

My Exchange Period at Fudan University, Shanghai

Dear reader,

My name is Antti Yang and I am a student Econometrics and Operations Research. From September 2015 to December 2015, I studied in Shanghai at Fudan University, one of the most renowned universities in China (together with Qinghua and Peking University in Beijing). In this report, I will try to tell you everything you need to know about your exchange in China. If you still have any questions, feel free to contact me at anttiyang@gmail.com!

Preparation

After you get nominated by ESE to do the exchange program at Fudan University, you have to wait a while to get your first e-mail from Fudan. **Be sure to check your mail regularly, especially the spam inbox, since their mail might end up in there!** After receiving the mail, follow the instructions to finish application. Fudan will send the admission notice and other required files to the university. This includes the papers necessary to apply for an X2 type visa. Further information on visa application can be found on the website of the Chinese visa application center in The Hague.

Accommodation

There are multiple options for accommodation at Fudan University. The Handan campus, where you will be studying, is located in the northern part of Shanghai, about a 20-30 minute taxi ride from the center. I recommend living close to campus, since it is easier to go to the center whenever you want to instead of having to come to campus everyday to go to class. There are three alternatives around campus: the international dormitories, Tohee student village and renting a room/apartment.

I decided to live in the campus dormitories. If you want to rent a room in the dormitories, you have to be quick: renting a room is comparable to snatching concert tickets; if you are too late then all rooms are booked. Registration in my year started at 12th of August at 9:00 AM sharp. There are three types of rooms: single rooms, double rooms and rooms with multiple students. The first two types are in the main building of the dormitories, so I recommend these because of their facilities. The prices are 80 rmb/day for a single room and 55 rmb/day for a double room, which you have to share with another roommate. Every room has its own bathroom, shower, bed, desk, chair and closet. For the most recent information, keep an eye on the website of the international students office of Fudan: <http://iso.fudan.edu.cn/house.htm>.

Another alternative would be Tohee International Student Village, where you can rent a room in an apartment, sharing it with either 2 or 3 people. More information is available on <http://www.tohee.com/>. The final option would be to rent a room or apartment by yourself. This could be done on www.smartshanghai.com. Prices are similar to that of the dorm.

Arrival

I arrived in Shanghai about four days before the start of the registrations, on 26th of August. You can choose a suitable start date for the dormitory and arrive on that date. Taking a taxi from Pudong International Airport is quite expensive, and will cost you around 200 rmb. Classes start one week after the official registration, more information follows in the *Courses* section.

Courses

Course registration is done after arrival and registration, so you do not need to worry about it beforehand. You will have one week to try out courses and at the end of the week you have to hand in a form. Courses are usually 2/3 credits, representing the amount of hours you have to attend class. One Fudan credit is worth 2 ECTS, so to finish the exchange program you need to obtain 12 credits.

I chose courses out of the master program Chinese Economy & Finance. The level is higher than bachelor courses, but the exams are earlier so you will be done before Christmas. I chose the following courses:

Chinese Foreign Trade (2 ECTS): this course treats some general topics on the development and the current status of the foreign trade structure in the Chinese Economy. This is also the course I was engaged most into, since classes were mandatory. The grade consists out of 10% participation, 20% presentation, 20% reading report and 50% final exam.

Topics on Development Economics (3 ECTS): this course treats some random topics concerning development economics, property rights and corruption. The professor, Yu Liu, studied at Yale University and was really interesting. The grade consisted solely out of a presentation and a reading report; both were 50% of the final grade.

Corporate Finance (3 ECTS): this was one of the least interesting courses I chose. It treats some topics of corporate finance from the perspective of the moral hazard problem. Just like for Development Economics, this course only had a presentation and reading report.

Integrated Chinese: Advanced Level (4 ECTS): this course is only for people who can already speak Chinese at a fairly high level. Courses are given fully in Chinese. You will read a lot of news articles, and the teacher will explain some grammar out of this article. This course also has a beginners and intermediate level.

All the presentations and reports mentioned were about an academic paper you had to read. After reading the paper, you had to summarize the most important points and add your personal viewpoints.

Finances

Monthly expenditures:

- Rent: 2400-3000 RMB/month
- Food and drinks: 2000-3000 RMB/month (depending on taste and hygiene standards)
- Social activities: 1500 RMB/month
- Transportation: 300 RMB/month (taxi's are expensive, metro and buses are really cheap)
- Phone & Wifi: 150 RMB/month

The expenditures in euros depend on the exchange rate. However, the RMB has appreciated quite a lot the past few years, making an exchange period relatively expensive. The exchange rate during my stay was around 1 eu = 6.9 RMB.

Other costs:

- Flight ticket: 800 euro (cheaper to transfer somewhere)
- Visa: 100 euro

Daily life

Around campus

Shanghai offers a lot of fun things to do, but before I start with that, you are an exchange student so you should also focus on studying. You will be having approximately 12 lecture hours per week, but you could organize your classes in such a way that you can enjoy a long weekend. There are many activities around school. I participated in bi-weekly football events, where a lot of local but also international students gathered to play football with each other. Other than that, there are also a lot of basketball courts near the dorm and a gym. Do not expect too much from the gym, the equipment looks cheap and old; but it works and it is free! I also participated in an association for voluntary work. These are only a few examples in an infinite amount of activities! There are also lots of restaurants around campus, and the Wujiaochang shopping area is just a few stops by bus, so you will never get bored!

City center

When you want to leave campus, the city center offers a lot of shopping, eating and entertainment opportunities. Nanjing road basically offers everything you need for a fun day out, and is easily reachable using metro line 10. From there, you can also walk to The Bund, where you can see the famous skyline of Shanghai. There are also other places to go, such as Lujiazui, where you stand in the middle of all the famous skyscrapers of Shanghai. Tianzifang, Chenghuangmiao (Yuyuan Garden) and Jingan Temple are other famous tourist attractions. For the party animals, Shanghai is a city that never goes to sleep, and there are parties every day, so do not worry about that.

Entertainment

Some fun activities you have to do in China:

- Go karaoke and show off your amazing singing skills
- Pay to let people lock you up in a room and try to get out within an hour (escape room)
- Go to an arcade and try to win little plush toys for your boy/girlfriend
- Everything there is to do back home, but with more variety and cheaper!

I have to note that if you can read Chinese and own a Chinese bank account, you should download Dazhong Dianping and try to get to know how to use Wechatpay and Alipay; it will save you lots of money on discounts on food and entertainment. For example, movies are often half the price, or even less!

Travel

Finally, there are lots of travel opportunities, in China and in Asia. Around Shanghai, you could go to Suzhou, Hangzhou or Nanjing, which are all within a few hours travel by train. Popular cities in China include Xian, Chengdu, Xiamen and Sanya (Hainan). Of course, you also have to visit the majestic capital of China: Beijing, which has everything Shanghai has to offer and more! If you are tired of China, you can also travel around in Asia, but make sure to apply for a residents permit if you still need to go back to China after your travel. You will receive information on how to from the university.

I hope this report will be useful in making your choice! No matter the destination, the exchange period will be a really fun time in your life, and you should do everything to enjoy it! As mentioned before, you can always mail me with questions about anything related and exchange to Shanghai or China!

Good luck with your application process!