Preparation Before Arrival
I am a Business Information Systems Master student in my 3rd semester, who applied for the National Taiwan University. The preparation started with the applications for three universities I wanted to attend. It included writing a motivational letter and a CV. After the application period was done, I received a written notice that the „National Taiwan University (NTU)“ would be where I would go. I also received a notice from NTU, who asked me to fill out their online application. The process was a bit complicated at first, but with the help of the NTU’s International Office it all worked out well.

From the reports I read a lot of people said that the dorm to choose would be the guo qing dorm, where a lot of international students would live. This wasn’t really my impression. The guo qing dorm is very very quiet and perfect for everyone who doesn’t mind living with another person in a small room. I got along with my roommate but I guess it depends on yourself. It is a great experience. The prince house dorm, which is a bit further away from campus is a bit more expensive (~7000 NTD/month) but you will meet more people there. The choice of room over there is mostly single but doubles are possible too. If I could remake my choice I would probably choose the prince house dorm because most of my friends lived there.

A couple months before my arrival, I received a message from my exchange student volunteer. The volunteer is a very good idea for incoming students to get acquainted with the facilities and everything that’s important to know once you get there. Other than that the facebook group for incoming exchange students resolved a lot of questions I had.

At the same time the course application started, which was divided into three rounds. In the first round, you should take apply for as many classes possible that you might attend. There is going to be a priority list. For my application process the system didn’t offer that many options. That’s why I recommend you to thoroughly plan how many courses (3-4 is perfect not more) and what kind of courses. A lot of business administration courses are available in English.

After the first round is over, you will receive the results online. I was very surprised that I didn’t get any of my classes that I really needed, in order not to extend my entire studies. This is absolutely normal. You will be able to make a list again and after that you might not get into the classes you wanted. The good thing is that during the first week, you will be able to receive a “greencard” from the professor to be able to attend the class. I recommend to go to all the classes you need in the first week and get the “greencard”.
**Arrival**

I made a reservation for a bus transfer to the dorm, which was provided by NTU. Once I arrived at the Taipei airport, the volunteer group was easy to find. We went to get money from the ATMs (20,000 NTD) and bought our SIM Cards for our phones. I chose the Taiwan DaGeDa prepaid card, which in my opinion had the best 3G + phone plan available. For 800 NTD per month you would get unlimited data but the downside was, that you have to recharge it with more money if you text or make phone calls a lot.

We took the bus to the dorms where we would go through the process for incoming dorm students. The rooms at guo qing are small but big enough for two people to live in. I think it’s not for everybody but you get used to it very fast. The room was clean and had a lot of shelves and places to store things. The bathroom has a shower, sink and toilet. The room comes with an AC for which you need to pay for. It will cost about (400NTD/month) depending on how much you use it. Also the beds are not really beds but just a wooden box on which you can put a mattress. A mattress will be one of the first things to buy. They sell them at the general merchandise store next to the MRT Technology Building Station. They are very thin. Another option is to go to Ikea and get a better mattress. I chose to sleep on one mattress but that is up to you.

During wintertime it can get a bit cold in the room so blankets might be necessary. You can get those at the general merchandise store and on the way there get a raincoat and umbrella at 7-Eleven.

The Guo Qing dorm itself has a 7-Eleven and a breakfast place right outside the building and a lunch and dinner buffet on the lower floor. The breakfast place sells sandwiches, hamburgers, dumplings and more. A fitness room is also there, which is very convenient if you don’t want to go to the big sports center 10-15min (by foot) away.

The first days you will have to attend the orientation events. They will give you a great overview of the university and all the things you need to know to start the semester. You will also be able to meet tons of new people that are also starting the semester. It is therefore a must to go there. You will get a campus tour, lunch and some gifts from the university.

**Campus Life**

Once you get into the rhythm of the classes you will see that it is not much different. Well, except some things: The classes that I had were not particularly difficult, but some had weekly assignments, presentations and reports. I think that it’s normal for a university. The workload was, compared to courses you might be used to in Germany, more spread out over the semester. This means mid-terms or written reports for mid-semester or team projects which last over the whole semester.

