



Tsinghua University in Beijing

2023-2024

PREPARATION
exchange application process
<p>The application process for the exchange program required several steps, including drafting a motivation letter and outlining a proposed study plan. Unfortunately, the lack of readily available information about the courses offered made crafting a suitable study plan challenging. Additionally, I found it perplexing that some resources, such as the list of English-language courses available to exchange students, were either outdated or inaccessible. Beyond the application process, obtaining a study visa was necessary to participate in the exchange semester. I successfully secured this visa through the local Chinese consulate.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University
<p>Navigating the initial stages of my exchange in China proved more challenging than anticipated due to the limited presence of other exchange students from my university. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of borders over the past couple of years had undoubtedly reduced the usual support network. For example, information sessions with students from other destinations, while well-intentioned, didn't address the specific challenges I faced as a student traveling to China, which were significantly different from those in other exchange destinations. Initially, I was surprised to be the only student on paper from my university, feeling a sense of isolation. However, I was fortunate to connect with a few exchange students from other faculties at Utrecht University who were also on exchange during the same period. Perhaps fostering inter-faculty collaboration to proactively connect future students with peers from other programs could help mitigate this initial isolation.</p> <p>Despite these initial hurdles, I want to emphasize that the Exchange Office provided invaluable support once I was settled in. Their dedicated assistance in coordinating with my host university smoothed out many logistical challenges and helped me get the most out of my experience. I am confident that with an increased influx of exchange students to this destination in the future, these initial challenges will become even easier to navigate.</p>
academic preparation
<p>The academic curriculum at Tsinghua struck me as closely aligned with the standards I'm familiar with at Utrecht. This similarity meant I felt comfortable diving into the coursework without specific pre-departure preparation beyond my usual academic routine. While the level of challenge was similar, I found the interdisciplinary approach to the subject matter particularly refreshing, expanding my understanding beyond traditional textbook confines. This aspect was an unexpected bonus, adding a welcome layer of depth and diversity to the learning experience.</p>
language preparation
<p>The bustling language scene at Tsinghua was evident in the high demand for their free Chinese courses. While this popularity unfortunately meant I couldn't snag a spot, the silver lining was the consistently excellent English proficiency of most professors. This fluency ensured seamless communication and fostered a vibrant learning environment where even complex concepts were explained clearly and discussions flowed effortlessly. This, combined with my own independent language learning efforts, allowed me to immerse myself in the local culture, even without formal classes.</p>
finances
<p>Accommodation in Tsinghua University residences proved remarkably economical, with my single room costing only 300 euros per month. This represents a significant reduction compared to similar accommodation options</p>



in Utrecht. Meals, both in the university canteen and through online delivery services, typically ranged from 2 to 3 euros, demonstrating the overall affordability of daily living expenses. It shall be noted that exchange students pay a surplus of around 20% for every transaction with the student card at the University canteen.

While personal spending habits naturally vary, the cost-of-living in Tsinghua University allowed me to enjoy a higher standard of life compared to Utrecht. This was evident in my ability to engage in diverse cultural experiences, such as exploring bustling street markets and immersing myself in the historical significance of ancient temples. My budget stretched substantially further than anticipated, contributing to an overall enriched experience during my exchange program.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Overall I was highly satisfied with the selection of courses I made and the quality of the content provided.

International Law:

The course content was intellectually stimulating and delved into diverse areas of international law. We began with the fundamental concepts like the nature of international law itself, statehood, and third-world perspectives. We then explored critical topics such as self-determination, *ius cogens*, state immunity, the law of the sea, effective control of territory, and expropriations. Each session included presentations by students, followed by insightful explanations and questions from the professor, who held a wealth of knowledge and experience. One of the highlights was having a former member of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) as our professor. This provided a unique opportunity to gain firsthand insights into complex legal issues and receive personalized guidance. For my presentation, I explored the "Chapeau Requirements" in crimes against humanity, utilizing the case study of war criminal Slobodan Prljak in the ICTY Judgment Prlic et al. This in-depth analysis allowed me to delve into specific legal challenges and engage in critical discussion with my peers. The course culminated in a final paper where I examined the intricacies of the Wassenaar Arrangement and its potential status as an instrument of international law. This research allowed me to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios and develop a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of international cooperation and legal frameworks. Overall, the International Law course provided a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. The combination of theoretical knowledge, case studies, and expert insights from a former ICTY member made this course intellectually stimulating and highly rewarding.

