

# Student Report: Fudan University Shanghai Fall 2015

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## General Information

The following student report outlines the life at Fudan University Shanghai, where I attended classes during the fall semester 2015. If you have never been to China before, Shanghai is a good start as it is the most modern and “westernized” city in China hosting many expats and international students. But bear in mind that some of the exchange courses for bachelor studies end in January so that you will have to start with your studies in Rotterdam immediately after your return.

## Preparation

The admission process for Fudan is straightforward and easy to understand. After my nomination I did not have to send any documents to the university and received all the documents needed for the application of the X-visa (student visa for China) as well as a course guide to have a first glance at what courses are offered at Fudan by the end of March/April. In my case the course guide was completely off, so do not rely on this information unless you are sure it is correct (even if it is sent by the university). The application process for the visa, however, was quick and easy. I encountered no problems, but make sure to apply in time and have your departure date at hand. Further, getting either a single or double room in the dorm facilities of the university was no problem. However, the dorm is about a 20-minute walk away from the School of Economics, so I would recommend buying a bike for about RMB 200 when you arrive. Finally, make sure that you have the original documents and several copies as well as passport pictures with you when you depart (keep all receipts and documents you get).

## Upon Arrival

When you arrive at the university, you will have to go through a step-by-step registration procedure at the dorm. This includes registration at the university, buying mandatory insurance for the time spent in China and paying any fees for the classes/dorm upfront. As Erasmus University is paying your tuition fees you will only need to pay for the dorm, if you choose to live there. In addition, I would recommend making an appointment for the physical examination, which is necessary to get the residence permit including a multiple entry visa. If you are living at the dorm, you do not need to register with the local police station (this only applies, if you choose to live off campus). If you are applying for the residence permit, do so at the entry-exit bureau as it is much quicker than through the university. I applied through the university and got the permit at the end of October, while at the entry-exit bureau it takes only five working days, if you have all the necessary documents.

## Courses

The first two weeks of the semester you will be able to attend all classes and choose, which ones you like best. Since the course guide sent to me was wrong, I appreciated this opportunity and found out that EMA-classes (classes offered to Master students) end during December, so that you can spend Christmas/New Years at home or have some time to travel. There are a variety of courses offered,

but the School of Economics at Fudan only lets you choose one class outside of the field of Economics. Therefore, you will not be able to take 12 ECTS credits outside of Economics, when going to Fudan. In my case, I took only classes offered by the EMA program, namely New Political Economics in China (3 credits), China's Taxation System and Fiscal Policy (3 credits), Doing Business in China (3 credits) and Topics on Development Economics (3 credits). Hence, one credit at Fudan roughly translates into 2 ECTS at Erasmus University. The level of the courses varied according to the number of assignments and the English level of each professor. Make sure, that you find out what classes you want to take during the first week, as you will not be able to switch or add any courses after you have handed in the registration form. You may be able to follow courses that you did not officially include on the registration form, but this has to be arranged with the professor and you will not receive a grade for the class.

I did not choose to learn any mandarin, as I thought that I would not be able to learn enough within four months anyway. This was also the case for most people who took mandarin classes. Therefore, if you want to learn mandarin and speak it in China, you will have to invest a lot of time on your own since the course does not teach you enough to be able to have a general conversation.

### Finance

Finances may vary a lot in China, but in general life is cheaper than in Rotterdam. This following calculation assumes living in the dorm and eating out everyday, as you will probably not cook often at the dorm:

Type of Expense	Item	Approx. price in RMB
One-time purchase	Bike	200-250
One-time purchase	Insurance	400
One-time purchase	Physical Examination	Ca. 350
One-time purchase	Residence Permit	Ca. 400
Monthly	SIM card	50
Daily	3 Meals	70
Daily	Metro	Max. 7 per trip
Daily	Single Room	80

In China your biggest expense will be rent. Depending on whether you want to live in the dorm or downtown this will vary between EUR 300-550 a month. Food is generally speaking very cheap in China, but if you are looking for quality food, then you will have to budget a little more. Transportation is very cheap and I would suggest getting a travel card in the beginning so that you do not have to buy a single ticket every time. An average meal costs between RMB 20-30, while most drinks cost less than a euro. Therefore, daily life can be very cheap.

### Daily Life

The daily life in Shanghai is very dynamic and the city never stops being busy. You can do lots of shopping downtown, visit several museums, the Bund as well as other sites. If you like going out, Shanghai is the right place for you. Most of the times going out is for free, but quality may differ according to your taste. If you are living at university, it will take you about 45 minutes to go downtown by

metro or 25 minutes by taxi. However, everything you need is nearby the university, such as restaurants, supermarkets, bars etc. Further, the Internet at university is very slow, even if you get your own router in the dorm. The VPN connection with Erasmus will not work and Google, Youtube, Facebook, Playstore (android phones) and several websites are blocked (so prepare for that). In addition, everybody uses Wechat in China and not Whatsapp, so I recommend downloading it already in the Netherlands. Furthermore, be prepared for cold winters. Even though September and October are relatively warm, it might get very cold in December and the isolation of Chinese houses is quite bad.

During my time in Shanghai I found it somewhat difficult to get to know many Chinese students. I did not meet any Chinese students in my courses and all internationals live in a separate part of the dormitory facilities. Compared to Hong Kong and Tokyo, the English level is also much worse. Nonetheless, I had a lot of fun during my exchange, meeting new people and going out in Shanghai. It was interesting to experience living in a different system and society and trying to understand the western world from a Chinese perspective. Shanghai is also a great starting point for trips around Asia and keeping in mind all recommendations life can be very comfortable over there! So be prepared and enjoy your time at Fudan University!