



BERICHTSFORMULAR

Non-EU Student Exchange Programm

2018/2019

BewerbungsID 407

Nominierte Studienrichtung: 066/824 Studienrichtung Masterstudium Politikwissenschaft

Angaben zum Aufenthalt:

Gastinstitution: Renmin University of China - (China, Volksrepublik)

Aufenthaltszeitraum: WS 2018/2019

Aufenthaltsbeginn: 07.09.2018 Aufenthaltsende: 31.01.2019

STIPENDIUM	
Stipendium Uni Wien gesamt laut Zuerkennung: (inkl. Zuschüsse für Reisekosten und Sprachtest)	€ 2.000,00
Weitere Stipendien (zB Jasso, Studienbeihilfe):	Weitere Stipendien: Nein <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stipendium des Gastlandes:• Bundesländerstipendium: nein• Studienbeihilfe: nein• Sonstiges Stipendium:
Summe weiterer Stipendien	€ 0,00
Gesamtsumme aller Stipendien	€ 2.000,00

KOSTEN DES AUSLANDSAUFENTHALTS	
Unterkunft:	€ 1.500,00
Art der Unterkunft:	Studierendenwohnheim
Reisekosten:	€ 600,00
Lebenshaltungskosten:	€ 3.000,00
Studienkosten:	€ 0,00
Versicherungskosten	€ 250,00
Visakosten:	€ 50,00
Gesamtkosten des Auslandsaufenthalts:	€ 5.400,00

Bericht veröffentlichen:



PERSÖNLICHER BERICHT

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Verfassen Sie bitte einen persönlichen Bericht über den Studienaufenthalt

- **Mindestumfang:** Fließtext 1 Seite DinA4
- **Inhalt:** Gastuniversität, Kurse, Prüfungen, Mitstudierende, Unterkunft, etwaige Schwierigkeiten etc.

BERICHT ÜBER DEN STUDIENAUFENTHALT

Report about exchange semester at Renmin University of China, Winter Semester 2018/2019

Exchange Semester at Renmin University of China, Beijing, China

Duration of study: 01.09.2018 – 31.01.2019

Programme attended at Renmin University: MA „Contemporary China Studies Programme“

Programme attended at University of Vienna: MA Politikwissenschaft

Studying in China:

China is probably not the easiest country to do an exchange, with a whole host of organisational challenges waiting for you upon arrival. Still, it is an extremely rewarding experience which I highly recommend to anyone adventurous with an appetite for something else than the easy life offered by Vienna. This is a chance to get out of your comfort zone and get first-hand experience from one of the world's fastest changing societies.

About the University:

Renmin University of China is part of the Chinese Government's Double First Class Universities Plan, which means it is part the top Chinese universities which receive more funding and are being developed into becoming world class elite universities. Within China, it is well known and a renowned university. It was founded by the Chinese Communist Party in 1937 and is still seen by many to have a special connection to the party, and to be very pro-CCP and pro-China. This makes it a very interesting place to study social- and political sciences, as many professors and students have a deep connection to and knowledge of the workings of China's political system.

Accommodation:

Renmin University offers university accommodation on campus for all exchange students. They have many different types of accommodation, with varying degree of comfort, cleanliness and quality. They offer single rooms and double rooms. The single rooms are in the "Gaoli Building", also known as the



Korean Building or the International Culture Exchange Center. These rooms are very high quality (for China) and each room has its own bathroom and a nice view. The price for single rooms is 80 rmb per day (please note that this price might change and it is likely that it will be higher for future students). The double rooms are in the International Student Dormitories 1 and 2. These are less nice, and the buildings are colder and older. However, they are much cheaper at ca. 40-50 rmb per day.

I stayed in the Gaoli Building in a single room and was very happy there. Other students I spoke with who lived in double rooms in the International Student Dormitories were also happy with their arrangement.

Courses:

As a political science student at the University of Vienna, I was interested in the courses offered by the School of International Studies at Renmin. For Master's students, the most relevant courses are those that are a part of the MA in Contemporary China Studies offered by Renmin. These include courses on China's security, Asian-Pacific energy issues, Sino-EU relations, Sino-US relations, and Development.

