In the first semester of academic year 2014~2015, I have the taste of study aboard. I exchanged to the University of Adelaide. The university is located in the city area of Adelaide, which is the capital city of South Australia.

Adelaide is a convenience city and has a nickname called “20 minutes city”. The city has this name because people can travel from the western to the eastern part of the city within 20 minutes by public transport. It is not a long journey even they walk from one side to another side of the city. I always enjoy walking in the city under the fine weather and appreciate the gorgeous architecture. The weather there is always good, the natural views there are wonderful and the people there are so nice and helpful. I really love this peaceful and lovely city!

My host university, the University of Adelaide, has a total of 5 campuses. I studied in the main campus, which is located near the main street of Adelaide city. The university has a lot of natural elements in the campus. For example, it has several grass fields, a lake that always has ducks swimming in it and a river near the North entrance of the university. These elements create a relaxing environment for the students to study. Many students enjoy studying under the sunshine on the grass field or near the river. I am also one of them and I did not feel any stress while studying in Australia.

The academic cultural there is very different from Hong Kong. The students there take every lecture seriously and will pay attention to the whole lecture. They seldom late for class and always arrive earlier than the professor. Unlike the students in Hong Kong, they will not bring computer to class. All of them will print out the notes before class. They prefer using their own writing to jot down the notes instead of using computer to type the notes. They have very good relationship to the professors. They will call their name directly if they want to ask them question. For example, if the name of the professor is Tom Chan, they will call him Tom directly instead of calling him Professor Chan. This made me feel the cultural difference between western and eastern countries.

I took 4 courses in the exchange period. The most interesting one is the Astronomy course. I have been interested in space for a long time and always want to take a course of that. I am so lucky that I can take this course in Australia and I really learnt a lot from that. Oversea universities often encourage students to learn through practical instead of lectures. Therefore, this course has a total of 6 practical in a semester. I like this arrangement as I think the practical
lessons in Hong Kong universities are not enough. All the students are just sitting in a lecture hall and attend 3 hours lecture per week and then go home. They have little chances to show what they have learnt from lectures in practical lessons. At last, all the students will be very strong in theory but very weak in practical and this will make them difficult to survive in the competitive working environment. Therefore, I think oversea universities do very well in this aspect. They offer a lot of opportunities for students to learn through practical lessons and this really made me learn a lot from that. Lessons become more interesting if you can really involve in it instead of just sitting there and listen to the voice of the lecturer.

As mentioned above, the students are very serious in learning so it is very difficult to make friends though school time. Therefore, I make international friends though my accommodation and international student activities.

Let’s talk about my accommodation first. I lived in a student accommodation called urbanest. Not only students from the University of Adelaide live in it, but also from other universities such as University of South Australia. I lived in a six shared flat. All of us have our own room and toilet and need to share the kitchen. Therefore, the kitchen becomes a place for us to make new friends. My flat mates are from different parts of the world. They are from Korea, Malaysia, England and Australia. Through talking with them, I learnt a lot of cultures of their home country. They also asked me a lot about Hong Kong. We exchanged our own culture and this is one of the aims of study aboard. We also cooked for each other, let the westerners to have a taste of Chinese cuisine and they also let me to have a try of traditional western food. It is really fun to cook with the others and talk to the people from the other parts of the world!

The university offers a lot of activities for students. These activities included a pre-semester trip, weekly morning tea, cultural nights and international student parties. Through these activities, I can know more friends from different parts of the world. However, most of my international friends are Asian. I think it is easier to communicate and make friends with Asian as we have similar appearance and share similar culture. For the westerners, if only two of us, we can talk to each other easily. However, when they are in a group, they tend to make friends with the other western people instead of Asians. I think this is also because of the westerners share similar cultures so they can get along among themselves easily.
Apart from school life, I tried a lot of new things and adventures in Australia. I have tried kayaking with cute dolphins in a nice river; controlling a small airplane in the sky and trying the thrilling skydive near a spectacular beach. All the activities were great and fantastic and they cannot be done in Hong Kong. I also learnt how to play the most popular sports in Australia, the Australian ruled football. It is a very exciting and violent ball game that I have never heard before I went to Adelaide. This sport is very special and it is played in an oval shaped sport field. There are all together 36 players in the field and I think it has the greatest number of on-field players among the other team sports. I watched a football match in the sports stadium in Adelaide. It was really great and I could easily feel the passions of the audience and the players.

I have exchanged in Adelaide for 5 months. I think these 5 months are the best 5 months ever in my life. I think I have grown up a lot in these 5 months. I learnt to be independent and take care myself. I gained confident and courage from different new activities that I have tried. I have improved in my interpersonal skills through making friends with people around the world. I am sure the skills I learnt and the experiences I had in these 5 months will benefit me in my future life and make me become a real adult.