

Final Report semester abroad at the Tel Aviv University (TAU) – Coller School of Management: Fall 2018



I had to apply for the semester abroad at TAU almost half a year before the semester starts. After getting the nomination by the international office, I had to do lots of paperwork and formalities. There is definitely lots of work to do before going abroad to Israel, but it is worth its work! If there are any questions or problems with the pre-work, the exchange coordinator from TAU will always offer you help.

On the 1st of October my journey to Tel Aviv finally started. You have just landed at Ben Gurion International Airport in Israel. You might immediately notice the humidity, the noisy and busy airport, and the sound of people speaking a variety of foreign languages. The national languages in Israel are Hebrew and Arabic, but don't worry, there are people here from all over the world. Most people will speak English and will be happy to help you if you have any questions. Upon your arrival there are two different ways you can get to Tel Aviv: Train or Taxi. I recommend train, which is much cheaper.

Please be aware of the different working days. At Tel Aviv University, courses are held from Sunday through Thursday. Stores in Israel are generally open from Sunday through Friday afternoon. Some malls and stores also open for Saturday evening shopping. Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and ends on Saturday at sunset. All offices and businesses are closed. Approximately an hour before sundown on Friday almost all businesses, retail stores, and restaurants also close and public transportation stops. However, in Tel Aviv, there are a growing number of restaurants and cafes that are open on Shabbat.

In the first week, before classes started, we had a very busy and exciting time. It started with an orientation week on the 8th of October (4 days). At the first two days we got lots of important information and presentations, which should help us living in Israel and going to University. Every department, which works closely together with international students, and all international student organizations from the campus represented their services for students. In addition to that we had a campus tour. The third day was a guided day trip to Jerusalem – lots of fun, great impressions and local food. The fourth and last day was a guided sightseeing tour through Tel Aviv. The week was great, we had the possibility to meet many new people from TAU who are keen on helping us in every situation.

Accommodation

Unfortunately, the university does not offer dormitories for students in the exchange program. Students attending the program will need to find an apartment in Tel Aviv or Ramat Aviv (location of TAU).

Tel Aviv has an extremely fast-moving housing market and many different areas to choose from. If you are looking for a quiet, neighborhood location close to the university, consider looking in Ramat Aviv. For a more central location to bars and beaches and night life, take a look at the center of Tel Aviv via Airbnb, Secret Tel Aviv or Sublet Tel Aviv (the last two are Facebook groups).

Contact

Everybody who I met was really friendly, open-minded and welcoming. This fact made it really easy to feel comfortable here. The professors are very friendly and keen on helping you, if you have any questions regarding courses etc. The relationship between professors and students is more personal than in Germany, this makes the atmosphere in the class totally different. Local students are in general very exciting about you and happy to talk and get to know you, but also if you have any concerns or problems, they are always happy to help you. The staff of the International Office is really friendly, keen on making your stay as awesome as possible and if you have any problems, they are always ready to help you as well. When I had a question or issue, I have always got an answer or help immediately. Another big plus is the TAU exchange coordinator Sharon Rochweg, she is always available, and you just can run into her office at any time, give her a call or even whats-app.

In general, you spend the majority of your time with other international students, as all of them are in the same situation as you are; they have more free time as Israeli MBA students – who are usually working - and are also keener on discovering the area and travelling. You definitely will make plenty of new friends from all over the world. You will make awesome experiences community life of Tel Aviv. However, I would still

recommend to join the buddy system at TAU. The program offers all international students the opportunity to enhance their connection to the city, country, and community by connecting them with Israeli students from TAU (not just from the MBA program) and hosting activities such as trips, lectures, volunteering, parties, and more.

Campus

As an exchange student from HHU you will take Master classes from the MBA program of the Coller School of Management at the TAU. Most of the time you will be in the Recanati building. Usually all classes of the MBA program take place there. Inside is a cafeteria and some other food areas are nearby around for breaks and lunch time. There are many student organizations located where you can get lots of information about the campus, upcoming events etc. There is also a big area for students where you can spend free time between classes, study or just relax. If you want to use the fitness center of TAU, you need to pay for the facilities. To be punctual at classes, please plan enough time. Because if you use public transportation, busses run always late or sometimes don't arrive. As a student you get cheaper bus tickets. It's recommended to get a RavKav. All busses except only this card. You charge money on it with cash or credit card via app or at any stores that offer RavKav charging services. You can get it at the beginning of the semester at the campus or you go to the central bus station at any time. The library is a nice place to learn and to meet other students e.g. for group meetings from classes. There is also the possibility to book separate rooms. In mostly every building there are PC's and printers which you can use with your credit card.

Courses

There will be lots of work to do in class during the semester – unfortunately there is not much free time during the week. After the first week I had already my first assignments like writing essays or preparing presentations. In general, at TAU there are lots of homework, essays and presentations to do. Every class needs to be prepared and it is mandatory to read the relevant readings which are either uploaded at the moodle or which you have to buy online (especially Case Studies). Compared to lectures in Germany, classes in Israel are more like high school, as you must attend all classes and lectures, otherwise your grade will be negatively affected. So it is recommended to attend every class punctual. Another difference to Germany is that the Professors expect your collaboration in classes, they ask far more questions, talk more to students and lead longer discussions.

I finally decided to take following courses:

- Strategic Innovation
- Operations Management
- Measuring Eco-Efficiency in Business Context

- Relocation – How to succeed in a global world
- Recruitment and Selection Processes
- Green Supply Chain Management

I can highly recommend taking Strategic Innovation. The class provides very famous guest speakers from local Entrepreneurs and the class is very interactive and never boring. I would also suggest taking the course Relocation – How to succeed in a global world. You meet many other international students and you learn more about the cultural matter and cultural theories. Because of that you will understand many things during your international experiences, and you realize that some theories are totally true. It was a great experience to join that little “community”. Our teacher was very social, cooperative and all the time available for our concerns.

Expenses

A semester abroad (above all in the Tel Aviv) is definitely a very expensive experience. Here is a list of some upcoming costs – those are just rough estimations.

▪ <i>Visa costs</i>	50 €
▪ <i>Flight</i>	approx. 200-500 €
▪ <i>Accommodation</i>	4.500 €
▪ <i>Living expanses</i>	1.000 €
▪ <i>Health insurance</i>	300 €
▪ <i>Textbooks & online tools</i>	100 €
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▪ <i>Sum</i>	6.300 €
▪ Sum per month (4. months)	1.575 €

Traveling

As you are usually not allowed to miss any classes, you can only travel on weekends and holidays. Therefore I would also recommend picking your classes in that way that you don't have classes on Fridays and/or Mondays.

The best way to travel is either by bus, train or by car. You get bus tickets overall Israel for a great deal. Here some “must” places to travel:

Caesarea, The Sea of Galilee, Golan Heights, Jerusalem, Jaffa, The Dead Sea, The Negev Desert (Masada), Nazareth

All in all, I would recommend everybody to make a semester abroad. It was a unique experience, which I will never forget and I have made great friendships with people all over the world. It is expensive, but it worth it and you will grow personally. Take the chance – studying is at all expensive in the Israel, but you should take into consideration that you DON'T have to pay the high tuition fees!!