

# exchange semester

# Tongji

# University

# Shanghai, China

**To summarize my exchange semester at Tongji University in Shanghai I need to admit that it changed totally my opinion about China and future of architecture.**

**First of all, Tongji is a very ambitious and challenging university, one of two best in China and you can feel a spirit of hardworking at the very beginning.**

Shanghai

Shanghai is a very modern city with a rich history and European influences. Apart from a new business district full of skyscrapers - Pudong and wide shopping streets, you can find cosy and green area of the former French Concession, which reminds more Europe than China. However, most of Shanghai's districts are residential (there are more than 24 million inhabitants there).

accomodation

Although Tongji University provides cheap rooms in dormitories, their standard is quite low and it nicer to rent a room in the city and enjoy the view of Shanghai. The safest option is to rent a room in a shared flat via agency and the cost of such room in the city center (around People's Square) is around 500 euro/month.

food

If you are a big fan of dumplings, you will find China a dumpling paradise. The second delicious must-try is a milk bubble tea, which you can find almost everywhere. Food is affordable here (30-100 yuan mean in the restaurant, 5-20 yuan streetfood, 10-15 yuan meal in the Tongji canteen.

What is more, Tongji student card allows you to pay in canteens and campus shops cashless, which is very helpful.

public transport

Shanghai has a very well developed subway network. Thanks to that, distance from the city centre to Tongji (7 stations) you can reach in 25 minutes. One ride costs around 4 yuan.

attractions

Staying in China for one semester gives you an opportunity to enjoy one of China's holiday (National Holiday in autumn or Chinese New Year in spring). Shanghai offers a lot of traditional Chinese architecture and gardens as well. What's more, Beijing, which is said to remain more *authentic* city is only 4 hours by train from Shanghai (with fast railway, costs around 1400 yuan round way).



**Important!**

In China most of people pay using WeChat Pay or Alipay. There are shops which don't accept cash. Keep in mind that your card (even Visa or Mastercard) may not work in most of places. Make sure that you have installed a good VPN before departure, in order to skip The Great Firewall and have access to internet.

## Tongji University

First of all, Tongji University is in contrast to our Uni Li, because of its scale and number of students. This is why, it's easier to meet your friends at canteens or cafes than at classes.

### campus

Tongji has a large campus which provides a lot of services for students. Apart from school buildings, you can find there space to rest, for example a Chinese garden. Department of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP) has its own library with books in different languages. It is also a nice place to work in silence.



### subjects

As Tongji is very focused on emerging technologies in architecture, a lot of interesting, future-oriented courses are offered. Students can learn basics of parametric design (Grasshopper course) or theory and practice of digital architecture (3d printing, digital fabrication). Additionally, uni provides around 10 design studios. What's more some studio instructors lead additional subjects about architectural research or filming architecture.

Tongji pays attention to traditional and contemporary Chinese architecture as well. That's why international students have choice of subjects which require case studies. Some subjects are open for both international and Chinese students, which gives an amazing opportunity to cooperate with local students in one team,

### additional trips and lectures

Many subjects include additional one- or few-day-trips outside Shanghai, for example to discover Chinese craftsmanship - one of the tasks for Art Potter class was learning from teapot makers and creating own teapots individually in that village. Tongji offers also a lot of lectures made by guest professors and architects, for example Patrick Schumacher (Zaha Hadid Architects) or Raya Ani.

