwick Business School undergraduate/exchange enquiries:
undergraduate@wbs.ac.uk

Course registration, teaching and assessment (portal):
https://my.wbs.ac.uk

Accommodation
Warwick accommodation information:
https://warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation

Warwick accommodation email:
accommodation@warwick.ac.uk

Mezzino student accommodation (e.g. Trinity View, Infinity):
https://www.mezzino.com

Visa, travel & transport
UK visa / ETA check:

https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa

UK Railcard (e.g. 16–25 Railcard):
https://www.railcard.co.uk/

UK coach travel (National Express):
https://www.nationalexpress.com/en

Cross-country coaches in Europe (FlixBus):
https://global.flixbus.com/