Chinese Legal History

The course concerns the development of Chinese legal culture from antiquity up to the present. First, we delved into the Qing Code, China's intricate answer to Europe's Napoleonic one. Dissecting its structure, we discovered the unique interplay between statutes and sub-statutes, a defining feature of Qing justice. Professor Chen then steered us through the traditional Chinese courtroom, where curious practices like "autumn assizes" sparked lively debates. We explored the nuances of legal interpretation, appreciating how China's legal fingerprint differed from the West. Next, we plunged into the turbulent legal reforms of the late Qing Dynasty, figures like Shen Jiaben guiding us through this dynamic era. Finally, we grappled with the crucial question: where is Chinese law headed in the modern world? For my final assessment, I presented a comparative analysis of the codification processes in the Qing and Napoleonic Codes. This head-to-head exploration illuminated the distinct approaches adopted by these legal giants. This course left me with a profound appreciation for the rich history and intricate workings of Chinese law. Professor Chen's guidance and my own research journey equipped me with a fresh perspective on this dynamic legal landscape, one that continues to shape China's future and inspire my own understanding of law.



Legal Issues Relating to the International Sale of Goods

My week at Tsinghua's CISG arbitration course was an intensive crash course in navigating the intricate world of resolving international trade disputes. Professor Jane Willems, a seasoned expert, expertly guided us through the labyrinthine paths of contract formation, seller and buyer obligations, and the powerful remedies available under the UN Convention on the International Sale of Goods (CISG). But this wasn't just theory. We delved headfirst into the "Blue Hill Case," . The simulated mini-moot tested our understanding of CISG principles in a dynamic pressure cooker, sharpening our legal arguments and courtroom presence. Beyond the case study, we explored the evolving landscape of international trade, demystifying financing mechanisms, guarantees, and the critical role of documents like bills of lading in facilitating secure transactions. Anti-counterfeiting and anti-fraud measures were woven into the fabric of our learning, emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct in this interconnected global marketplace. Our journey culminated in crafting a legal memorandum, dissecting the intricacies of the "Blue Hill Case" and applying our newfound knowledge to a tangible legal document. The final step was the nerve-wracking moot court, where we donned our lawyer hats and presented our arguments before a panel of esteemed judges. Emerging from this intensive week, I feel equipped not just with practical skills – from letters of credit to dispute resolution strategies – but also with a profound respect for the intricate tapestry of international trade. This experience was more than just an academic exercise; it was a transformative journey that honed my legal acumen, tested my mettle under pressure, and instilled a deep appreciation for the vital role of law in this dynamic global arena.

International Development Frontier I

This course consisted of only two classes and was aimed at writing a policy paper. The course in particular focused on introducing theories of public administration. During the two days of classes hosted by Professor Tom Christensen, we were asked to present our initial findings about a topic for which we were planning to write a paper about and received thorough feedback. I wrote my paper on a comparison between the policy approaches employed by China and the United States in developing their semiconductor industry. The professor was very satisfied with my presentation and I implemented his feedback by discussing the relevance of theories of public administration in my analysis.

Foreign Copyright Law

The course was divided in two parts. The first part consisted of reading classes, whereby students were tasked with preparing and presenting a case brief on a copyright case from the United States. I was assigned the *Perfect 10, Inc. v. Amazon.com, Inc. and the Authors Guild, Inc. v. Google, Inc.* cases, focusing on the implications for the fair use doctrine in US copyright law. The second part featured a guest lecturer from Hong Kong, who guided us through the Chinese copyright law system and the challenges it is currently facing. I found this second part to be more engaging and interesting. Building on these sessions, I wrote a paper comparing the approach followed by China and the United States with regard to fair use, utilising the Google Books decisions in China and the United States as a case study.

