

## Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg Erfahrungsbericht Auslandsstudium

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| Persönliche Angaben                     |  |
|---|--|
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| Gastuniversität:                        | Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies                    |
| Gastland:                               | Indien   |
| Studiengang an der Gastuniversität:     | MBA  |
| Aufenthaltszeitraum (WS, SS oder Jahr): | WS2016/2017  |

### PREPARATION

The organization process was not very complicated, since NMIMS is a partner university of FAU. After applying for the semester abroad at FAU, I only had to fill out some additional forms for the Indian university. However, in terms of communication, it was quite difficult, because when I requested some information from NMIMS, I could wait weeks for an answer. Sometimes I had to ask the exchange program coordinator at FAU to help me get the information I needed. So the only thing is to start preparing in advance, because all the organizational issues from the Indian side might take time.

### VISA

The visa application process was easy, as there is a Visa Center in Munich (link under the last point). It is easier to call them and ask for the list of documents in your specific situation just to make sure that nothing is missing.

There are two ways of applying: at the counter and by sending the documents by post. I recommend going there and applying at the counter since it is faster.

You will need a Document showing financial support for the tuition fee and stay in India OR sponsorship declaration from parents with supporting documents. In my case, it was enough that my parents just signed a paper saying that they will sponsor me during my stay in India. I also attached the copies of their passports.

Also, ask your host university to send you the Acceptance Letter in advance, because it might take longer than expected.

## **ARRIVAL**

I arrived at Mumbai by airplane. I got the tickets from Munich to Mumbai in approximately one month before the beginning of my journey for 450 Euros. There were many offers starting from 450 to 500 Euros from Turkish airlines and Emirates.

I had to organize hotel and pickup on my own, but later I found out that NMIMS offers pickup from the airport (but it only takes you to the university area and costs really a lot). So my suggestion is to take a prepaid taxi at the airport, that way you will pay a little bit more than usual, but will not get scammed by private taxi drivers. But if you have an Uber account, it would be the best and cheapest option.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

NMIMS did not provide accommodation for exchange students, even though from their application form it seems like they are supposed to. Luckily, I could rent the apartment that exchange students from the previous term lived in and it was not such a big problem for me. But many exchange students were complaining that it is very difficult for a foreigner to find a good apartment for a reasonable price in Mumbai. Since it was an apartment for three people, I had to contact some other exchange students to ask them if they want to move in. In this way I found two roommates: one of them from FAU, the other one from another exchange university.

So when you are going to India, ask your host university if they provide accommodation. If yes, you are a lucky person☺. If not, you have two options. First, look for different groups on Facebook where people look for roommates (link for a group in Mumbai under the last point). Second, ask your host university for the list of exchange students and contact them. They will probably have the same problem and you could help each other. Some of the exchange students were also staying in Airbnb apartment, but that is quite expensive, although relatively easy to find.

## **STUDYING**

NMIMS offers MBA courses for master exchange students. I felt like I was lacking severely in background knowledge when I started the courses. But it is also possible to visit all the courses that you are interested in during the first week of the term. In that way you find out which subjects are suitable for you. But be careful, the only thing that I found relatively easy was marketing, everything else is quite complicated.

You are required to be present in 80% of the lectures, otherwise your grades will be penalized by the end of the semester. Choose the amount of your courses wisely. I took three courses, which accounts for 15 ECTS. As for me, it was a perfect amount of courses to balance academic and personal life. Also, I only had classes on Monday till Wednesday, which allowed me to travel and explore the country.

The teachers were treating me very well and I got the feeling that they do not really expect much from the exchange students because, as I already said, they are not MBA students and there is clearly a difference in knowledge and experience. Same can be said about the classmates or teammates. Besides, I was lucky to come to Mumbai for the last term of the MBA program when most of the students already got

offers for their future jobs, so the studying process was very relaxed and not stressful at all (in terms of presentations and group assignments). However, the exam was a different story and I had to squeeze all my knowledge in order to write something reasonable.

There were no language courses at this university, since it is a graduate business school.

## **HELP AT THE HOST UNIVERSITY**

There were three people responsible for the exchange students at NMIMS.

Cheryl Monteiro is a course coordinator and a responsible person for international linkages. She was very friendly and ready to help with any problem.

Ila Pathak Jha also works in international linkages program. She helped all the exchange students register at FRRO. I did not have to ask her for help, but she was also very nice and friendly.

Ashwini Dighe is responsible for MBA II year and Student Activities. Most of my questions were addressed to her (sending the course outlines, problems with attendance etc.). Sometimes I had to be really persistent to get an answer for my question or help with something.

Regarding the fellow students, it was a little bit difficult to get along with them at first. I was told that in the previous trimester they organized a welcome party for the exchange students. But in the beginning of the next trimester they were busy attending the job interviews, which is why there was no welcome party or at least a get-together for the exchange students.