In some classes it is normal that local students sleep on the table, while the teacher is holding the class. I asked local students about it and they said, that teachers would rather see their student taking a short power nap, then being unfocused the whole lecture.
The library is the best example for that. You might see a lot of students basically living and sleeping there. I haven’t really used the library a lot because I didn’t like the environment that much. On the campus roads, be careful when you walk. You might get hit by the oncoming bicycle riders that in my opinion didn’t really have the skill to safely ride a bike. You will see that this campus has a lot of bicycles and local students tend to share them by hopping on to the “backseat”.

**Life Outside of University**

After getting acquainted with the campus on the first weeks, you will want to start making plans for travelling and visiting other places outside of Taipei. If you only stay for a semester, I would recommend to make those plans as soon as possible or you might find yourself at the end of the semester without really seeing anything. Some really nice places to go to are Taroko, Hualien, Alishan, Penghu, Kaohsiung and Kenting. If you like hiking, Taiwan is the ideal place to do that. It offers 3000+ m high mountains such as Snow Mountain or Jade Mountain (the highest peak in Taiwan).

I suggest, if you have the money to travel, you should make a trip to Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong or Singapur. The tickets are relatively cheap. Just think about how many times you’re going to be able to do something like that in the future.

The nightlife is really good around Taipei. You will find a lot of clubs ranging from upscale clubs such as Luxy and Myst to more middle class ones which are frequented by young locals. The all-you-can-drink clubs are Babe18 and Wax.

Getting to the clubs is easy. You can take a cab for not more than 200 NTD or take the MRT. The MRT closes around midnight so you will have to take a cab if you are in the clubbing area around Taipei 101.

**Daily Needs**

Most of the stuff you need you can get at 7-Eleven. You will see it is really “convenient” and offers a lot of services.

Depending on where you go to eat you might be spending either more or less than 200 NTD. The food places around NTU are cheap and you can get a good meal for 100 NTD. I recommend you go to the dumpling place close to the main gate of NTU which offers dumplings for 5NTD a piece.

The food places are all clean and I haven’t heard of many food poisoning cases. At most places you can either order to take out or to eat it at the place. The restaurants sometimes have English menus, for those who are not good at deciphering the Chinese menus. You should try a bit of everything and don’t be afraid to go into different restaurants. Some might not look good from the outside but still offer some really delicious food.

On campus you will have different food courts with buffets available which is the cheapest option to eat (not more than 100NTD). Having a bike can be really useful if you live in guo qing dorm. Most of my classes were on the other end of the campus but a short 15-20min walk is also very relaxing. The campus bike store sells bikes for 1000-2000 NTD (new) but
there are also other options of renting possible. Some of my friends rented a bike for 500 NTD (deposit) for one semester. One other important thing is your NTU student card, which is also used as your MRT card to pay for the rides. You can recharge your card and pay at a lot of places such as 7-Eleven or other stores.

**Conclusion**

Taiwan is great place to explore the nature and culture while you enjoy some delicious food. I have a great time travelling in this country and getting to know every part of this island. I can’t really tell any bad experience but maybe long rainy weeks are what you can expect. I hope you will enjoy you’re time as much as I did here, because it is probably for most a once in a lifetime experience that you will make at this time of your life. So enjoy every day of it and don’t be afraid to try something new!

### Courses

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Accreditation</th>
<th>Difficulty/Workload (1 low – 10 high)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Management</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Content: No final exam, midterm presentation and final report/presentation, weekly case studies. You get good grades in this class, no class attendance and no final exam!!</td>
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<td>Business Management</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Content: Midterm, final and team project. Fairly easy class. Take this if you want good grades. Only</td>
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negative point is class attendance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Content: Team project, final exam, case studies. Team project.</td>
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<td>Class has no class attendance but you need to go there to get the class</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>material. Upside is that the grading is good.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>High workload outside of classes but very good way to learn the language.</td>
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<td>Recommended!</td>
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