

Exchange Report



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I. INTRODUCTION:

My name is Jose Liu and I'm from Peru. My background is on Business which I studied in Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru one of the top universities in Peru. My professional background is in insurance as I worked for 7 years in Rimac Seguros, the leading company in the insurance sector in the Digital Marketing and Innovation Strategy area.

As time was passing by in my job, I felt the necessity to have more challenges and that is when I decided to study an MBA. After I did all my research and look all the choices available, I decided to apply to UBC because of its reputation as a university, recommendations from former alumni, the internationality of the cohort and the location of University because Vancouver is multi-cultural city and a tech hub in the northwest coast.

During my research about UBC, I was aware of the partnerships available for exchange and the name of the University of Manchester came across and I knew from that moment that I will like to do the exchange at that university. So when I received my acceptance for the Exchange in Manchester I was happy.

There were several reasons to pick Manchester as a destination. First of all, I always dreamed to study in the UK since I began to learn English in a British institute in Peru. That was the first moment when I was in touch with the British culture, the history, the music, and all the great landscapes that the UK has. The reputation of the University of Manchester was also very important as it is well ranked in both Financial Times and QS rankings (positions 59th and 47th respectively) and it has a great diversity of students. And Finally, Manchester as destination called my attention for its music scene (my favorite rock bands are from Manchester such as Oasis, Stone Roses, The Smiths, New Order) and its football teams (there are 2 big football teams which are Manchester City and Manchester United but I lean slightly towards to support Manchester City because my favorite band Oasis were really big fans)

With all that in mind, my exchange period in Alliance Manchester Business School was the highlight of my MBA and of the best experiences I had in my life.

II. ORIENTATION:

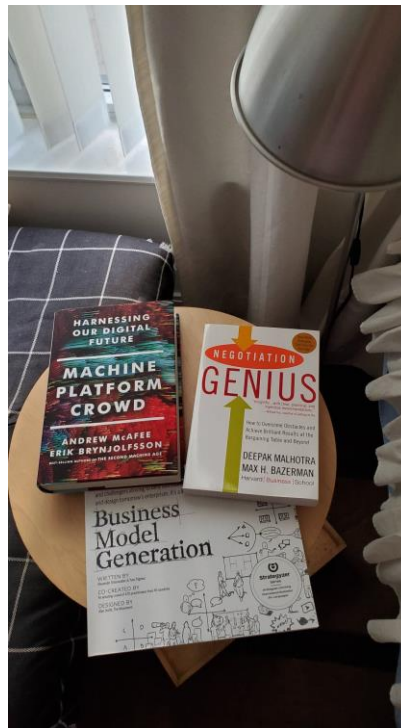
There was an orientation welcoming for all international students that were doing the exchange that also matched with the beginning of the new cohort of Full-time MBA students class of 2021, but unfortunately, I was unable to assist since it overlaps with my internship. As soon as I finished my internship, I flew to Manchester and I met with Lynne McCormack from the MBA Centre who was very kind to receive me and other 2 exchange students to give us a Welcome Pack full with information about the university and she gave us a tour to know the AMBS building which was inaugurated only 2 years ago.

Although I missed the orientation session, AMBS organized additional social events where I finally met not only people from FT 2020 but also people from the new FT 2021 and that's where I realized that were a lot of Peruvians in both cohorts that were welcoming from the start.

III. COURSES & REGISTRATION:

I received my confirmation for the exchange in February before going to GIE and after that I the first formal communication from AMBS arrived in the middle of May. In that email, there were attached several documents such as an application form for the exchange, the deadlines for the course registration and the list of courses available to enroll including a summary of all the content for each course. In my particular case, I needed to overload courses to fulfill with the credits required by UBC. So instead of the maximum 4 courses to enroll for exchange students, I needed to enroll in 6. To make this possible, there was a coordination between Alina Yukhymets from Sauder and Lynne McCormack from AMBS to make the exception with me and finally, I was allowed to enroll in the 6 elective courses which were: Negotiation Skills, Venture Capital, International Business Strategy, Engaging Human Talent, Digital Economy, and Advanced Strategic Management.

The enrollment in the courses was very simple. After submitting my choices by email, I received a confirmation that I was accepted in all 6 courses and 3 books were delivered to my house in Canada from Manchester at 0 cost which was very surprising for me because something like that does not happen in Sauder.



Later on, I received my acceptance letter from Manchester which was required for visa purposes and finally an email to complete my registration to access Canvas which is the online intranet that AMBS has (like Canvas is for Sauder).