The courses offered to students change each semester, and I was not able to find out exactly what courses were offered before I arrived in China. This makes it slightly difficult to get courses pre-approved before departure, and it is likely you need to change your study plan after arrival if the course plan changes last minute (which is very likely). It is therefore highly recommended to take your elective modules on the exchange, as this leaves the most room for flexibility in change of courses in your study plan.

Workload and Exams:

The examination for courses varied: For some, only an essay on a specific topic was required, while for others there was a mix of presentations and final exams. The workload for the School of International was relatively high; I would say I worked at least as much per credit/ECTS as I did in Vienna. For other schools at Renmin, such as for example the Law School, I heard the opposite was true, and students in general felt they had to work far less than at their home universities. Thus, there are wide variations between different courses at Renmin.

Language Courses:

Renmin University offers Chinese courses to those students who do not take Chinese full time. These courses are taught once a week for 3,5 hours each time. When I was a student, they only offered courses at two levels: beginner and intermediate. In practice, it meant that one class had only beginner students, and the other class had everything from HSK 2 to HSK 6 level students. If you already know some Chinese, this is not an ideal learning environment because the spread between levels is too high. If you are serious about learning Chinese, I recommend you to invest some money in extra classes. I can recommend you to either get a private teacher (around 100 yuan per hour), or I can also highly recommend the "Global Village School" in Wu Dao Kou (only 30 minutes away by bus) where they teach Chinese at all levels (about 50 yuan per 1,5 hour of classes).

Organisational issues:

At the point of writing this, universities in China still functioned very differently than universities in Europe. They are far less organised, and getting hold of the right information can be extremely difficult and sometimes impossible. Websites also vary widely in standard. If you want to study in China, I urge you to stay patient and calmly search for the right person to ask your questions. Sometimes, you just need to go with the flow and hope for the best, it is not certain you will get hold of the information you need until you actually show up in China and have walked through five different offices looking for someone to give you answers. Please do not let this scare you away from going on and exchange in China; it is an extremely rewarding and exciting opportunity which will teach you lessons in patience and intercultural understanding that you will keep for the rest of your life.



After your studies/receiving your transcript:

I had my final exam at Renmin University early January, but I did not receive my transcripts from Renmin until the very end of April, after sending multiple emails, wechat messages etc to the University. Please be aware of this, especially as it might influence your plans to graduate on time. The actual process of approving my courses from Renmin University at the University of Vienna took about 3 weeks in total (plus the almost 4 months of waiting for the transcripts from Renmin University). If possible, I would insist on getting a hard copy of your transcript before you leave China to avoid the situation I was in.

Contact persons at Renmin University:

In general, Mz. Zhang Ruifang who works in the international office is extremely helpful and responds promptly to emails. You can ask her most questions relating to your exchange, and also ask her for contacts in the department where you plan to study. Her email address is: zhangruifang@ruc.edu.cn.

At the School of International Studies, Ms. Pan Haiyan is also a good contact person who is responsible for organising the Contemporary China Studies Programme (CCSP). She can be asked about academic issues. She could also probably guide you to the right contact person for other programmes than CCSP at the International Studies School. She can be reached via email at: panhaiyan@ruc.edu.cn, or via wechat at: wxid_5630676306422. You can also try to reach someone via the general email address of the CCSP programme: chinastudies@ruc.edu.cn

Political Issues:

Since 2018, Chinese students at campuses at China's top universities have started being arrested for political activities. Between the lines, international students at Renmin are encouraged to be careful about what opinions they express about certain sensitive topics. Explicitly, Renmin students (including exchange students) are told not to organise in political or religious groups. The question of academic freedom at Renmin has also be brought up, and some partner universities have reconsidered their agreements with Renmin and cut ties (e.g. Cornell University: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/29/world/asia/cornell-university-renmin.html>). Several foreign students have also reported being banned from wechat for "violation of terms", often thought to be them sending messages about politically sensitive topics. As a foreign student at Renmin, and China in general, you should be aware of these issues and thread carefully when writing and speaking about politically sensitive topics to avoid backlash. Speaking from personal experience, the space for free speech in classrooms where political science or IR classes are being taught is restricted, especially when classes are taught by Chinese professors.