## **FACILITIES OF THE HOST UNIVERSITY**

The building of the MBA School in NMIMS is the cleanest building I have seen in India. It is very new, looks like an office building with an artificial rainforest on the ground floor and elevators that look like capsules 😊

There is a big library with computer rooms. Also, there is a cafeteria with a huge variety of food and drinks for very reasonable prices: coffee, tea, fresh juices, smoothies, Indian cuisine, pizza, pasta, wraps, soups, sweets (but only vegetarian).

But for the MBA students, this is the only facility; there is no campus and no other buildings that belong to graduate business school.

## DAILY LIFE AND LEISURE

- **SIGHTS**

In Mumbai, most of the sights are situated in the southern district called Colaba (The Gateway of India, Hotel Taj Mahal, Marine Drive). The architecture is also really nice there and it is quite different from the area that you see around the university.

Famous Elephanta caves are just a ferry ride away from the Gateway of India.

Also, there is a huge national park in the north of Mumbai and it is big enough to spend the whole day there.

Not far from the university, there is a beach, but it is not recommended to swim there, never mind sunbathing. The beach is quite dirty as well as the water and full of people trying to sell you something. However, it is a nice sunset spot if you are not bothered by large crowds and stares.

- **FOOD**

One of the good things about Mumbai is that here you can find everything. Shopping for food is quite easy because almost every street has a fruits and vegetables stand and a small food store where you can find most of the stuff. However, it is difficult to buy meat (and even if you find it, it would be only chicken). For meat, we had to shop online (the store is called Big Basket, linked below). It is quite cheap and convenient, since they deliver it to your place.

Besides, when we were lazy to cook, we were ordering food on two websites: zomato and swiggy (also linked below).

For going out there is a huge variety of options.

First off, Juhu Chowpatty beach has a street food market. There you can try many things, including fresh juices, ice cream and traditional deserts. A dinner there would cost around 3-4 Euros. It is, however, only vegetarian.

Second, the district called Bandra, which is relatively not far from the university area, has a lot of cafes and restaurants for every taste and budget. But again, you will not find beef or pork there (no, not even at McDonald's or Burger King).

Recommended places: Grandmama's Café Juhu, Fables, Prithvi Café, TAP Resto Bar.

Must try Indian food: butter chicken/butter paneer, cheese naan, biryani (any kind), fried papad, curry (any kind), Mumbai chaat street food (bhel puri, sev puri, pani puri, dosa, pav bhaji).

- **MONEY**

It is better to come to India with a bank card than cash. I personally came to India in the midst of demonetization, which made it very difficult to withdraw or exchange money. But when I was leaving, there was no such problem. But it is still more convenient and easy to withdraw money than to exchange it.

- **SIM CARD**

To get a sim card in India as a foreigner you need to have a copy of your passport and Indian visa and two passport pictures. With all that you should go to the closest Vodafone store (I chose Vodafone, because it has the best network and good prices) and the consultants there will fill out everything on their own. For 2 GB of data a month I paid around 4 Euros.

## **FINANCIAL ASPECT**

Accommodations in Mumbai are quite expensive. Depending on the room type and location, prices can vary from 150 Euros (for a room shared with two or three other people) to 400 Euros and more. Personally I paid around 270 Euros per month including utilities.

One trip in India for 4-5 days would cost not less than 150-200 Euros (if you live in a hostel and eat in regular restaurants) + transportation (depends if bus or plane as well as times of booking).

Food is relatively cheap if you cook on your own or do not mind eating street food. But going out to eat can cost a lot (from around 3 Euros for McDonald's meal to 10 Euros and more in nice restaurants).

## **CONCLUSION**

- **Worst experience**

I turned out to be in the country with a completely different mentality than what I used to. People are slow, unorganized, and they mostly do not really do what they promised to do. It also applies to the organization processes in the university, which were long and chaotic.

In terms of studying, I felt that this is a little bit unfair to consider regular German master's program absolutely compatible with an MBA program. It is also disappointing that for such amount of work you get the grades that are not that good and it was not your fault.

When travelling, it was really annoying that every person tries to get as much money from you as possible. In particular, rickshaw or taxi drivers charge the highest price, because they know that you have no choice.

Finally, regardless of how much I liked India, it is still a dirty country. There are rats in the streets, people sleeping on the ground, rivers full of trash, and you see it everywhere.

- **Best experience**

Barring the things described in the previous point, I liked pretty much everything about India.

It is a big beautiful country with interesting history and unique culture. I loved the kindness, hospitality and helpfulness of the people (not the ones trying to rip me off, of course), endless travel opportunities, colorful cities and many other things. It is a country of contrasts. One can get all they want here: from savage travelling with basic accommodations and street food to luxurious hotels, bars, and restaurants; from slums to big majestic temples and monuments.

Looking back, I can definitely say that it was one of the best (if not the best) trips in my life.

## **IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND LINKS**

### **Visa**

<http://ivs-germany.com/Default.aspx>

### **Accommodation**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/362380130502012/>

### **Food**

<https://www.bigbasket.com/>

<https://www.zomato.com/mumbai>

<https://www.swiggy.com/>