

## My semester abroad in Taipei

The National Chengchi University (NCCU or 國立政治大學) is located in Taipei, Taiwan. Here, over 16.000 students study together and from September 2017 until January 2018 I was one of them. In the following I will give a short overview about the necessary preparations, housing-options, course-selection procedure, the courses I took, the university, day-to-day life in Taipei and my personal opinion about a semester abroad in Taipei at the NCCU.

### Preparation

I made the decision to go abroad last-minute. I walked in the International Office and asked Mirjana Matic-Schädler what options were still available to me. To my surprise, I could still choose from a large number of universities from all over the world. Taiwan soon became my favourite. Mirjana helped me to organize all the necessary documents and always had an answer when a question came up in the process.

After you have been nominated by Marjana, the NCCU sends you an e-mail asking for all the documents needed for the exchange application procedure. Once you collected all these documents, you bring them to Marjana who will send them to the NCCU for you.

Once you got accepted, the most important thing to consider before going to Taiwan is your visa. I decided to get a visitor visa with multiple entries. This visa enabled me to leave Taiwan as many times as I wanted during my stay. Every time I came back, I was granted an additional 90 days. If I did not leave the country within the 90 days, I could also extend the visa in Taipei. The process of obtaining this visa is easy and the very helpful employee of the "Taipeh Vertretung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" answers all questions which come up in the process quickly and professionally. In order to apply for a visa in Germany you need: your Passport, 2 passport photos, a letter of admission from the NCCU, a statement signed by your parents that they will financially support you during your stay and 86€.

Another important thing to keep in mind before going abroad is an international health care insurance. I chose one from HanseMerkur as they in my opinion offer the best deal.

### Housing-options

The NCCU offers three types of housing options:

1. On-campus housing in the dorms: 4 persons per room NT\$11,000/semester  
2 persons per room NT\$23,000/semester
2. Off-campus NCCU I-House: Single Suite NT\$58,500/semester  
(very close to NCCU) Double Suite NT\$38,250/semester
3. Off-campus Housing between NT\$10,000-20,000/month

I lived off-campus in a private apartment which my buddy helped me find. It was a little closer to the city centre of Taipei than the university.

Nevertheless, the dorms and especially the I-house are great housing options. Around the campus and the I-house are a supermarket and a couple of really nice restaurants.

## **Course-Selection Procedure**

The Course Registration Guideline will be send to you by Deborah Lee, she will be your coordinator at the NCCU. You will find a variety of course options online. The challenge is to find course which match those in Liechtenstein. Once you made your decision you need to talk to your executive director of your program at the University of Liechtenstein, (s)he will make sure that the courses you chose can be accredited once you come back to Liechtenstein. Afterwards, you fill-in your official learning agreement.

Subsequently, you officially register in the NCCU online system for the respective courses. You might not get accepted to all courses you were planning on registering, e.g. some courses might have already reached their maximum number of participants. So, make sure you have a couple of back-up courses.

Within the first week of your lectures, you can attend all courses whether you are officially registered for the course or not. In the courses where you are not yet officially registered you simply ask the professor whether you can nevertheless attend his/her course. If the professor approves he has to sign the “manual add course” formula for you. In my case, this worked every single time and I only made one adjustment to my original learning agreement.

## **My courses**

### **Finance and Risk Management of Financial Institutions**

This course was given by Prof. Ching-Ting Lin.

Workload: Two group presentations à 20/30 minutes, one project, one in-class mid-term exam and one take-home 24-hour final exam.

### **Contemporary Issues on International Financial Markets**

This course was given by Professor Tsoyu Calvin Lin.

Workload: 20 minutes group presentation, 48-hours final take home exam, plus homework: two 5-pager and an excel feasibility analysis of two companies.

### **Ideas and Policy (PhD-level course)**

This course was given by Professor Der-yuan Wu.

Workload: Read a predefined paper and give a 1 hour presentation about it by yourself, after the presentation you have to answer the questions of the professor and the class for 30 minutes. On the day of the presentation you also submit a 7-page reading summary including a critical report about the presented paper. Furthermore, you have to read a book (mine had 250 pages), summarize it and give a critical report in 20 pages.

### **International Investments**

This course was given by Yee-Tien “Ted” Fu.

Workload: multiple choice mid-term exam, take home final-exam

### Topics on International Trade Law

This course was given by Professor Hsueh Ching-Wen.

Workload: 10min individual presentation, 3-hour group presentation (in groups of 2 people) including class-discussion rounds. After the 3-hour group presentation you have to submit a 20-pager.

### Research Methods

This course was given by Trisha Tsui-Chuan Lin. This was by far the most time-consuming course I took. We had to do a content analysis of a topic of our choice regarding social media (3 pages), we had to conduct two interviews (one in person, one via telephone or e-mail), a qualitative data analysis (15 pages), we had to present a qualitative moderating paper (20mins), SPSS quantitative assignment (8-page report), one draft research proposal (37-pages), one draft research proposal presentation (20min), one final research proposal (review the 37-pages and implement her suggestions given during the presentation). Additionally, we were constantly given homework. Overall, I needed about one full day every week just to complete the tasks of this lecture.

