

Amazing experience of exchanging to City University London

Hi there, my name is Zhe Liu and I spent approximately 3 months at City University of London, under the Social Science department. Though City University is not a very famous university around the world, it has the best location almost in the center of London, which is only two stations away from Kings Cross and from there you can visit everywhere that jumps into your mind.

Studying abroad is not a brand new experience for me since I have already studied in Rotterdam for two years, before that I was born and raised in Beijing. However the time in London was absolutely amazing and unforgettable, I would highly recommend to those people like me who are always seeking new challenges and fresh experience to go to London.

You will never feel bored in London, as one of the gigantic cities worldwide, plenty of shows and places are waiting for you to watch. You cannot miss this great opportunity to study in London.

Preparation

Bear in mind that there are several things that need to be done during your preparation, such as choosing courses, applying for Erasmus+ grant and preparing for the language test. But the most important thing that I would like to mention is the ACCOMMODATION! As we all understand that the rental price in London is extremely crazy, but City University actually provides accommodations for short period exchange students, which is called Liberty Hall. The Liberty Hall is just next to campus with an affordable price. However for me, since I did not fully aware the high rent in London and thought there was always a place for me to live in, therefore I applied the accommodation really late and there were no rooms available for me at Liberty Hall. Then I had to find apartments by myself, luckily I was finally settled down near Baker Street but the price was 300 pounds per week!! At this price, I still had to share the apartments with 3 other people. Therefore, the only advice that I can give to you is that try to apply the accommodation through City University as early as possible. Assume you have to search the room by yourself, don't panic and please induce your budget in order to find more available rooms. You can use the website like Airbnb (which I used) and Sparreroom, the location you may focus at are Paddington, Old Street and Elephant & Castle, which are the places

that many students stay.

Besides, keep in mind that if you are not from the English speaking countries, you have to take the TOEFL or IELTS test. I took the IELTS and it was not hard to reach the requirement, just remember you have to hand in your results before the end of March so do it right now!

Applying for Erasmus+ grant is also a time-consuming work, as you have to finish many forms and get signatures from both ESE and City University. If it really takes a long time for you to wait for the response emails from City University, please call them and it may push the procedure faster.

Arrival

I took the train from Rotterdam to London at 18th of September; the reason for not choosing the plane for me was that I bought two big suitcases; the plane may charge an extra fee for that. The train was not that bad, firstly you just have to transfer into Eurostar from Brussels Midi station, and the entire trip is around 4 hours. Secondly the destination station in London is St.Pancras, you can go from there to your accommodation within 5 tube stations depends on where you live of course, instead of bringing your luggage with you from some remote airports to the city center.

Furthermore, never miss the orientation week. I made most of my friends during that week because we were all exchange students and you may find common topics and importantly, had a similar schedule. During the orientation week, there were several introduction lectures, a social drink and a city tour. It was really useful because, in the city like London, you have to know where are the fantastic bars and clubs.

Lastly, don't take taxi but try Uber after the clubbing if you really need it. Trust me!

Courses

School finally begins, in order to obtain enough credits you have to choose 4 courses, each course includes two hours lecture and one-hour tutorial per week. Seems like pretty easy, but actually you have only one day off and some courses contain coursework

and others have midterms.

Intermediate Macroeconomics (7.5 ECTS)

This is a second-year course at City University, as we all learnt Macroeconomics before so it was not a tough one. You only have to take the midterm for the first two chapters and these two are never shown in the final exam. The tutorial was not compulsory in my opinion, though you register a fixed time of tutorial, you can still change it to any time you like. Once I remembered there was only one student in the tutorial, it was I.

Introductory Econometrics (7.5ECTS)

It is a second-year course as well; I would like to challenge myself as I thought I never learnt a course indeed called econometrics. However at some point, I felt like I may fail the course because I had to learn STATA, which was brand new software for me. There was not much information about STATA during the lectures, as they assumed that the students who choose this course should have some prior experience on STATA. Then I had to learn step by step through YouTube. Therefore don't choose this one if you willing to have more time to hang out with friends.

Global Financial Market (7.5ECTS)

A very interesting course, not only the professor was funny but also contained basic knowledge for hedge funds and future contracts. Currently, I am doing Finance 2 as one of my major courses, what I have learnt from the course Global financial market is also in the Finance 2. This is a second-year course in City as well.

Money and Banking (7.5ECTS)

This one is a third-year course for City University's students; therefore it contains specific knowledge about regulation and operation of banks. You have to do the coursework instead of the midterm. But the final exam was not as easy as I expected, the professor even asked the writers' name of some certain papers, therefore you have to read the entire slides thoroughly and slowly.

Finance

London is one of the most expensive cities in the world. The average costs of eating at

restaurants are from 15 pounds to infinite. Especially when you find there is a Japanese restaurant costs 300 pounds per person per meal, you will understand the meaning of expensive.

The following are my approximate expenses:

Rent:	5000
Transportation:	220
Daily life:	1000
Trips to Scotland:	250
Social:	950
Gym:	65
Total:	7485 pounds

Daily Life

If you tired of London, you tired of Life. As I mentioned before, each course had only 2 hours of lecture and 1-hour tutorial, which means I had so many spare time to do other activities. It was the first that I went to London; therefore the first thing for me was to visit attractions such as Tower Bridge, Westminster Abbey and Big Ben. Apart from that, there were tons of theaters that played famous shows everyday, among those adorable performances I chose the Hamlet, which was acted by Benedict Cumberbatch! You cannot really imagine how excited I was at the time I saw Benedict on the stage!

In addition, I also attended mountain climbing and table tennis groups in order to meet new friends. London is a perfect place to learn horse riding as well; there are so many horse-riding schools around London. Hyde Park, for example, has its own riding school, which is exactly located in the city center.

Last but not the least, you will find hundreds of clubs and bars around you, not only near the City University but also around Soho district. Just relax and enjoy the beer in London, only one thing I have to remind: always know your limit!

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions: lzese2013@hotmail.com

Cheers!