Foreign Patent Law

Similarly to the copyright law course, the patent law class focused on the United States patent system and was divided into reading classes and a series of lectures hosted by a guest professor. For the reading classes I was assigned the *Uniloc USA, Inc. v. Microsoft Corp.* on reasonable royalties and admissibility of evidence in US patent cases. The second part featured former Federal Circuit Judge Randall Ray Rader, who delivered an interesting series of introductory lectures on US patent law. The lectures were very informative and engaging. Unlike for the copyright course, we were given a written exam with multiple choice questions and an essay question.



academic quality of education activities

Tsinghua University is consistently ranked as the best University in China and among the best in the world and I was as a result unsurprisingly satisfied with the quality of the education activities. However, I found the reading classes in the intellectual property to be not too engaging, given that we were required to read out loud are case briefs rather than presenting them.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The host university was helpful and welcoming. However, I encountered several issues with the course registration and other formalities. I have in particular received personalised support from the Faculty of Law and through the 'buddy' programme whereby a Tsinghua student is paired with an exchange student to help with formalities and adjust to life in China.

transfer of credits

Chinese credits do not correspond to the ECTS credits employed in the Netherlands. I took 17 out of a possible 20 credits, which amounted to a total of 34 ECTS. I took 13 credits at the law school (12 is the minimum required) and 4 credits from other non-law courses. Eventually I decided to drop the corporate finance course (3 credits), since the credits were not recognised by Utrecht University, since it is a bachelor's course.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The University's first-week "Welcome Program" proved a lifesaver, assisting me with essential tasks like course registration, student insurance, and navigating the formalities of Chinese registration and bank account opening. This practical support significantly eased my transition to life in China, allowing me to focus on academics and cultural immersion.

Furthermore, the well-structured "Buddy Program" paired me with a friendly local student who met me weekly. He became more than just a guide; he was a friend, readily offering insights into navigating daily life, cultural nuances, and even helping me learn basic Mandarin phrases. Together, we explored bustling markets, celebrated local festivals, and I even learned to bargain for souvenirs! This personalized support not only facilitated my integration into Chinese society but also enriched my experience with cultural connections and a deeper understanding of the community..

accommodation

The provided accommodation was an AB room, which offered a private sleeping area with a shared bathroom and a compact kitchenette equipped with a microwave. While the kitchenette was functional, its lack of a stove meant I primarily relied on the readily available and affordable food delivery services and canteens that China boasts.

The university-provided accommodation was relatively affordable, especially compared to Dutch standards. Additionally, the dormitory offered residents access to a small gym, contributing to a healthy and active lifestyle. The campus itself was conveniently designed, offering all essential amenities within walking distance. This included various canteens, sports facilities, libraries, and lecture halls, ensuring I had everything I needed right at my fingertips.

Here's a breakdown of the key features and amenities:

- Private Room: Secured a peaceful and personal space for relaxation and focused study.
- Shared Bathroom: Facilitated socialization and interaction with fellow residents.



- Compact Kitchenette: Provided basic cooking capabilities with a microwave.
- Food Delivery & Canteens: Affordable and readily available dining options close by.
- Gym: On-site access to exercise equipment for maintaining physical well-being.
- Canteens: Diverse dietary choices at reasonable prices within the campus.
- Sports Facilities: Swimming pool, tennis courts, basketball court, and more for sports enthusiasts.
- Libraries: Quiet spaces equipped with research resources and study materials.
- Lecture Halls: Well-equipped and comfortable environments for learning.

Overall, the university accommodation effectively served my needs during my exchange experience. It offered a comfortable and affordable living space, coupled with convenient access to essential amenities, contributing to a positive and productive stay.

leisure & culture

There are plenty of cultural activities and interesting conferences organised on the University campus to which exchange students may take part. For example I have attended a conference from one of my childhood idols, the football player Franco Baresi, who gave a conference at the faculty of business and economics. There are also multiple possibilities to play sports with world class facilities available, both indoors and outdoors, with relevant sports clubs for each faculty. For instance, I joined the football team of the School of Law. Sport is given a high level of prominence, which is exemplified by the slogan 'there is no Tsinghua without sports'. Finally, there are several students associations, which organise cultural activities. However, some might be of limited relevance, since all activities take place in Chinese.

suggestions/tips

N/A

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I have really enjoyed my stay in China and would certainly recommend Tsinghua University as an exchange destination.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

