

TELFER INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

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About me

Name: X

Major: Bachelor of Commerce -Accounting

Country of exchange: Taiwan

School of exchange: National University of Chengchi

I am doing an international exchange in the Winter of my third year undergraduate program for accounting at Telfer. As an accounting student at Telfer I feel that it is extremely difficult to participate in the exchange without taking extra courses in the summer, dropping co-op or delaying graduation. Despite much pressure to keep co-op, I still wanted to experience travelling. Excited to turn my dream into reality, I applied for the exchange program.

About the Courses I chose

Registration for courses goes through 2 rounds. I only got into one of the courses during that time, but the school guarantees that I'll get into whatever international courses I want (but has to meet requirements of your program and must be approved from Telfer first). The first step I took was to make a list of the courses I wanted, and then sent them to Telfer International office for approval. Then I registered for my courses online through the NCCU website, and the ones I did not get into the first or second time, I just manually registered myself.

All the courses below are full-time courses (3.0 credit). All courses run from February 20 to June 23. Each class is 3 hours long and occur once a week. Total hours for each course is about 54 hours (3 hours x 18 classes).

<p>Asian Economic Integration Tuesdays 9:00-12:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Oral presentation 20% -Midterm exam 30% -Term paper 20% -Group debate 20% -Class performance 10% 	<p>Digital Media & E-marketing Tuesdays 13:00-16:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Group presentation -Term paper -Class performance
<p>Part-time Practical Mandarin Tuesdays 16:00-19:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Biweekly quizzes -Biweekly homework -Midterm exam -Final 	<p>Investments Wednesdays 13:00-16:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Midterm exam 30% -Final exam 35% -Investment game 25% -Assignments 10% -Bonus quizzes 5%

NCCU Mandarin course:

In regards to the mandarin courses designed specifically for international students, they are free. However, this course is only once a week (3 hours). If you are a complete beginner, opt for the beginner mandarin course. Otherwise, you need to take a test on the first day of the Practical Mandarin course. This mandarin course is for non-beginners and after the test results, they will group participants into 5 different levels. If you feel that the level you are in for Practical Mandarin is too easy or too difficult, you may easily switch.

My Everyday Life in Taiwan

What's great about Taiwan is that snacks and desserts can be found everywhere; a lot things to try and places to go. If you've taken a look at the courses I've taken then you can find that I've stacked it all on Tuesdays with one course on a Wednesday. This means that from Thursday to Monday I have no school (long weekend every weekend!). This allows me to travel even further if I wanted to. I've taken advantage of my long weekends by going to Korea for 5 days and Vietnam for 3 days. Although I do not have school on many days of the week, I still walk around school because I live on campus. This is nice because it only takes a couple of minutes to get to class. On days I do not have class I like to walk around with friends (or by myself) to try new things to eat. When I am bored of eating nearby and want to exercise a bit, I walk to Muxin Street. This is a long street nearby where I can find a lot of things to eat. If I go with my friends then we will usually go shopping, watching movies, go to night markets or restaurants in near the city.

Here are a few of the favourite things I like to eat:

- Bubble milk tea
- Oyster omelet
- Shrimp wonton noodles
- Apple milk
- Beef noodles
- Tofu pudding
- Mango shaved ice
- Dan bing
- Glutinous Rice Rolls
- Dong po pork rice

Here are some of the places I like to go:

- Shilin night market (big)
- Tonghua night market (small)
- Chengpin (bookstore)
- Taipei 101
- Shida night market
- Raohe night market
- Keelung (it is a seaport)
- Miaokou night market (in Keelung)
- Maokong (Gondola rides)
- Taipei zoo
- National palace museum
- Ice monster (shaved ice restaurant)

Important Dates

Below are some dates from my personal school calendar (the school will provide a timetable). I added a little more of what I thought would be useful. The dates coded in **red** indicate there was no school that day.

Dates	Event
25/02/16	Received/Pickup exchange decision
12/03/16	Admission letter is finally ready for pickup
14/12/16	Approved me for the iHouse
23/12/16	iHouse deposit is due (must pay to keep spot)
23/12/16	Returned UPASS for Winter semester refund/credit
15/01/17	NCCU Course selection day (round 1)
16/02/17	NCCU Health check & iHouse Orientation
20/02/17	NCCU courses start
21/02/17	Mandarin placement test for non-beginners (personal)
28/02/17	Memorial day (holiday)
04/04/17	Tomb sweeping festival (holiday)
05/04/17	Telfer International Exchange Questionnaire due
17-22/04/17	Midterm week
18/05/17	International Museum day (free entry to museums)
30/05/17	Dragon boat festival (holiday)
21/06/17	My last day of class (my last exam)
16-23/06/17	Final exams

Procedures upon Arrival

Buddy System

There is a buddy system at NCCU. Basically, each exchange student is paired with 2-3 local students who volunteer to become a “buddy”. A buddy’s role is to help you fit in and get around, especially upon your arrival. Some buddies will actually pick you up from the airport and show you the way home. Taxis are available but are quite costly. The cheaper option is to take the bus; there are ticket counters that will help you decide on which bus will be closer to your home. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact your buddies (they are friendly and will usually contact you before you go on your trip).

