

## Travel Report by Fredrik, autumn semester 2018

- Why did you apply to your host university?

I have had an interest in China since my first visit in 2008. I had a feeling that I have to go back there one day and now I had the opportunity to do so. Not for traveling but to study and experience more of Beijing. BTBU was the only university in Beijing that I could apply to that my faculty accepted.

- What kind of preparations for your exchange studies did you do?

I tried to google for location, where to live, what to do and see and much more. I also read previous students travel reports from BTBU to get a better understanding on what to come. How courses and the school is organised and what they expect from us as exchange students. China is different from western culture. I tried to email the university before my departure, and this turned out to be more difficult than I thought. A week into my arrival in Beijing and BTBU I started to understand why contact by email was not sufficient. In China, email is not the mail tool to work with as they more or less do everything by Wechat – the all in one app.

- What was the courses and the study environment like at the host university?

The main difference from studying in China and Sweden is that in Sweden we usually read 2 or 4 courses per semester that is equivalent to 30 credits. In China the requirements are 16 credits per semester that equals to 4 credits per course. All courses are read simultaneously, similar to the Swedish high school system. Monday morning you have one course and in the afternoon you have the other. You start at 08:00 and read until lunchtime at 12:00 with three breaks every 50 min. 08:00-08:50 then 10 min break. From 09:00 to 09:50 then 20-30 min break. From 10:20 to 11:45 (12:00). This was supposed to be fixed schedule times but it was more flexible than put in text.

After the first course finished at 12:00 there is always a two hour break that is similar to a siesta, some students went home for a nap in between the classes while other had lunch and did some workout at the nearby gym.

The courses I read had only international students and no Chinese students. Friends of mine that read other another course than me had a few Chinese students.

- What is the most important thing you learned during your exchange?

Things take time even if they want to show that technology is the future and most things a run through them that is not always the case and patience. Bureaucracy take time and if you want to get things done quicker you sometimes have to push forward. That doesn't mean that you have to be rude, but you have to be on their feet all the time. Simple tasks that is no problem back home could be a big problem there because of regulations and other policies.

- Which is your best advice for a student who is interested in going on exchange?

Patience and patience is the best advice I can give. English is not very common and if someone speaks it is often very limited. When speaking use simple words and speak clearly and try to be as explanatory as possible. Sign language and a smile will help you far. Many Chinese people are very helpful and even if they don't know how to help you they will try to. This the other hand can be time wasting and it is something you will learn through time. Not everyone can help you even if they more or less say they can and this is because Chinese people cant say no. Its within their culture and not because they want to drift you off. Some students might doubt that they can't do exchange because their English is limited, or work tasks at the university will be to difficult or something else. This is just an excuse and I believe everyone that have the opportunity to go should do it. Its not easy the first week but you will meet students that are in the same position as you. No one is there to fail, everyone is there to make the best of it and everyone will help each other out. It will probably be one of the best times in your life and an experience to remember. You will meet new friends and tell stories that you experienced. Good Luck!

If you have any questions regarding Beijing Technology and Business University or life as an exchange student. Don't hesitate to send an email to me: [Frejoo86@hotmail.com](mailto:Frejoo86@hotmail.com) and I will try to answer it as soon as possible.

Great regards

Fredrik