

# **Mainland exchange study report**

Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (China)

Spring 2023

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School: SBM

Name of host institution: Shanghai University of Finance and Economics  
(China)

Host country: Mainland China

Term: Spring 2023

Program period - Start date: 17-Feb-23

Program period - End date: 26-Jun-23

This report would include the following:

- Overall Experience
- General Study Abroad Information
- Items to Bring
- Useful Links and Contacts

## **Overall Experience**

I embarked on a life-changing adventure by participating in an exchange program at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (SUFU). This Spring semester experience broadened my horizons, enriched my academic knowledge, and provided me with invaluable personal growth opportunities. In this reflection, I will share my learnings and experiences during my time at SUFU.

In terms of study, the teaching methods and tools in the mainland are different from that in Hong Kong. Classes are broken down to mostly 2 to 3 credits per course, and most of the students are taking up to 30 credits per semester. In spite of their heavy workload, their teaching system is more convenient than that of HKUST. They took advantage of WeCom (The business version of WeChat), and you will be placed into their class group chats once you've successfully sign-up a course. You may also connect with your professors and classmates via WeCom, which you may get a quick response from. Through extensive case studies and group discussions, I developed critical thinking skills and learned to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios. This exposure significantly broadened my knowledge base and sparked a deeper passion for my field of study.

Since I wanted not only to gain credits for transfer but to really immerse in their culture, I took some experiential courses such as Chinese Martial Arts and News Photography. In such courses, I had the opportunity to experience fieldwork and group projects in a different way. Extracurricularly speaking, one of the most shocking differences is that they have physical education examinations each semester. Students are required to participate in a variety of tests, such as the 800-meter run, long jump, sit-up, and 60-meter dash, and it was harsh.

In terms of learning, living in Shanghai not only introduced me to Chinese culture but also allowed me to immerse myself in a melting pot of international communities. Interacting with local students and fellow exchange participants fostered cross-cultural friendships and provided me with an appreciation for diversity. From sharing meals at traditional Chinese restaurants to exploring historic landmarks such as the Bund and Yu Garden, every experience deepened my understanding of China's rich heritage. Furthermore, participating in local festivals like the business school music festival and graduation celebration night gave me a firsthand experience of Chinese students' traditions and customs. These interactions not only enhanced my language skills but also broadened my perspective on global affairs.

In terms of life experience, living independently in a foreign place was a significant step in my personal development. Overcoming language barriers, navigating public transportation, and managing everyday tasks challenged me to become more adaptable and resilient. I learned to embrace uncertainty, develop

problem-solving skills, and cultivate a global mindset. This experience also pushed me out of my comfort zone, enabling me to build self-confidence and foster independence. The friendships and connections I made during this journey will undoubtedly shape my future as they broaden my network and support system.

The exchange program provided ample opportunities for networking and professional development. Engaging with guest speakers, attending career fairs, and participating in workshops exposed me to industry professionals and potential future employers. Through these interactions, I gained valuable insights into the Chinese business landscape and established connections that may prove beneficial in my future career endeavors. These experiences have motivated me to further expand my global network and pursue international job prospects.

My semester at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics was an unforgettable experience filled with academic growth, cultural immersion, personal development, and professional networking. This exchange program has equipped me with transferable skills and a profound appreciation for diverse cultures. As I return to HKUST, I do so with a renewed sense of purpose, armed with a global perspective that will undoubtedly shape my future endeavors. (629 words)

### **General Study Abroad Information**

- 1) Visa Procedures: Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macau Residents, make sure that your permit is valid, it takes about 14 work days to renew.
- 2) Orientation Activities: There's no orientation activities organized by the host university. All communications are via Wechat group only.
- 3) International Services & Activities: There's no international services and activities provided.
- 4) Accommodations: International student dormitory is provided. An apartment with 3 rooms, 8 students per apartment, outside school campus with around 10-15 minutes walk.
- 5) Courses Registration: you may apply for courses online, but need mainland VPN to access. No course information is provided other than the course title and timeslots. Local students could browse course syllabus before register but we exchange students couldn't.

6) Teaching & Assessment Methods: face to face mode, with group projects, homeworks and exams. Around 40-100 students per class, taught in mainly Chinese.

7) Finance & Banking: Apply for a mainland bank account and set up your mainland Wechat pay/Alipay before arrival.

8) Climate: Weather is super cold during February to April, around 10-20C, and increase to 30C after May.

9) Health & Safety: School clinic available.

10) Food: Easy access to food with established food delivery system. Canteen meals vary across \$9-25.

11) Transportation: All payments can be made via Alipay and Wechat. Metro around \$2-7, buses \$2 per ride.

12) Communication: Apply for verified SIM card in the airport. Locals mostly use Wechat to communicate.

13) Sports & Recreation Facilities: You may book facilities via their school website, track and football court are accessible anytime.

14) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities: There are multiple students communities for you to join, but there's no announcement of their promotion period. You have to find out yourself.

15) Cautionary measures: Most are similar from Hong Kong.

## **Items to Bring**

List of Things to Bring and Prepare for the Exchange Trip to Shanghai:

- **Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macau Residents:** Ensure that your permit is valid for at least a month beyond your planned stay in Shanghai. It takes around 14 working days for you to renew your permit.
- **Important Documents:** Carry copies of your passport, visa, and other important identification documents. It's also advisable to keep digital copies saved securely in cloud storage.

- **Health Insurance:** Check with your insurance provider to ensure that you have international health coverage that extends to your time in Shanghai. If not, consider purchasing a separate study abroad insurance plan (around \$4000 for a 6 months insurance).
- **Medications and Prescriptions:** Bring an ample supply of any prescription medications you regularly take, along with copies of prescriptions, translated into Chinese if necessary. Also, carry a basic first aid kit with essentials like pain relievers, bandages, and cold medicine.
- **Weather-Appropriate Clothing:** Pack clothing suitable for Shanghai's weather during February to June. The climate is cold in the beginning and gets significantly hotter after May. Include rain gear and comfortable walking shoes for exploring the city.
- **Electrical Adapters:** China uses Type A, C, and I electrical outlets. Bring adapters suitable for your electronic devices if they have different plug types.
- **Money:** Carry some Chinese yuan (CNY) in cash for immediate expenses upon arrival. Most shops use electronic payments such as Wechat pay and Alipay.
- **Beddings:** Beddings and mattress are not provided in the dorm, so pre-order the necessities via online stores before your arrival.
- **Pre-arranged Accommodation:** Ensure that your accommodation arrangements are confirmed before departing. Book hotels one or two days prior the dorm check in date to settle down.
- **Academic Preparation:** Familiarize yourself with the courses you'll be taking and review any relevant material or textbooks. Reach out to professors or fellow students if you have any questions or concerns.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Make a note of important contact numbers such as the local embassy/consulate, your university's international office, and emergency services (police, ambulance) in case of any unforeseen circumstances.

Remember to stay updated on the latest travel advisories and regulations pertaining to COVID-19. Be prepared to comply with any health and safety protocols set forth by both the host university and local authorities.

### **Useful Links and Contacts**

<https://login.sufe.edu.cn/login/>