Here are some tips upon arrival:

1. If you were planning on registering for a phone plan, then you can register at one of the stands within the airport.
2. There is apparently free wifi in Taiwan, but it is limited and requires a phone number to create an account.
3. Write down the address of your home on a piece of paper and ask the taxi driver if they know the address before getting on.
4. The bus from Taoyuan airport to Taipei 101 is approximately 1 hour in duration.
5. Once you are connected to the wifi from the airport, you can message your buddies to let them know you’ve arrived.
6. Grab a map or ask for directions.
7. Definitely exchange some money first so that you have money to buy your ticket home, pay for the taxi, and even grab some food to eat on the way home.
8. Buy the student easycard (or as the Taiwanese call it, the “yoyo” card) to get a little bit of discounts for rides. You can use this card for most of the public transportation (MRT, bus) and even some convenience stores.

My experience upon arrival:

When I arrived, my buddies were there waiting to take me home. We each bought a ticket from Taoyuan airport to Taipei City Hall. A bus to Taipei 101 would work as well. The first thing I did was exchange some money at the airport to pay for the bus tickets and food. The 1-hour bus ride only cost about \$4 dollars each person. After that, my buddies showed me a small dumpling place where, I could grab some dinner. We took a local bus home, which took about another 20 minutes. It was a very nice experience being picked up by my buddies, and for them to take me around for a brief campus tour.

Budgeting

Budgeting was initially difficult for me because I had never been to Taiwan before. Thankfully though, eating out is affordable for students! There are a lot of factors that will make a difference to your budget, such as unforeseen fees (my roommate broke our toilet) and hasty spendings (my friends and I have spent over \$100 in total for arcade claw cranes). For textbooks, I recommend finding Facebook groups for used textbooks. Secondhand are usually half the price of the new textbooks. Below is an example of how much you should prepare if you planned to choose Taiwan and during your Taiwan trip take two mini trips overseas.

Ticket to Taiwan (One way)	1200
Ticket to Canada (One way)	1200
Housing (for semester)	1500
Food \$10 a day (\$300 x 5 months)	1500
Travelling to Korea for weekend	600
Ticket to Korea (Two way)	350
Travelling to Vietnam for weekend	300
Ticket to Vietnam (Two way)	150
Vietnamese VISA	50
Textbooks (\$30 x 4 courses)	120
Travel Insurance	350
Shopping	500
Others	180
Total	\$ 8000

Ticket to Taiwan (One way)	1200
Ticket to Canada (One way)	1200
Housing	1500
Food (\$300 x 5 months)	1500
Travel insurance	350
Textbooks (\$30 x 4 courses)	120
Total	\$5870

Note: If you bought a return ticket to Taiwan from Canada then it would be cheaper than buying two one-ways. If you travel every 90 days during your stay in Taiwan then you can go to Taiwan visa-free/visa-exempt. If you eat more than me (or more expensive than me), then you should allocate more money towards food. My budget for food is \$10 a day. Ten dollars a day can buy me multiple snacks during the day or let me eat 2 full meals and a cup of bubble tea.

Housing

I applied to live at NCCU's iHouse (International House) in a two person's bedroom. I was able to share the room with a friend from uOttawa. Two people is very doable and the condition of the iHouse is mediocre. Just make sure you don't damage or stain anything or you will have to pull money out of your pockets. The cost of housing for a whole semester of stay was around \$1500 depending on if you paid cash or used your credit card (because of different exchange rates). The advantage of living at the iHouse is that it is right beside campus, it only takes you a few minutes to get to classes.

What the iHouse has:	What the iHouse doesn't have:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Air conditioner ● Mattresses, duvet covers, pillows ● Small fridge ● Garbage bins ● Hangers (they sell) ● 24 hour monitoring ● All guests have to sign in ● Small shared kitchen (no cooking) ● Coin laundry machines ● Study lounge ● TV room (room with lots of TVs) ● Cleaning (a lady will sweep your floor once every 2 weeks) ● Free wifi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Garbage bags, toilet paper ● Mats, rugs ● Towels ● Iron ● Blowdryer

NCCU International House:

Tel: 02-29368869

Fax: 02-29367769

Email : ihouse.nccu@gmail.com

台北市文山區秀明路二段112巷17號

NCCU I-House Address: No.17, Ln. 112,

Sec. 2, Xiuming Rd., Wenshan Dist.,

Taipei, Taiwan

On the right hand side is a picture I found on the internet.

All the rooms in the iHouse look like this.



Other Comments

I like to keep my stuff fairly organized. I will list below ten of the apps that I found the most useful during my semester in Taiwan and as well as travelling nearby. I recommend getting them if you don't already have them.

1. Calculator
2. Alarm clock
3. Uber (Useful for Vietnam)
4. Airbnb
5. Viber (to make calls to Canada landlines)
6. Google maps
7. Pleco (free offline Chinese dictionary)
8. Online banking application
9. Google Calendar (school dates and deadlines)
10. Google Spreadsheet (trip tracking)

Summary of my experience

This exchange has been definitely a life-changing experience for me despite it being only a semester of stay. In an attempt to take advantage of my school's late start (uOttawa starts beginning of January and NCCU starts mid-February), I took a trip to visit family members in Vietnam. During my exchange I've also gone to Korea, and Vietnam (again). This trip not only has taught me to budget better, but also to compare the dollar value to the countries that I've gone to. The implication of staying in Canada all my life is that I've unknowingly judged the world from one perspective. This exchange is nothing more than for myself; for my own personal development and to help me step back from my everyday life, look at things a bit differently, know a little more, build international friendships and open more doors for opportunities. I hope this was helpful. If you still have any questions or comments, I will answer them if you treat me out for bubble tea :)