N/A



2018-2019

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The whole application process can be somewhat challenging sometimes. Especially because they are not very good at responding to e-mails in a proper way, most of it is very unclear and not really helpful. But in hindsight, it was actually okay. You get all the documents you need and need to search for some things, but I don't think it's necessarily harder than other universities around the world.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	It was good. Most of my questions were answered or at least I was pointed in a direction, although sometimes the things Tsinghua wants or does are even unclear to the UU board.
academic preparation	
	Know beforehand how many credits you will need to have, and try to do some research into the courses you can take using the documents provided by Tsinghua University in the application process. Things can change any minute at Tsinghua and I think Chinese universities in general, so don't get your hopes up too high on something. Most of the things will become clear once you're there. All the courses you are allowed to take are doable without specific knowledge on some field, so don't worry about academic shortcomings.
language preparation	
	Try to learn the very basic aspects of Chinese language, what you would use in regular life. Almost nobody speaks English
finances	
	Of course, really depends on your choices. You can live on campus for 5 euros a night or so, and have dinner for 2 euros. If you do this you will end up really cheap. Living off campus is around 500 euros per month. In total, together with day- or weekend trips, going out, eating out etc. I spent the same amount of money monthly as in the Netherlands.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	Good courses, relatively broad choice. You can do courses on the Law faculty but also any faculty you like. The organization is somewhat complicated: some courses are one week, some are three weeks in a row, some are four weeks spread out over two months, and you don't really know beforehand when things are taking place. But it's never impossible to combine or puzzle it out.
academic quality of education activities	
	Every course has several class meetings (class is around 30 students) and a test or paper. The Chinese teachers I had were okay, but their English wasn't very good. That made the quality of the education a little bit less. They sometimes explained things in Chinese to make things clearer for the Chinese students, forgetting that the one or two western students had no clue. However, a lot of courses were taught by amazing, international guest teachers. Senior partners of big, international law firms, the Chief Judge of the Federal Court of Appeals of the US, Harvard professors etc. Being taught by such high influential people that really accomplished something was very inspiring. The way of teaching in all the courses was not very interactive; a lot of talking and students writing things down.



counselling & support at receiving university abroad

This can be difficult. To my experience the attitude towards (law) exchange students was one of 'go figure it out by yourself'. If you ask often enough they will do things for you but it takes some effort and more than one e-mail.

transfer of credits

Haven't done that yet but should be okay. I think it takes some time before you get your transcript so if you want to do a master right after the exchange you should let the host university know that you need it sooner.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

One welcome & orientation day, nothing special. Luckily you get thrown in a group on WeChat with your future fellow students for the semester, so we had dinner and drinks with 10 people before everything started which gives you a nice group of friends to start the semester with and explore campus.

accommodation

You can stay on campus really cheap (I think around 5 euros a day, could be little bit less or more). I chose to live off campus because I don't want to be trapped inside the campus constantly. You can do sports on campus, have really nice breakfast, lunch and dinner, study, go grocery shopping: there's no need to leave campus. And that's what I tried to prevent. Living off campus made me experience Beijing more than other students did I think. It will cost you around 500 euros though.

leisure & culture

Beautiful sceneries, top sights, nice neighbourhoods and parks galore. Too much to tell. Think about the Great Wall, Forbidden City, Summer Palace but also go to smaller things, chill in parks, do sports, attend opera's. You will never be bored.

suggestions/tips

I don't think I can give more tips than the internet already does about what to do in Beijing. If you're going to live off campus, Wudaokou is area where all the universities and international students are, that's the place to search for an apartment. Try to find something via WeChat, ask it in the group chat with fellow students. If you're here in winter go to the Summer Palace and other lakes while they're still frozen; it's beautiful. You can also go skiing two hours away from Beijing. Beijing opera is a must-see.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Definitely, 100%. Living and studying in China can be a challenge sometimes, and every once in a while you reach a point where you just want to scream for 5 seconds, but all the trouble is so worth it. The city is amazing, I had a lot of fun on campus, Japan, Korea and Mongolia are around the corner, the food is delicious, the education is (mostly) good, the night life, I can go on and on. It also taught me so much on how to take care of yourself in a country that is in no way like my home country. You're starting from scratch, nobody understands you, and that's what I really love about my experience. Because of course you will start to feel at home.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Get a VPN before you leave: you can't use anything on your phone without it.



