Travel Report

Basic information

Name: Jens Rasmusso

Exchange period: 20/08-2018 to 20/01-2019

Host University: Peking University HSBC Business School

About the school

Peking University HSBC Business School (PHBS) is a part of the Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School (PKU), a sub campus to the highly prestigious Peking University in Beijing. In the newly build business school on campus you will be challenge by overall excellent professors from all over the world. The entire University is a graduate school. The different majors on the Business School are Economics, Finance and Management. There is a quite wide selection of available courses but since it’s not a specifically big business school, the possibilities are not endless. If your major is Economics, Finance or Management, you should have no trouble finding courses.

I found that the finance courses were on a completely different level compared to the courses in management. As you can imagine the quantitative courses are a challenge, however not impossible if you are prepared to study.

Courses

The courses are selected on two occasions and beware, the spots are limited and are given on a first come first serve basis. Once the course selection opens everyone pours into the system which causes it to crash, this will happen. Therefore, you will need to prepare and consider several options in advance. I also recommend accessing the network while in School since that is your only chance of getting your first pick options.

Module 1

1. Financial Markets and Investments in China (General finance) (Easy difficulty)

An interesting course discussing topics such as bond markets, shadow banking and financial regulation within a Chinese context.

2. Theory and Practice of Socialist Economics: Economics of Development (Economics)

I do not recommend this course if you have studied the topic during your Bachelor.

3. Market Microstructure (Reasonable difficulty) (Finance)

Great teacher and the best course of my exchange semester with professor Daniel Kim. I recommend you taking a class with this teacher.
Module 2

1. China studies (Easy difficulty)

A course emphasizing cultural exchange with company visits and cultural experiences. Did not include any written examination.

2. Financial Risk Management (Extreme difficulty)

Provides you with a foundation to all quantitative aspects of risk management. However, prepare to study a lot. 2 exams and a group project.

3. Behavioral Finance (Difficult but manageable)

Very interesting course covering the development of behavioral finance from prospect theory and EMH to today. Includes two exams and two group projects with corresponding presentations.

Orientation

The first day is absolute madness so do not arrive tired from your flight or with too much clothing as the temperatures get tropical during the summer months and throughout a big portion of September. Signing up for a mobile phone, checking in to your dorm, creating a bank account with WeChat etc.

Tip. Do not download WeChat until you get your Chinese phone number.

Accommodation

Most students at PKU live on campus since the dorms are very generous and cheap, especially for westerners. All the students live in five different buildings with around 10-22 floors and 15-22 dorms per floor. Domestic students share rooms of 2 or 4 people while the international are very likely to get assigned a private dorm of 16 sqm, bathroom and a balcony. Pictures can be found on the University website. There are no kitchens available in the dormitory but there are several affordable food options on the ground floor and outside the dormitory.

Recommend that you learn how to navigate your way to Xili to eat Chinese BBQ which is more enjoyable than the canteen food, the university restaurant or Subway.

I also recommend that you buy cleaning equipment and moisturizers for your dorm immediately to avoid bug invasions.
Economy

Shared room costs 3300 RMB which is around 4500 SEK. You can expect to spend a similar amount of money as back home depending on your shopping and traveling habits. A meal at campus range from 14 yuan to 50 yuan. Eating out is cheap, taxi is cheap, metro is cheap, clothes are cheap, but the thing is that it accumulates.

Tip. Book your October vacation week (Golden week) early.

Tip. Do not spend your money in Coco Park

Leisure time

Chinese students love to do sports and are quite good at it, don’t be surprised I you get asked to join them. The campus provides the students with fields and courts for badminton, ping pong, tennis, basketball, soccer, volleyball as well as a swimming pool and a gym all closely around the dormitories.

There are also a lot of different committees and societies on the University and I honestly can’t tell you how many because it seemed like it popped up new ones every week ranging from movie clubs, golf clubs, entrepreneurship, marketing, finance etc. all arranging events regularly.

There is also a lot to discover by just sightseeing around in the city and it’s growing fast, from 1980-2010 Shenzhen grew its population from 30.000 people to 10.000.000 and currently the population is around 15-18 million, but it is impossible to know exactly.

Shenzhen is the kind of like a small Silicon Valley in Asia mostly for tech companies and new startups who can’t afford Hong Kong. Shenzhen is a city in the making and it’s very cool to just travel around in the city with the very easy and cheap transportation system.

When it comes to nightlife Shenzhen has surprisingly much to offer! There are of course the famous karaoke bars which must be tried, as well as several bars and nightclubs for different tastes, a lot of craft beer brewery pubs and lots of different restaurants. Partying in Shenzhen is cheap which means you don’t have to plan your night out as much as you must in Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore and all those expensive places. This leaves you more money to travel around inside China and all-over South-East Asia.

Other tips

Make Chinese friends and travel as much as possible within China.

Learn how to use apps such as Didi and Meituan.

Overall impression

Mainland China was undoubtedly an insane culture shock. However, my time in Shenzhen at PHBS was overall an amazing an unique experience that helped me grow a lot as a person.