

## **Participant Report: International Summer University Program (ISU)**

### Important information regarding the report:

Your report is an important source in regard to the partner university's and the program's evaluation process. Also it will be used for information and promotional purposes for potential future ISU participants. Therefore we ask you to read and fill in the questions below carefully and mark non-relevant questions with a "N/A".

Please do fill in the questions in English.

Requested word count: approximately 1,000 words; 2 DIN A4 pages

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Name of student: Michael Wandl

Study program at WU: Business Administration

Name of the attended ISU program: ISU China

Period (month/year) of the attended ISU program: 07/2019

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### Picture(s) of the program:



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Statements regarding the academic program: Which aspects did you like most about the academic program?

I really enjoyed that we not only had a nice variety of course topics but also that we worked with teachers with different backgrounds. To be honest, I especially liked the course with the Spain teacher because he made use of new technologies like WeChat in his course. Moreover, his course was very close to reality because we had to develop a new product from start to finish and had to think about all important aspects.

Additionally, the course with Ms. Kunczer was very informative and versatile because of all the different things we did in class. One time we watched a very interesting movie and had a deep discussion afterwards, another time we had to prepare mini presentations for a specific topic. She was always motivated and because of the nice class atmosphere all students contributed their share to the class.

Moreover, the course with Mr. Puck was perfectly suited as a wrap-up for the ISU. Together with him we not only discussed the most important things that we've learned but he also brought up some very interesting real-life examples.

Last but not least, I want to add that I learned a great deal by working on the project during our stay. Even though it was a very complicated task, we in the end came up with a final presentation that we all can be proud of.

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Statements regarding the social and cultural/leisure program: Which aspects did you like most about the leisure program? Any highlights you want to mention?

First of all, the session in which we learned how to make Chinese dumplings was really cool and I think that all students enjoyed this afternoon. Furthermore, Chinese calligraphy was pretty interesting as well because we really got a deep insight in the rich Chinese culture.

Regarding leisure programs, our group also very often just met with our coordinator and we explored the city together. This was important for finding one's way around the city if we had spare time to explore on our own. Additionally, our coordinator often told us things about the Chinese culture and answered all the questions we had.

I also especially enjoyed the intercultural event that Tarkan and Hubert organized together. We all had so much fun by introducing our Chinese friends to our culture and also enjoyed being introduced to theirs.

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Statements regarding the host country and university: Which aspects did you like most about the ISU country and WU's partner university?

In my opinion China is such an interesting country because it has a rich culture that couldn't be any more different to our European one. These enormous cultural differences naturally provided many opportunities for so called cultural shocks. This phenomenon has never before occurred to me but when we were in Shanghai, I had lots of cultural shocks. Studying in a country that is so different is a very special experience and one that really broadened my horizon.

Regarding the partner university, Tongji university is much bigger than our university in Vienna. Luckily our courses always took place in the same room. The campus of Tongji university really feels like a small city in which the students are the inhabitants. Additionally, the student lifestyle is very different to the Austrian one.

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Statements regarding the International Summer University program in general: Which are the most important experiences and learnings you could take out of the attended program?

First and foremost, I made the experience that the Chinese way of living and their culture in general couldn't be much more different to the one in Europe. Chinese people have a very different lifestyle, which comes down to for example a different eating culture, different work ethic and also different studying methods. Adding to that, it was very interesting for me to work on a group project with students from different nationalities and backgrounds. Our group consisted of two Austrian, two Chinese and one Bulgarian student. We all had different methods of tackling the problems we were facing and I also made the experience that Chinese students have very different approaches concerning research. In general, they had deep knowledge about Chinese business culture which was crucial for our project.

Additionally, I learned that there is no right way of doing something. What I mean by that is that there were many aspects of the Chinese way of life that we found funny or confusing. But you always have to consider that there are almost always logical reasons for the behavior. There were definitely things that Europeans could learn from the Chinese way of living, but on the other hand I made the experience that sometimes Chinese people could also learn something from us.

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Statements regarding future International Summer University program: Do you have any tips for future ISU participants regarding the program and preparing for an ISU program in general?

My first tip would be to gather information not only about the country you will travel to but also about the partner university beforehand, to get an idea of the experience that will await you. This is crucial in order to get to know the country and to get first insights.

It is very important to keep in mind that most people in China are not able to speak English. I don't mean that they are not fluent in English, they often simply can't express themselves in any other language than Chinese. This of course is a big problem for everyday communication. It's for example difficult to simply buy something or ask for directions. This is why it's essential to have an offline translator on your phone that can help you in such moments.

Keep in mind that you'll also need a Chinese SIM card and speaking of technology, using WeChat is necessary as well. Additionally, having access to a VPN service is crucial in China because many internet sites and services like Google, Facebook and WhatsApp are blocked in China.

Because of the fact that the language barrier is such a big problem in Asia, I made the experience that it is also difficult to order food. If you are lucky you may find pictures on the menu, so you can order whatever looks tasty. Sometimes you can also find English translations of dishes, but these are often useless because they are mostly badly translated.

Moreover, you should definitely download offline maps for your destination city because you will otherwise have problems finding your way in these big cities in Asia. The first few days before you buy a SIM card can be really complicated because your mapping service of choice will not work at all.

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**By submitting this report I agree that my name, all my comments as well as my pictures can be used for advertising the WU International Summer University programs online and in print.**

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