

# Student Report: Fudan University, Shanghai Fall 2016

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## General Information

During the fall of 2016 I was able to attend Fudan University in Shanghai, China. Fudan University is one of the best schools in China and Shanghai is a super modern and awesome city, so I'm very grateful to have been able to go to this university. In this report I'll hope to answer the questions you might have about your exchange. If you have any questions about Fudan or your exchange, feel free to contact me at [dylanbuter@hotmail.com](mailto:dylanbuter@hotmail.com).

## Preparation

After your nomination, you'll get your first e-mail from Fudan around March, however this email could end up in your spam box (so check it one regularly). This email contains information and instructions about the admission procedure. Around June, Fudan will send the documents needed to finish the application and to apply for a visa. You can apply for two types of student visas, X1 and X2, the X1-visa is for when you stay longer than 6 months, X2 for a period shorter than 6 months (which is sufficient for your exchange). However both of these visa allows you only one entry, you can apply for a residence permit in Shanghai (mandatory if you hold X1), which allows you to enter and leave the country during its validity. Fudan will send a handbook containing all the information about the application process for visa, residence permit etc., I would also advise to carefully read the information about the documents needed on the Chinese visa application centre and to start the process early (2-3 months in advance).

I decided to book a dorm room on campus, if you get a dorm room you'll stay at the international dormitories on Handan campus. Handan campus is located in the northern part of Shanghai, not far from the city centre (20 min. taxi; 20 min. metro). Alternatives to the dorms are Tohee village or renting your own apartment. The dorms are a lot cheaper, however when renting your own apartment you can decide to live in the city centre and the rooms are usually qualitatively better. When renting your own apartment you should look around on websites such as 'Smartshanghai' and contact agents via 'WeChat' (the Chinese social media/messaging app).

If you want to rent a dorm room you have to be quick, registration starts at a specific time in the beginning of August. Exchange students are in the second batch of registration, so in my case all single rooms were booked before I was able to register and had to book a double room and thus I had a roommate. The room itself is comparable in layout with a twin room in a hotel, however the rooms interior is very basic, it contains a bathroom, shower, toilet, desk, chair, closet, a bed and you can choose to rent a small fridge. For pictures and information about the dormitories you can check this link: <http://iso.fudan.edu.cn/en/house.htm>.

Before leaving I'd advise you to download a VPN, if you want to keep using sites as Facebook, Google and Youtube. I used VPN Master on my phone (available on Android and IOS), which is free to download and use.

## Upon Arrival

I arrived in Shanghai on 27<sup>th</sup> of August, which was the weekend before the introduction week. When arriving at Pudong you can take a taxi, which will be around 200 RMB. You have to look out for the English speaking drivers that approach you at Pudong (or anywhere in China), because they will charge you even more (sometimes 350 RMB).

Arriving at the university, you start with the registration procedure at the dorm, which includes registering at the university, buying insurance, paying for the dorms, starting the Residence Permit application, getting a physical examination etc., so during the first week you'll be standing in a lot of lines to get documents signed and checked. If you're staying at the dorms, you'll also have to buy your own beddings, which you can do at the dorm itself. A good way to get around the campus is via bike, you can buy a bike at one of the bike vendors on campus.

## Courses

In the first two weeks of the semester you're able to attend all courses that you're interested in. At the end of these two weeks you have to hand in a form with the courses that you'll take that semester. One credit at Fudan is worth 2 ECTS, so you need to get 12 credits in total. The courses at Fudan are usually 2/3 credits, but they also have short courses that only last 2 weeks during the semester worth one point. As an exchange student you have the option to take master courses and bachelor courses, the master courses have exams before Christmas, so you will be done earlier. At Fudan you can also choose one course outside of the School of Economics.

### Globalization and China (6 ECTS)

In this course we discussed trade theories and globalization with China as the main focus. Everyone had to do and present two cases about a firm in a specific market. The grade consisted of two Group presentations 25% per case, class participation (20%) and an essay (30%). This course was very enjoyable, because the teacher (Yu Liu) was very good and had a lot of enthusiasm in his teaching.

### Economics of Development (6 ECTS)

In this course we discussed about the different factors influencing the development of less developed countries and China in particular. The classes weren't really interesting, but the final exam was easy, because it was open book. The grade consisted of an exam (50%) and an essay (50%).