The level and focus of the elective courses are completely different from Sauder's. The methodology in AMBS is blended so you attend classes only for workshops for each course and the rest of the time you study on your own through the online tool that AMBS has which is called "Blackboard" and attend to online lectures. This is because the electives also apply for the people

of Global MBAs which are part-timers and they are located in several centers such as Shanghai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai, and Sao Paulo. So people who take the electives can log in to each center to attend to the online lectures which are most of the time recorded in Manchester. Furthermore, through Blackboard you can find all the relevant information for each course with readings and videos that will prepare you to attend the workshops. Each workshop lasts for 3 days with a final group presentation on the final day that weighs 50% of your grade. The rest of your grade is for an individual assignment which is an essay between 2000 and 2500 words. I found this the most difficult part since the assignments in Sauder are memos of 2 pages and for that, the time invested to prepare the assignments was longer.

Overall, I would definitely say that the level of courses in UBC is more difficult and the workload in UBC is heavier than AMBS. This is because, in Sauder, you are full of assignments, readings, quizzes and group meetings that could be time-consuming. As in the Blended methodology that AMBS has, you have more time to read and assimilate all the concepts by yourself and you have more balance to do other stuff. But this does not mean that the level of education you will receive in AMBS is lower. The content provided in articles and books by AMBS was really relevant as well as the analysis you need to do for your final presentations and individual assignments.

As a recommendation for the courses, I will suggest trying to contact current students from AMBS or former alumni that could give you a perspective of the quality of the courses and the teaching. In my case, I contacted a current student of AMBS and he told me that my election of the courses was good. The best courses for me were Digital Economy with Reza Salehnejad which not only was my favorite professor but also the Full-time students agreed on that and Negotiation Skills which was very efficient with a great balance between theory and practice. There are no specializations in AMBS like UBC has so regardless of your career track, you can choose whatever course resonates with you the most.



IV. TEACHING:

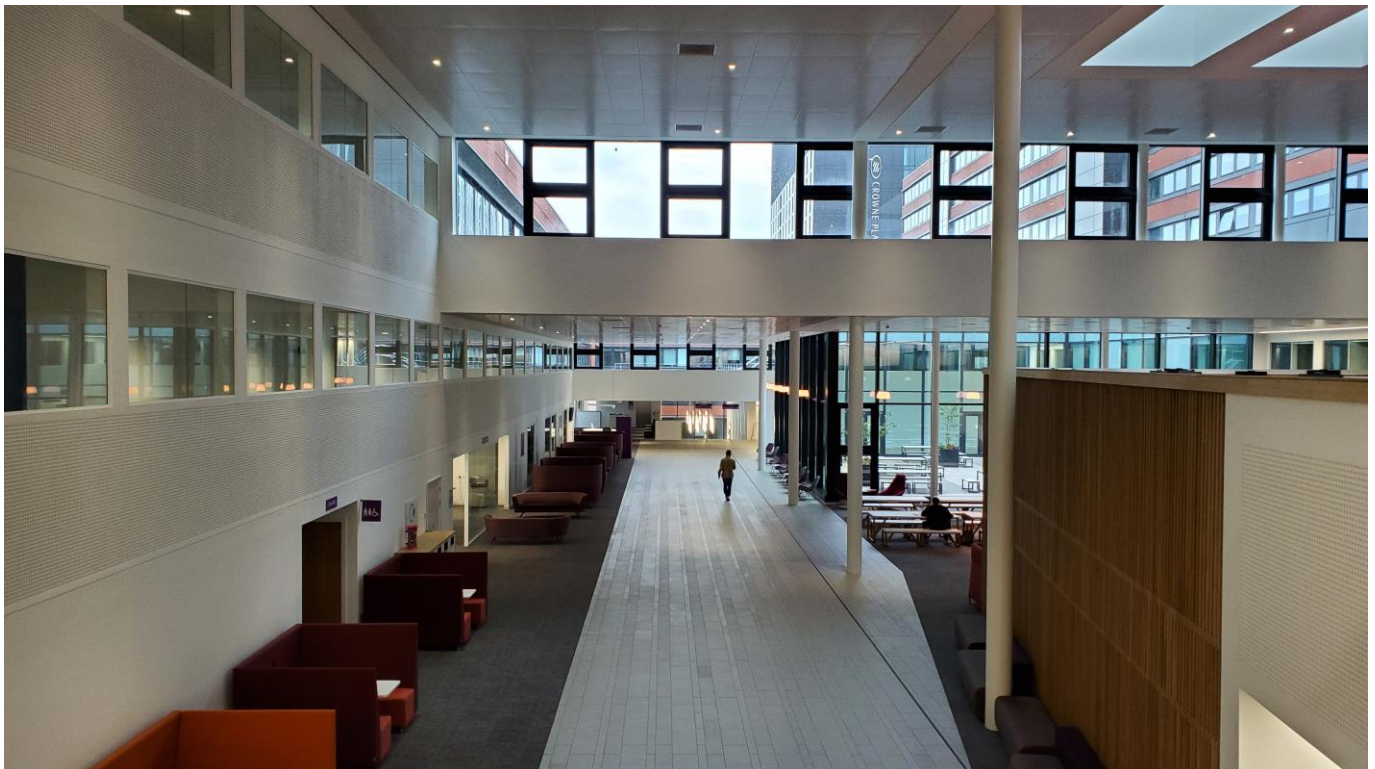
As for any school, there were really good and not so good professors during my experience in AMBS. Some of them tried to push too much content during the constrained amount of time of the workshops that sometimes was hard to assimilate, others were not very engaging with the class so it was a monotony of one-way direction between the professor and the class. But others were very high class, very engaging and very knowledgeable providing a great experience. Since the courses are given in different locations, the professors for each course could differ and therefore impact your experience of the course. Unlike UBC, AMBS does not have a component of class participation and homework including in your grade. But besides that, people participate with very thoughtful questions and the debate has a good level.

