

JEN BEATRICE TAN

Go on Exchange

Whatever doubts you're having, for as long as you can afford it, go on exchange. There has never been a more enriching experience than travelling to another country to study. Being from the Philippines, coming to NCCU has already been life changing but Paris was an entirely different story for me and so will your experience be wherever you decide to go. If you genuinely want to learn things that you don't already know, if you want to be challenged to do things you've never done, if you want to find yourself outside of your current comfort zone, then go on exchange.

You're never going to have as much free time as you do now as a student. Going on exchange is an ideal opportunity if you want to travel and learn at the same time because once you start working, it'll be hard to get time off to travel. More so if you decide to go to Europe. As selfish as it sounds, life is easy as a student. Everything you do is for yourself. You attend a few hours in class and then spend as much time as you want to study. The rest of it is free time and you do with it as you want. As an exchange student, you can decide to do part-time work or travel and go on adventures! From my previous reports, I obviously decided to travel but if that doesn't fit with your plan it's absolutely possible to find a job too. I have a friend who studies in London and is a part-time waitress. I have another friend from ESCP who worked part time in sales at a luxury perfume shop.

The paperwork to get to wherever you're going will also be much easier to complete. You'll also have a bigger chance of having it approved than if you travel independently. Having a Philippine passport, which ranks amongst the weakest in the world, is tough when applying for visas because most countries fear taking us in. This is largely due to the number of illegal immigrants that have entered their country (and haven't left) to apply for jobs with tourist visas. The same might not be the case for the Taiwanese.

You can also save on a lot of things as a student. In Paris, there are a lot of discounts offered to students and even more for those aged 26 and below. Some of the things that are cheaper for students include public transportation, train tickets, entrance to museums and select tourist sites. Relevant to transportation, tickets to other countries are also much cheaper coming from Paris than from Taiwan or the Philippines. You can also apply to live at a dorm which is considerably cheaper than looking for your own apartment. Lastly, the cost of applying directly to ESCP and attending as an exchange student is a few 00s apart. So tuition as an exchange, in my case, was also economical.

As much as you think you already know and as much as you believe you can easily accomplish on your own, there is a big beautiful world out there. Go on exchange and expose yourself to a new life, to a completely different culture and to that confusing language! Open yourself to learning things that you'll never learn from inside a classroom or even from working a corporate job. Make new friends, listen to their point of view, find new interests, dream new dreams and inspire others to dream bigger.

Go on exchange, find yourself and come out of it better!