2017-2018

preparation
exchange/placement application process
The application process was a little bit hard, because the Chinese embassy has very strict rules. It is necessary to have the original admission documents when applying for a visa.
counselling/support at home university
International office at Utrecht University was very helpful during the application process and they tried to contact the visiting university whenever it was needed.
academic preparation
There are a few deadlines to apply for a semester abroad, make sure to apply on time.
language preparation
It wasn't necessary to do a special English exam in order to be admitted. There was no language requirement.
finances
Living in China doesn't have to be very expensive, but you do have additional costs such as a payment for a mandatory health insurance at the university and travelling can be quite expensive if you prefer comfort over cheap but long travels.
study/placement abroad period
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
The courses at Tsinghua university are very long (3 hours of class for a subject). The organization differed for every programme. The IP programme at Tsinghua law school is very poorly organized and if you are a person who likes structure and clarity, then this is not the programme for you. You don't know when or about what your exams will be. The other programmes were organized way better and you knew from the beginning what to do.
academic quality of education/placement activities
The quality also differs for each programme. Law courses tend to be superficial and not profound enough for one who goes on exchange for his own academic development. Even though all the law courses I followed were masters level courses, it still wasn't hard at all. I also took a psychology course and that turned out to be better and a little more challenging, even though it was a bachelor course.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation



The host institution is not very helpful when you have questions. They tend to send you to other people each time you ask them something. I especially experienced this at the Law school. Their international office was a little bit better.

transfer of credits

They use the letter grading system, I took 5 courses in order to receive 30 ECTS, but this can be different for each and every course.

student life

welcome/orientation programme

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accommodation

Tsinghua didn't have enough campus rooms. The campus rooms were gone within seconds after the booking system was accessible. I booked an apartment through Airbnb which was very expensive for a student, but I had no choice.

leisure/culture

The culture is quite interesting, since it is a totally different world from what we are used to. Sightseeing is fun, since there's so much to see in and outside Beijing.

suggestions/tips

As a 'tourist' you will be treated like a superstar at some places. Going out in Beijing is usually free for foreigners (if you know the spots). Be careful of scammers, they are everywhere.

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

If you are (mentally) ready for a very different experience other than the safe travel options; then I would recommend this destination. The host organisation and especially the law faculty were not that much of a good experience, but after all it is nice to see how education is on the other side of the world.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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2015-2016

preparation
exchange/placement application process
The application process went smooth and information was clear. Make sure you send your application papers on time, since the postal service takes some time to deliver. On arrival there are two days scheduled on which you can complete your application. Make sure you have a Chinese name too and you can read and write it in characters! You will need it for you application and it is used on campus.
counselling/support at home university
From Utrecht University, there was great support. Although Tsinghua was a relatively new destination, they knew from their experience in guiding exchange students how to advice on successfully complete this application.
academic preparation
There is no need for extra academic preparation.
language preparation
The courses are in English, so make sure you are comfortable in writing, reading and speaking in English. However, if you want to get around outside the campus, you have to learn Mandarin. Prepare at least the basics at home.
finances
Some costs are low, while others were surprisingly high. Food, travelling in Beijing and books (which you print in the printshop in the school) are cheap. Travelling outside Beijing and living off campus is very expensive.



study/placement abroad period
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
The study program was provided late, on arrival. In comparison to the UU, you have to do almost twice as much subjects to get the same amount of ECTS.
academic quality of education/placement activities
There are some excellent subjects. For example the courses on arbitration and e-commerce. The top practitioners of the world are invited to teach you.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
Every students gets a host study buddy. This is a Chinese law student. This was especially helpful to get around on campus (where are the canteens, how does the it system in the library work) and get access to necessities like buying a sim card.
transfer of credits
Credits can be transferred easily, but you have to do much more subjects to get the same amount of study points. Be aware of this when you sign up for courses.
student life
welcome/orientation programme
There is a welcome ceremony, on where you get all the information you need. Also you student buddy, will help you to feel welcome and show you around.
accommodation
Since there is only one building reserved for exchange students, chances are small you get accommodation on campus. Nearby accommodation off campus, is hard to get and expensive. A good and cheap alternative is living with locals and teach them 5 hours per week English via an organisation for cultural exchange.
leisure/culture
Tsinghua is famous for its excellent sport facilities on campus. Outside campus there are many temples, musea and other cultural spots to visit.
suggestions/tips
Sign up for different kinds of sport groups on campus, like volleyball, badminton and tennis.
conclusions
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
Yes, it is not without reason the best university of China. Also you get the chance to learn a whole new, interesting culture.



**Utrecht
University**