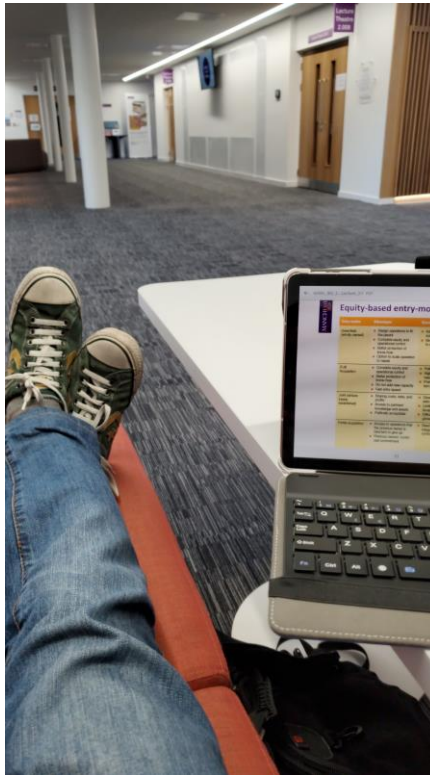
V. CAMPUS FACILITIES:

Both UBC's and AMBS's campuses are really beautiful and well equipped with everything you need to feel comfortable. The only big difference for me is that UBC's are bigger but AMBS has a really beautiful minimalistic architecture all in white that combines with the color of the logo of the University of Manchester. You can find breakout rooms to do your group assignments as well as comfortable couches to sit down and study by yourself. In addition, you can find also personal computers on individual desks to study in an area they called "The hive" which is highly demanded between undergraduates and postgraduates.

There was no such thing as insecurity on campus as AMBS is very well located and you can walk through the entire campus with complete safety







VI. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

There is an International Student Association at the University of Manchester that organizes events and support for all international students. The events vary from tour trips, board games, tea, and biscuits, etc. I would recommend joining the association because they organize good trips at a low cost and you can meet new people from other countries and make friends. Furthermore, The MBA center is very helpful and the people there are very kind to reach, so they can assist you with anything that you need.

VII. HOUSING FACILITIES:

The University of Manchester does not provide housing. Instead, they suggest either find accommodations on certain zones in a reasonable radius so you can go to the campus without any further problems or stay in the crown plaza which is a hotel in front of AMBS but is really expensive and not suitable for an exchange student but rather for Global MBAs who came only to attend the workshops for 3 days.

In my case, I stayed in the apartment of a full-time student who shares his place with me during the 3 months. I found this by chance while I previously contacted some of the Peruvians students and one of them told me that this guy had a room for me. The place was very convenient because it was near Oxford Road which is the main avenue and 10 minutes walking to school. In fact, I had everything on a 10-minute walking distance radius (bars, supermarkets, restaurants, malls, etc) so I didn't use public transport.

