

Destination: National Taiwan University
Exchange period: 2019 spring

Choice of the destination and courses:

I wanted to go as far away from home as possible and try something completely new. Taiwan, Japan and Korea offered just that, and my choice fell to Taiwan partly because what previous students that had went there said and partly because it was most unknown. Also it is a really cheap country to live in. Finding courses was a drag, bad websites both estatically, speed vice and in ease to undertand, made it really difficult finding and applying to courses. A lot of the times one had to manover and guess due to different t factors such as sometimes the website would only appear in chinese. Being 5 people going to the same uni from the same class made it easier and supported the process but doing it on my own would had been a nightmare

Describe shortly the preparation process before the departure:

If you plan to travel do not apply for a visa, it's a waste of money. I did and later realized I didn't even almost need it. With the Swedish passport we have 90 consecutive days to stay in Taiwan and I left the country more than enough times to stay my whole stay without a visa. Other preparations I made was vaccinations such as hepatitis, tyfoid and a few more. The dorms that the school offers are completely horrible but unfortunately I would still recommend you to stay at them. The whole area around the school is pretty worn down and the accommodation also so. And staying at the dorm you meet and spend your time with all these wonderful people, just be prepared that the rooms are, excuse my language pretty shit.

Contact with receiving institution:

Once again all the academic preparations was really troublesome, the English knowledge level is very low in Taiwan and it shows all through, even at the university. Upon that the registration system is very complicated and quite frankly stupid.

Support from Umea University:

After the semester and after talking to other students I/we realized that the international office at umu hadn't helped us almost at all, they always refered to papflits or websites while other students io's had helped them way more.

Arrival information:

There was an orientation course that was helpful and most importantly the local student volunteers were super helpful. But even when arriving none of us (5 students from uni) had more than 2 courses that we had been approved to. The rest we had to find in the 2 week drop in drop off period, which is partly first come first serve and partly based on lottery. This was, for me a stressful way of registration for courses. I had before the semester started in the online registration applied for something like 15-20 courses and only gotten 2.

Accommodation arrangements:

As I explained earlier the university have a partner that provides accommodation. The problem is that they are even worse at English and communication with them was nearly impossible. Even if the university has partnered up with "prince house" the system and processes are completely held apart and you cannot ask the one about the other.

Transportation:

Metro, skateboard and walking. Scooters and bikes where also common.

Budget:

It's really cheap to live and eat in Taiwan, the culture there makes it easy and cheap to eat out since most of the locals do so all of the meals. A dinner costs around 25-40 SEK, breakfast for about 10-15 SEK

Social activities:

The nightlife is quite different and the school has a lot of social and sport clubs that are open to join. Other than that there is almost always something going on in the city or around it, especially if you surround yourself with both the locals and the other exchange students

Recommendation :

As explained I/ we had a lot of trouble before coming there with the preparations but it was all worth it, I wouldn't change either my destination or the time spent there for anything else in the world.

Practical things to think about:

Be open minded, don't question every thing, your only there for a few months enjoy it from the very first day and realize that you don't need to change there way, your going back to comfy sweden soon enough. If you have the possibility read up before leaving, with that I mean study extra credits at umu so that while on the exchange you don't need to take the "most difficult " courses so to speak. That will enable you to do and see more of the country you go to.

General information about academia:

Basically everything is different. Both in the way of teaching, grading and applying for the courses. Be prepared and be open minded. Don't question there ways and just accept the situation, the sooner you do that the sooner you can enjoy your stay.

Courses attended*Course 1:*

Judgement and managerial decision making: a course in management and in decision making. What to think and how to act, what are the most common errors humans make when making decisions.

Course 2:

Internet of things: was supposed to be a computer science course about the topic internet of things where we were to make and program an smart product. The result of the course was a complete disaster. The teachers fell far behind in there planning and skipped crucial parts of what we needed to

know to complete the expected learnings of the course.

Course 3:

Social media analysis: by downloading large chunks of (social media) data and analysing it with statistical and journalistic approaches draw conclusions. This course was mainly conducted by programming in R

Course 4:

Field geology: a course where we learned about the geology of Taiwan and general geology knowledge.

Course 5:

International companions of learning: was a course / volunteer course where international students were given a local Taiwanese elementary class to conduct Skype sessions with to learn about there culture and mainly at the same time teach them about our. I highly recommend this course to learn and see more of the culture, it could also be something for Umeå uni to look into.

Additional Courses:

Did the university provide language courses? Could you receive ECTS points for them? What was your experience of such course?

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Possibility of future contact: Yes