

MBA Exchange: Personal Exchange Report

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Introduction

I am a second-year student of full-time MBA 2019. My track is Finance. I took the exchange opportunity to study at School of Management, Fudan University (FDSM) in Shanghai, China. The incentive was both professional and personal. Career-wise, I would like to gain deep knowledge of Chinese market and financial system since I plan to have my career development in Shanghai, China. FDSM offers courses about strategic innovation of Chinese enterprises, Chinese foreign exchange system, and digital marketing in China. Personally, my father graduated from Fudan University (Fudan), so it was a legacy for me to study at the same school. In addition, living in Shanghai made taking care of my parents, who are aging and residents of Shanghai, easier than living in Canada. Thus, the exchange and the choice of Fudan University met my needs and enriched my MBA international experience.

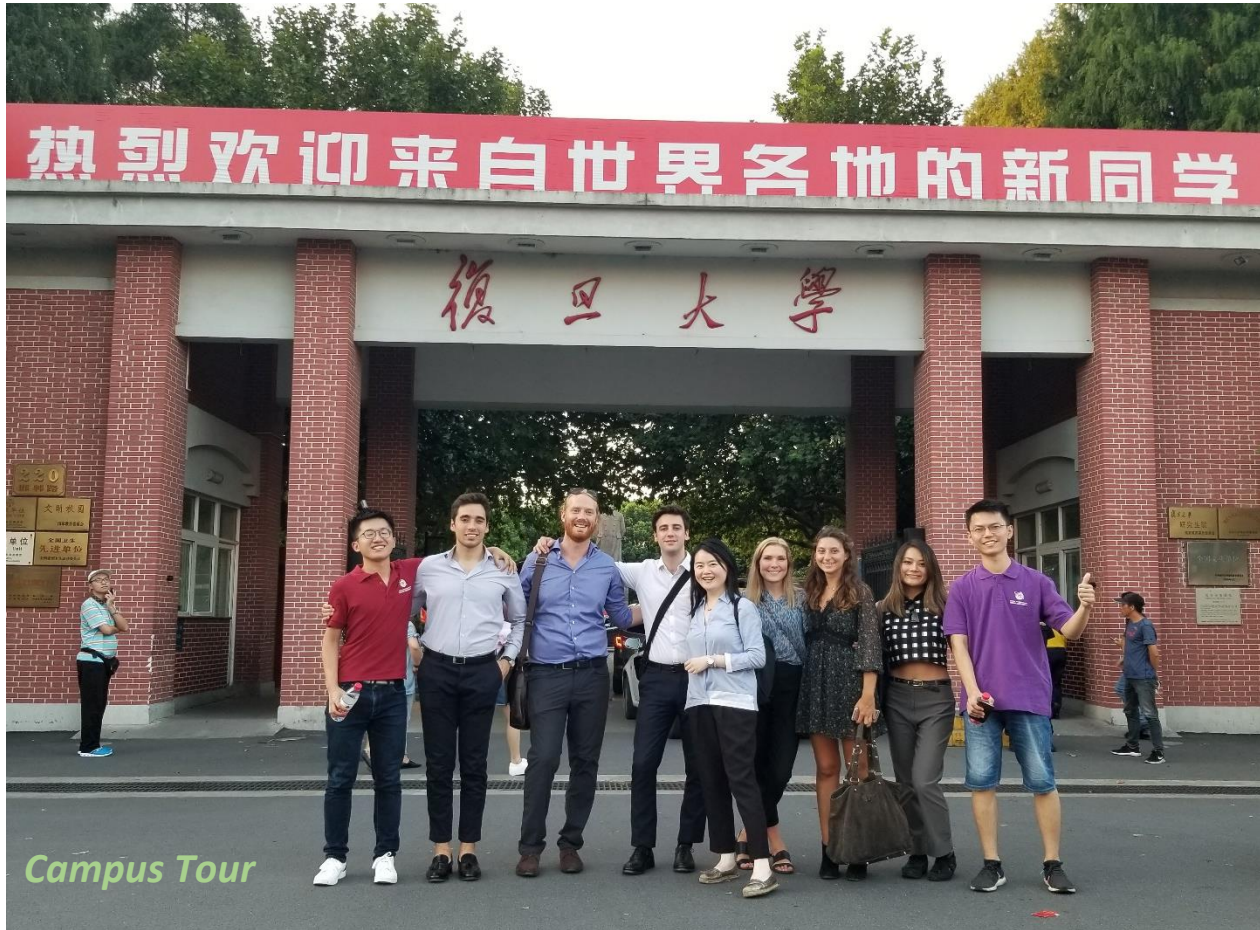
Orientation

After arriving in Shanghai, a visiting exchange student may take a taxi, a metro, or an express bus to city-centre or school. A taxi takes an hour and about C\$40 from Pudong International Airport to school. An express bus may take 70 minutes and about C\$4 for the same route. A metro from Hongqiao International Airport to school takes 80 minutes and about C\$1.

FDSM organized a four-day orientation for visiting exchange students at the first week of September 2018. For first two days, both undergraduate and graduate exchange students attended welcome lectures, campus tours, and networking events together. The other two days were field trips. Undergraduate exchange students and Graduated students were divided into two groups for an efficient tour management. One trip was sightseeing in Shanghai to visit signature attractions and learn basic history of Shanghai. Another trip was to visit a traditional town, Wuzhen, near Shanghai. It took 1.5 hours by bus from school to the town. Through the trip, all exchange students were impressed by beautiful Chinese ancient architecture and rich Chinese traditional culture. All expenses during the orientation were covered by FDSM. Buddies from FDSM buddy system organized an additional welcome party at the same week. The buddies had some games and activities to engage exchange students more. A warm welcome before the semesters helped



exchange students to get to know the new school, the new city, the new country and the new cohorts.