VIII. COSTS/ EXPENSES:

- a. Accommodation: In my case was around 550 pounds and I had a private bathroom. That is the average price I was mentioned many of the full-time students were paying.
- b. Textbooks: Rather than Sauder where you have to pay for readings, all the books either hard

copy or in digital were free.

c. Local transportation (buses, trains): The most common transport is the tram that cost around 2.6 pounds. I used whenever I needed to go to watch football either City or United because the stadiums are outside the downtown area of Manchester. As for trains, I highly recommend getting the railcard student because it gives you very good discounts by purchasing trains when you want to travel outside of Manchester and within the UK.

d. Food/groceries: Both are 25% less than Vancouver. Although the conversion for GBP is higher than CAD, you find on the supermarkets cheaper food. My suggestion is to buy groceries in ALDI because they have cheaper costs comparing with other supermarkets such as Tesco or Sainsburys

e. Other: I didn't buy any clothing since all the clothing I got from Canada was enough for the fall and beginning of winter in Manchester. In my case, I bought rock concerts and football tickets that were cheaper than in Canada. There are always discounts for students so it was very great to find that.

IX. STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES:

I was aware that the University has a health care clinic on campus. But since I did not have any health issues, so I am not familiar with the health assistance you can receive there.

X. SOCIAL EVENTS:

There were several activities organized by both the University and the alumni. From the side of the university, they tried to get closer bonds between the class of 2020 and 2021 and social drinks events were often organized. Furthermore, the class of 2020 was very engaging and high supportive. I made really good friends with them and we went together to football matches, eating out karaoke nights, and bars in Manchester. My favorite group was the Latino as they organize a lot of parties especially the Peruvians as they were the majority, so it was common to go on Wednesdays to "Revolucion Cuba" where they had Latin parties on that day.

My recommendations to eat are "Rudys" which an Italian place where they had amazing pizza, "Viet Shack Ancoats" to eat Vietnamese food and it was the best I tried in Manchester, "Gorilla" to eat the "Sunday Roast" which is a very popular dish in the UK. As for drinks and bars, the Northern Quarters zone is the best to find local bars and listen to live music.

XI. CAREER SERVICES:

I did have access to Career Services in Manchester. Through Blackboard, I could see events that were coming and enroll. For that, I enrolled in an event of former international students from AMBS that gave us tips about to do and shared their experiences with us so I found it very enjoyable. Furthermore, other workshops such as how to apply for work visas after graduation were giving the same as UBC does. I was aware that they support on personal coaching and give you help to find jobs, but I found it was more suitable for the full-timers. In addition, the University sends emails with job opportunities and the tool to look for job offers is the same as the one we use in UBC so I was very familiar when I looked at it.

XII. SPORTS/ RECREATION:

There is an aqua center near campus where students can enroll paying 40 pounds per month and have access to a swimming pool and a gym which was really well equipped. Furthermore, there is a football pitch nearby campus where students organized matches among them. No special equipment is required to bring rather than sports clothes if you want to practice sports on any of the facilities mentioned, but in case you need to buy clothing, you can do it on Primark which is a convenience store where they sell anything you need.

XIII. STUDY TOURS/ FIELD TRIPS:

The International Students Society organizes regularly tour trips to many locations nearby Manchester and these consist of full-day trips or even with 1 night staying. If you enrolled in the Society the cost varies from a range of 20-35 pounds depending on the duration of the trip. I did one in York and it was very good.

XIV. WHAT TO BRING:

There is no need to bring to many things to Manchester. The clothing you use in Vancouver is perfectible useful in Manchester since in both cities rain a lot and an umbrella with proper raincoats are essential. Laptops are mandatory to work not only for the workshops but for the individual assignments. If there is one essential thing you need to bring with you is an adapter because Plugs in the UK are different from Canada, so my recommendation will be to bring an international adapter that can help not only in the UK but also in Europe when you travel. The rest you can find it and buy it in Primark or in Amazon.

XV. GENERAL IMPRESSIONS:

Without any doubt, the exchange experience in Manchester was the highlight of my MBA and of the best life experiences I had in my life. As I mentioned before, going to the UK to study was a dream come true to me that it gave me the chance to know a fantastic place with so much history and culture that I was amazed anytime I had the chance to travel within the UK. In addition to that, air tickets to go to other countries in Europe are cheap, so it is absolutely recommended to spend some time traveling. I did that in my last weeks during the exchange and I visited places I never thought I could do. But besides the traveling, concerts, football matches, the most rewarding part for me was to meet fantastic people and a great cohort of the Full time 2020 class that was very close and welcoming with anyone. Moreover, during the workshops, I was exposed to meet people from the Global MBAs and that experience was enriching to meet people with bigger roles in their companies, so chances to do great networking with people outside Manchester were huge.

On the other hand, this exchange gave me the chance to value the education received in Sauder because sometimes when I mentioned that I came from Sauder in Vancouver, people looked at me minimizing my school but when the time came to work, they saw that I could perform even better than full-timers. In addition, the skills build with Sauder gave me the confidence to do all the assignments and prepare myself for the workshops properly that I don't think could work if that went vice versa.