

Exchange Report  
Imperial Business School.

Sumit Goyal  
[Sgoyal18@schulich.yorku.ca](mailto:Sgoyal18@schulich.yorku.ca)  
Term: Summer 2019

My exchange program, journey was full of excitement, joy and knowledge that I would like to share with the readers. Decision to go for full term exchange at Imperial Business School, London was one of the best decision I took while on my MBA journey at Schulich. This was my first time on international exchange and went pretty well. The whole experience was not only helpful to broaden my education horizon but also provided me with opportunity to explore a different culture, meet other students and faculty in equally competitive business school in the globe.

My exchange journey started with my attendance to one of the info sessions and inquire to the student services about the exchange. I still remember the time, when I submitted my application to exchange office with my interest for exchange and asked hundreds of questions about how it will work. I am grateful to Cheryl and Tim from International relations at Schulich for their advice during the complete process including their recommendations on selecting the right school, courses and term that will fit my carrier objectives.

I received my confirmation letter for acceptance at Imperial through Schulich in December 2018 for start date for Summer 2019. The official letter from Imperial arrived in February by email and I needed to request them for hard copy to be sent by mail for immigration. Both these letter are important and physical copies are required for immigration at London airport. The official confirmation email from Imperial also included the online links to enroll in the courses and other information such as immigration and housing options.

Before making any decisions regarding the choice of school, it is always recommended to guide yourself about the visa and study requirements for that country. As a domestic student, I didn't need a visa for short term study in UK, but it's always better to check for latest updates with UK government (<https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>) before you travel.

London have multiple airports for international arrival. There are numerous flights from Toronto to London, I choose to arrive at Gatwick airport which had a direct and affordable flight from Pearson airport.

Most of the Airports in Europe have automatic gate for passengers arriving from North America but as a student DONOT use automated gates. International students to UK are required to visit a custom officer and require an arrival stamp on passport to study in UK. Schools require those stamps for authorization to allow students to continue study in UK. There are frequent trains from Airports to central London (Victoria station) for about 20 pounds one way. Uber is also available and was cheaper then taxi but still expensive then trains. Public transits (subway, buses and trains) are very convenient and similar to TTC. Major credit cards with contactless features are accepted for fare payments in their transit system. You can also buy Oster card (similar to Presto) but I used my visa card and it worked the same. Transit system works with zone system and fares are charged based on distance / stops travelled. I used offline downloaded Google maps on my phone and was very helpful for my way around.

Getting a pre-paid Sim card for phone was easy. 20 pounds connection with LYCA mobile provided unlimited calling within Europe, 100 minutes to Canada and 2 GB of data. Sim card can be purchased from airport or any local convenience store with in London.

Finding yourself a place to stay while completing exchange program can be challenging for oneself. There are many options available for accommodation such as student halls, hostels, AirBNb or room for rent though various online websites but they are quite expensive and smaller in comparison to what we can get in Toronto. Its difficult to find a sublet or room for shorter periods as most building require longer lease agreements. Imperial is located in core downtown London. Room prices vary considerably by location and distance from School. Imperial Student Hub provided me some resources and contact information of some companies providing rental services in London. I choose to stay within walking distance from School and paid about 50 pounds per day in shared student accommodation with Bed station ([www.bedstation.co.uk](http://www.bedstation.co.uk)). I had a room with attached bathroom with shared Kitchen. Kitchen was all equipped with pots, pans, microwave and stove. Laundry was in the building with ironing facility. There were many restaurants, shopping centers, bars, convenience stores all within the walking distance. The food delivery services such as UberEATS, Deliveroo were fast and easily available. The stay with the company was fine but they delayed more than 2 months for my deposit refund and retained about 50% for some miscellaneous expenses.

My host school did not have a mandatory insurance plan but school, did recommended getting medical and travel insurance before travel to UK. I didn't buy any extra insurance for travel as my drug benefit card covered for international travel up to 60 days. It is always good to check with your insurance company about the coverage before you travel, about coverage options for out of country and their contact numbers in case of emergency. Visiting a physician or obtaining a sick note in London can be very expensive.

The currency in England is Pounds. Imperial is a paperless and cash less organization. Everything including notes, assignments are required to be in electronic format. Payments are accepted through major credit cards or mobile apps. I didn't open a bank account as my debit/credit cards were working as same as here in Toronto. I did not felt a need to carry extra cash with me anytime since my debit and credit card worked well at the ATM machines in London, but again you need to check with your service provider for international usage fees or any extra charges on card usage. Cash withdrawals from ATM's in UK are no charge and offered better conversion rate then cashiers and money exchange shops.

Full term MBA at Imperial is 1 year compared to 2 years in most North American schools, so it's kind of fast track. The courses start almost every week with classes 4 full days and categorized into 2 modules: Split and Block modules. Split courses had 2 classes on Monday & Tuesday of first week, finished on Thursday & Friday of following week. Whereas for the Block courses classes were from Thursday to Sunday. MBA exchange students can choose course from various departments within Imperial including MBA and MSc programs. Every course is about 24 contact hours gives 4 ECTS. 20 - 23 ECTS are equivalent to 12 SSB credits. The class size was smaller than Schulich with about 20-25 students including students from Full time, Part-time, Online,

executive, exchange and other programs (MSc) that made those very diverse classes with people with vast experiences and knowledge to share. Students travel from all over the world to attend their classes. Classes were very interactive and discussion oriented. Students were highly encouraged for class participations and contribute with their practical experiences and personal opinions. This practicality in classes was one of the best parts I enjoyed at Imperial, learnings in the classes were highly focused on class discussions rather than book or slides contents. Course load and style is very much similar to Schulich with pre readings requirements, in-class assignments, case studies, presentations and final project delivery in the end. Almost every class had guest lecturers who shared their personal real-life experiences and provided tips on how to navigate future in career search. Most of the professors, I had, were from other parts of Europe and travelled specially to London to teach those courses. I found the faculty very energetic, passionate and practical towards their approach. They were open towards criticism and able to provide positive feedback to students. My understanding is that grading to assignments is done by another teacher. Comments and feedbacks, I received on my submission were very detailed including directions on areas of improvement.

Imperial Business School is part of Imperial College London, Similar to Schulich as to York University. Business school have their own staff for most of student services. The language spoken is English, but accents can be difficult to understand in the beginning. Locals and other students were very friendly and also invited me to their gatherings and group events.

Their International office at Imperial was my main contact and all communications were through email. The orientation for exchange student was one to one and details were provided in one of their emails. The orientation was for about 1 hour and provide information about campus locations, policies, expectations and security badge for entry to the premises.

London has many places to visit with in the city. Plan you courses, arrival and departure dates accordingly so that you can enjoy most while being there. London is very well connected to other major European countries such as Scotland, Netherlands, France by superfast trains. Advance booking could save hundreds of pounds both in travel and accommodation. Train are reliable and have frequent services. Prices for entry tickets and train/bus tickets vary quite a bit over timing and various websites. Make sure to compare multiple websites to find the best deal. Most of the Museums in and around the city permits free entry but you might have to pay for few.

I was able to plan my full-term exchange at imperial with 6 course in 2 months spread between June and July 2019 and managed to travel in England, Scotland, France and Switzerland. This was one of the best memorable experience in my life not only academically but also helped me build international connections with professionals from all over the world.