Courses and registration

The course registration started at the beginning of July 2018. Fudan has a different semester schedule than UBC. My exchange term was from September 2018 to January 2019. Before the registration, FDSM sent emails with specific dates, time, course information and detail instructions of the course registration. Since the operation hours of registration follows Chinese time, FDSM kept reminding me about the time difference before the registration started. The manager of FDSM International Exchange Office, Shaoyu Cui, was available to assist with any inquiries and problems. After my research and preparation based on provided course information, I registered all courses that I wanted successfully and smoothly. The registration was all taken place on Fudan's online portal. The website address, login information, and instructions were all provided within the emails from FDSM. One recommendation is to register courses as early as possible since some courses are filled up quickly. Be aware of the time difference and do the right calculation of time. For exchange students, FDSM does not provide a two-week withdraw period. Thus, another recommendation is to be clear about desired courses and to be firm with study plans.

FDSM offered high-quality courses. Some courses, such as Power and Negotiation, were designed by MIT. Some marketing and entrepreneurship courses were structured and taught by professors from Hong Kong University. This competitive advantage is because FDSM has many international partnerships with international prestigious schools. A course involves case studies, group projects, and class activities to encourage diversified study methods. On the other hand, workload at FDSM was less than the one at UBC Sauder. Cases were reviewed and discussed during the class. Some courses had one group project through the term. A group of 7 to 8 students conducted a written report and a presentation. The group must have both domestic students and exchange students. Not all members were needed to present. Some courses had casual group projects. These group projects were assigned, discussed, and completed during the class. There were many pre-class readings, but few pre-class assignments. Exams and final reports were due in a week after last classes. My exam was fairly designed and open-book. If there were any occasions, the deadlines could be adjusted reasonably. A deadline of a final project was extended for another week because of a national holiday.