### Overall

It is important to know that attendance is mandatory at the NCCU. Missing more than one or two lectures means you will fail the course. The most relaxed course was international investments, the most stressful was research methods. I would recommend all of them apart from Research Methods as the workload was just insane.

Overall, the academic level of the NCCU is lower than in Liechtenstein but the workload is higher. This means you are constantly busy but you will never encounter major academic challenges. All my professors have been very motivated. My favourite course was Finance and Risk Management of Financial Institutions.

### Research Greenhouse in Liechtenstein

When I left Liechtenstein to go to Taipei I already knew that I will write my thesis in the semester after I come back. This is why, I had to find my thesis topic and professor while I was in Taipei. Therefore, I did the "Research Greenhouse" as a long-distance course. Here I had to hand in a research-pitch, a pre-exposé as well as a final exposé which was really time-consuming. Keep in mind, that your topic might not be accepted in the first attempt, maybe not even in the second. Furthermore, as this will be your final thesis you want to do a good job at it which is why this subject too is very time-consuming.

Important to know: You will not get any ECTS-points for this lecture as you are not physically present for the lectures and are unable to give a presentation.

## **NCCU**

Once you arrive in Taipei, the NCCU organizes a welcome week for all international students. You are provided with a welcome package with all necessary administrative information. Further, a campus tour and several events from a variety of clubs are offered within the first week so you can get in touch with other students.

As mentioned before Deborah Lee is your contact person in case you need help with anything. Furthermore, everyone is assigned at least one Taiwanese buddy, which is really helpful especially in the beginning and later to show you all the nice places in Taipei and its surrounding.

The NCCU is a well-equipped university with quiet a large campus. Besides the libraries and the lecture hall buildings there is a gym, a gymnasium, a pool, an athletics track and a 24-hour room on campus. There are also many clubs and activities of clubs which you can join through-out the semester for a very little fee. I especially enjoyed these various activities like the welcome party, the international fair, the NCCU-run (the first run I ever attended in my life), our two-day trip to Nantopia, our dumpling cooking session, the Christmas party,... I can only recommend to take part in as many activities as your schedule allows. Here you will always meet new people and get to know the "real Taiwan".

Good to know: Right across the street of the NCCU you will find the NCCU health care centre. It is a small hospital NCCU students can turn to when they fall sick.

## **Day-to-day life in Taipei**

Taipei is a large city with a lot of nice places and activities. There are night markets and temples all over the city. Furthermore, places like memorial hall are definitely worth a visit. Luckily, public transportation is really good. A 30min ride costs NT\$12 (student fair), so it is quite cheap to get around. Overall, the prices in Taipei are about the same as in Germany if you live off-campus and order take-away every now and then 😊.

Good to know:

In case you need a german-speaking doctor in Taipei, there is one. He is called Tzeng-Ji Chen and is director of the Department of Family Medicine in the Taipei Veterans General Hospital. If he is not able to help you out himself, he for sure knows who can. His e-mail address is: [tjchen@vghtpe.gov.tw](mailto:tjchen@vghtpe.gov.tw)

Mr Chen studied medicine in German at the University of Heidelberg. Therefore, his German is really good. He is also recommended by the German Institute in Taipei.

## My personal feedback about a semester abroad in Taipei at the NCCU

I would do it again. Although, I was very busy doing uni stuff during my semester abroad I would do it again. Not necessarily because of the University but because you really experience the Asian way of life – an experience no one will ever take away from you.

There are two things I would like to see changed though

1. Student of the University of Liechtenstein cannot register for IMBA courses at the NCCU, although most other international students can. This is really a pity as these courses are taught by people who have hands-on knowledge, the syllabus is way more interesting than the one of the standard courses and these lectures usually take place in the evening so that they are a great addition to the standard lectures as they do not overlap. It would be great if in the future those courses would be open to students from Liechtenstein as well.
2. The conversion of Taiwanese Credit points to Liechtenstein-ECTS seems a little off. 1 Taiwanese Credit is considered 2 FL-ECTS. However, most universities convert 1:3, 1:4, in extreme cases even 1:5. This means, we worked approximately twice as much as the other international students for the exact same number of ECTS-points.



Goodbye party in Contemporary Issues on International Financial Markets



SPSS Lecture in Research Methods



NCCU mascot, Artur and me



NCCU Christmas Party





#unili #outgoing



Taipei 101 on New Years Eve



View of Taipei from the Elephant Mountain

台湾大哥大 4G 10:53 72%  
 nccu.edu.tw SHARE

小朋友不畏風雨完賽。攝影：江忠育

外籍生共襄盛舉。攝影：鄭宇軒

【校訊記者李羿萱、陳韋辰報導】「叭～叭～」鳴笛聲響徹雲霄，2017政大校園馬拉松3日早上7點半準時開跑。雖然天空下著小雨，仍吸引許多跑者共襄盛舉。2017政大校園馬拉松包括10公里的競賽「跑」馬組，讓跑步好手一較高下，以及4.6公里的休閒「走」馬組，提供環山健走，促進血液循環，老少咸宜。

高手過招 競賽跑馬組一二名皆為田徑隊員  
 來自台北市立金華國中田徑隊陳品任年僅

News article about the NCCU -Run