### Basic Chinese (I)-A (4 ECTS)

This was a basic introduction course for learning mandarin, you should take this course if you have no previous mandarin knowledge and you're interested in learning mandarin. In the first two weeks you learn about the pronunciation and a few basic words, in the following weeks you'll learn some new words, phrases and grammar each week. Although you won't become fluent in Chinese, this course will teach a solid basis. The grade consisted solely out of an exam.

### Academic Writing (4 ECTS)

This course discussed the correct ways of writing academic paper. I wouldn't recommend the course, because the classes weren't interesting at all, however the course material wasn't challenging at all. In the final exam we had to correct a reference list according to the APA style and a few open questions about plagiarism. The grade consisted solely out of this exam.

### Empirical Methods for Applied Microeconomics (2 ECTS)

Because I'm an econometrics student I thought it would be fun to take a short econometrics course at Fudan, this was a mistake. Although the professor (Songnian Chen) was decent, the work you needed to put into this course was disproportionate with the amount of credits you can earn. This was easily the hardest course of the semester. The grade consisted of an exam (50%) and an essay (50%).

### Economics of Happiness (2 ECTS)

This course discussed which economic factors influence happiness. I found this course to be really interesting and would recommend it. The grade of this course solely consists of an exam.

### Finances

In general China is a lot cheaper than the Netherlands. You can survive in China with small amounts of money if you use your money wisely, for example: eating local food, only use public transport etc. The following calculations are done using the exchange rate 1 EUR ≈ 7.40 RMB and the numbers are rounded up to integers.

#### Monthly Expenditures:

	RMB	EUR
Rent (Dorm Double Room)	1700	230
Food	1000	135
SIM	50	7
Transportation	400	55
Wifi	50	7
Electricity	100	14

#### One-Time expenditures

Visa	130 EUR
Flight (Retour)	480 EUR
Residence Permit	400 RMB
Insurance	400 RMB
Physical Exam	300 RMB
Beddings	200 RMB
Fridge	200 RMB
Bike	200 RMB

#### General prices

Local food	10 – 30 RMB
Canteen food	5 – 15 RMB
Water Bottle (0.5 L)	2 RMB
Metro	3-5 RMB
Bus	2 RMB
Taxi	30 – 80 RMB

## **Daily Life**

Shanghai is a wonderful place to live, the city has numerous things to fill your daily life. Furthermore these things are usually very cheap to do as well. On campus there are a lot of basketball courts, where you can play basketball with local Chinese students. There's also a gym, which doesn't have the best equipment, but it's free to use. There are a couple of bars around campus. Also there are lots of cheap restaurants near the campus and around 11 pm the street food vendors will come to campus where you can really good (and cheap) food. Because food was so cheap I never had to cook during my stay, however the dorms does have a kitchen and there is a supermarket close to the campus if might prefer to cook yourself. There is also a shopping centre (Wujiaochang) nearby, here you can find a lot of western clothing stores, a cinema, fast food restaurants like McDonalds and much more. Also if you like videogames, you should check out the internet bars in Shanghai, WYWK is a popular one.

I chose my courses in such a way, that all my classes were on Tuesday and Wednesday so I had a 5 day weekend every week (except during the weeks I had short courses). Most of your classes will be held at the School of Economics and going there is 15 minutes by bike from the dormitories, so I do advise to buy a bike. Classes are around 2 to 3 hours depending on the amount of credits they are worth.

There are a lot of museums and city sights in Shanghai that you can explore, including the Bund, the French concession, Shanghai Tower and many more! A good way to get around the city is via the metro, metro line 10 is closest to campus, which will take you to the centre in 20 minutes. One thing to note about the metro, it closes around 10 pm so if you stay up late you'll have to take a taxi. If you like to go clubbing Shanghai is the place for you. There are lots of clubs in shanghai, so there'll be a party or something every night.

In terms of technology China is very up to date in the smart phone department. Everyone in China uses Wechat, which is the general messaging app used in China, but it also has many more features. If you have a Chinese bank account you can even pay using Wechat. For travelling around Shanghai and in other cities Google Maps is way better than other services such as Bing maps, Google Maps gives the names of addresses using the Roman alphabet and has all information on bus/metro routes. As I said before a good VPN is necessary if you want to keep using western media sites and services.

I had a lot of fun during my exchange in China, I was able to travel to a lot of places and meet a lot of wonderful people. China is a very interesting country and has a lot to offer, so I would definitely recommend going to Fudan University.