Teaching

The style of teaching at FDSM is quite different from the style at Sauder. At Fudan, a lecture is taught by one professor and supported by one teaching assistant (TA). Before first class of any courses, TA sends all registered students a welcome email with introductions of courses and some instructions of first-class preparations. After signing names as attendance records, students can pick up printed course material from TA. The course material includes course syllabus, course slides, and printed cases. Some professors gave them all at the first class; some professors distributed the material by classes. TA also emailed all students an electronic version of all the class summaries and material at the end of each class. In addition, each course has a Wechat group, a WhatsApp group in China, for class communication. Students can ask questions and get deadline reminders in the group. During the class, professors followed slides closely. The slides are very detail and cover much knowledge. Although professors provided detailed written instructions of assignments and projects, they would go over the instructions couple times near due dates. Professors also had office hours for any questions. They were easily reachable by

emails. In addition, professors at FDSM mixed videos, seminars, lectures, case studies and projects together to engage students to learn, discuss, and share diversified perspectives. Some professors invited guest speakers from leading organizations in China to provide insights of Chinese industrial practises. In terms of finals, students either take exams at classrooms or email final projects to TAs. Online evaluation survey of professors' performance is asked to fill and submit. Overall, the quality of teaching was good as professors at FDSM have deep knowledge of Chinese market. They are also able to share great insights of how to practice business properly in China. Although digital system is continuously developing and improving at FDSM, the style of teaching at Fudan is more traditional than the one at UBC. Due to large volume to cover, professors managed a fast pace in each class. Class participation was high as it is mandatory. Workload at Fudan was fair. However, it was easier to manage the workload at Fudan than the one at UBC because one term at Fudan is 7-week.



Group Projects



Guest Speaker @ Digital Marketing

Language Courses

FDSM does offer a beginner Chinese language course. It is a 4-credit and two-term course, from September 2018 to January 2019. It is offered as an elective course, so no additional cost is needed. I didn't take the course, but I heard that students could have opportunities to learn some ancient Chinese stories and experience some traditional Chinese teaching styles.

Besides the language course at FDSM, I recommend visiting exchange students to learn some basic Chinese with Chinese tutors before starting their exchange. In Vancouver, many Chinese tutors are available. With basic Chinese, visiting exchange students can enjoy a much easier life in China.

Campus Facilities

Designs of UBC's campus and designs of Fudan's campus are different. UBC campus is more like a garden than Fudan's campus. Since Fudan is a very popular school in China, numbers of new students increase dramatically every year. Due to the limited land, Fudan's main

campus is small. Different facilities or departments locate at surrounding blocks. For example, FDSM is across the street of Fudan's main campus. It takes 10 minutes to walk from FDSM to a school stadium. In addition, Fudan has 3 other campus in Shanghai. The closest new campus is an extension of the main campus. It is in the North and takes 10 minutes by car from the main campus. Another one is the medical school of Fudan. It takes 30 minutes by car from the main campus. It is in the South. The last one focuses on high-technology developing. It also takes 30 minutes by car, but it is in the East. In general, all facilities at Fudan are similar to the ones at UBC. They are more spread-out than the ones at UBC. Visiting exchange students is welcomed to take free school shuttle buses to visit other campuses. For any specific facilities, a campus tour by Fudan students during the orientation can provide helpful information. International Exchange Office of FDSM can also share insightful information of student services. As having a Fudan student card, visiting exchange students have access to most of campus facilities. The best study place on campus is a library inside FDSM. Students need to bring their own computers. Students have free access to Wi-Fi at school. Although there are some night classes, the campus is safe. The population density is always high on campus. There are guards to security their departments, which are almost one-block away from each other. In addition, the main campus, including FDSM, is near a large shopping centre, so surrounding traffic is busy. To be careful, visiting exchange students should keep their personal belongings with themselves.

International students

Fudan International Student Office (ISO) and Fudan Foreign Affair Office & Nordic Centre are general international offices at Fudan. They manage and provide official documents for applying or extending Chinese Visa. FDSM also has own international exchange office for relevant matters. Visiting exchange students should contact the international exchange office at FDSM first for any issues. The manager, Shaoyu Cui, at the international exchange office is very helpful. She is very familiar with most issues happened to international students based on her experiences. She can provide effective solutions or refer international students to other contacts at ISO or Foreign Affair Office & Nordic Centre.

