



Tsinghua University in Beijing

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 weekendtrips, 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 of 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 via, 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

Definetely, 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, intresting culture.