The international exchange office at FDSM also organized some activities for international students. Every Monday, Cui emails weekly newsletter to notify any new incoming activities, seminars, and job fairs. Some are cultural activities to encourage domestic students and international students to share ideas, diversify perspectives, and learn from each other. Some are career-related seminars for international students who are interested in Chinese job market. Field trips to other provinces in China are also available. These trips are mainly to expand international students' experiences and knowledge of China. Visiting exchange students should experience as many activities as possible to expand their horizons and enrich their exchange journeys.

Housing Facilities

Visiting exchange students may either apply for on-campus international student dorms or find off-campus accommodations. For on-campus dorms, there are single rooms and double rooms. After an exchange student's application is accepted, he or she will be randomly assigned by school into a room. He or she needs to pay C\$157 as a deposit first. The remaining rent will

be charged once the student arrives. A single room costs \$16 per day, \$480 per month. A double room costs either \$9 per day, \$270 per month, or \$11 per day, \$330 per month. The price differences are because of locations of dorm buildings. The room is small, and the condition of room is ordinary. The cleanness and quietness depend on types of students' roommates. Each room has a balcony and air-conditioner. Students living in the same dorm building share one laundry room. Students may find cooking areas on each floor. There is also students' cafeteria, gym, and a convenience store. During holidays, students may stay at their dorms with some regulations. They may check with ISO for any details. However, it is very hard to get a dorm on campus due to extreme shortages of rooms' supply. It is strongly recommended to rent an off-campus apartment during exchange terms. For off-campus apartments, students may search places on Facebook groups, SmartShanghai, Airbnb, or UNIJIA international student community. Some helpful websites are provided in the following:

In the surrounding Fudan community:
UNIJIA international student community: www.unijia.net/en (EN)
Different locations around the city and with varying amenities:
SmartShanghai: www.smartshanghai.com/housing (EN)
Airbnb: www.airbnb.com (EN)

Eating in Shanghai is the least of the problems. On campus, there are 3 big dining halls and 2 small canteens. Meals on campus are very economical. Students may load money into their student cards to purchase meals on campus. Near campus, there are many other dining areas, such as Basin 3 and Da Xue Road. Many convenience stores are available near campus, where takes 5~10 minutes to walk. FamilyMart, Alldays, and Lawson sell instant food, snacks, breakfast, beverages, and toiletries. At weekends, Students are encouraged to taste a great variety of food in the city centre. Online delivery is also super popular in Shanghai. Students can download some delivery mobile apps to enjoy serives. One major deliver app is eleme. Within 30 minutes, students can have their ordered food delivered to home.

Costs/Expenses

In Shanghai, cost of living is not as cheap as expected. Rent is expensive. Other living costs vary widely according to different lifestyles. Averagely, a person may spend about C\$600 to C\$750 per month for his or her rent. A person may easily spend another C\$600 to C\$750 per month as his or her other living expenses, such as shopping, transit, and entertainment. A modest life in Shanghai costs at least C\$1500 per month. A basic breakdown is below.

Modest Costs/Expenses in CAD in Shanghai			
	Distance to Fudan University		
	5km/15-minute by car	City Center (10km/25-minute by car)	City Centre (15km/30-minute by car)
Accommodation (share with 3 people in an apartment)	\$636	\$636	\$753
Textbooks	N/A	(provided by Fudan University)	
	Distance to Fudan University		
	5km/15-minute by car	City Center (10km/25-minute by car)	City Centre (15km/30-minute by car)
Local transportation (By taxi)	\$4	\$6	\$8
Local transportation (By metro)	\$1	\$1	\$1
Local transportation (By bus)	\$1	\$1	\$1
Food/Groceries/Other	Various		

Student Health Services

On campus, students can visit student health clinic for any health issues. There is no charge for the visit. For medicine, students can buy some drugs without prescriptions at pharmacies. If a student needs to see a doctor at any local hospitals, their medical expenses may be covered by their insurance. Foreign Students Overall Insurance is a kind of insurance. The insurance fee is \$80 every 6 months, and \$160 per year. Depends on types of purchased insurance, percentage of the coverage may be various. The insurance should be purchased in advance before arrival in Shanghai. Before departure, Cui from Fudan provides international students with detail information of medical insurance in China.

Social Events

FDSM organized some social events to enrich student life. On November 10th, FDSM had a cultural event: the USA Day. On that day, students could gain insights of US leading companies' operations in China by hearing senior executives' presentations. The speakers were from Google North Asia, Pivotal Greater China, MSD China, and Microsoft Shanghai. Moreover, students could experience US culture by participating US cultural activities. The activities had wine tasting of Napa Valley's wine, football and golf challenges, artisan coffee making, and exhibition of scene of Big Bang Theory. Workshop and dance performance further encouraged students to enjoy the event. Prizes enhanced joy. During holidays, FDSM also held events to celebrate festivals. For example, students were all invited to attend a New Year Event in December. During the event, students, especially international students, had great opportunities to experience traditional Chinese culture. Students did Chinese paper cutting and made traditional Chinese lanterns. Many candies and lovely wrapped gifts were also attractive. Through these social events, visiting exchange students can meet new friends, experience Chinese culture, and enjoy exchange journey.



Career Services

Career Development Office (CDO) is the career service centre of FDSM. It assists students to identify clear career goals and improve students' competitiveness. It also offers many job opportunities by diversifying recruitment services and partnering with many corporations. During the orientation, a representative from CDO came to introduce the office, services, and contact information. Students can join CDO's official Wechat group to have real-time news about any job search seminars, company visits, job fairs, and career-related workshops. These services mainly target students who interest in developing their career paths in Chinese market. Some events are in English, but many are in Chinese. Students may also book appointments with CDO by email to conduct resume assistance, interview practises, and other customized services. Students can leverage CDO's services to understand and get involved in the Chinese job market.

Sports/Recreation

Fudan Zhengda stadium only takes 10 minutes to walk from FDSM. It is a standard stadium, which can hold almost 5000 people. Students can play handball, basketball, volleyball, pingpong, and badminton. There are fields for running and jogging. The stadium is also used for professional trainings and competitions. Students can check opening hours and reserve court on Fudan official website. Associated phone numbers on Fudan official website are also available for inquiries.

Study Tours/ Field Trips

FDSM organized two tours for international students only in October and November. One was called "Mobile Class" study tour. It was a 3-day trip, from October 25th to October 27th. Students had seminars about Chinese business environment and strategies. They visited three companies in Shanghai. At the end, they present group presentations to conduct learnings. The

other one was a field trip to Shandong, a north province in China. The purpose of the trip was for international students to experience different Chinese culture. The trip took 4 days, from November 8th to November 11th. Student visited three local leading companies: Haier, Hisense, and Tsingtao Beer. The trips also included some sightseeing in different cities in Shandong to enhance students' culture experiences of China. Students visited Chinese temples and traditional Chinese mansion. For both tours, students needed to apply for registrations and pay for the tours. The cost of tours included meals, accommodation and transit. By then, Cui emailed all international students about detail dates and tours' information. Through the trips, international students could gain deep industrial knowledge of Chinese business and experience different Chinese culture.

Conclusion

Overall, my exchange experience was one of the most rewarding parts of my MBA journey. Through the experience, I gained knowledge of Chinese financial systems and Chinese business strategies. China, especially Shanghai, is unique. It adopts matured financial models from capitalist countries, but it manages financial systems and practise in a socialist way. How to balance two different elements to grow Chinese economy rapidly is interesting to learn. However, culture differences are quite large. Practicing business in local manner is critical. Understanding local people's culture is effective to build relationships in China. Language barriers may exist. Culture differences are challenges, but they can shape people to be open-minded and international. Thus, my exchange experience expanded my horizon and diversified my perspectives in an international scale.

