



Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
ERASMUS Report 2014/15

Personal Information	
Surname, First name:	Yang, Michelle
Study programme at FAU:	MA Development Economics and International Studies
E-Mail:	Michelle.yang@fau.de
Host university:	Bogazici University
Host country:	Turkey
Study programme at host university:	Business and Economics
Duration in semester (WS, SS or whole year):	WS
May the report be published?	YES
If yes, may name and e-mail be published?	YES to both

1. Preparation (organization, application at the host university)

Application processes: The preparation took about 3, 4 months after the acceptance results were published by FAU. The application process at the Bogazici was clear but quite demanding, besides proving proficiency level in English they required recommendation letter from professors and the transcript of records. This was tricky for a master student like me because the master had just begun and we did not know the professors very well yet. Besides that, although I was nominated by the department of Industrial Management, the department responsible for the agreement, the chair of this department could not write me a recommendation letter since they did not know me.

The acceptance from Bogazici took a long time to come, which made me a bit nervous about the time pressure due to visa application processes.

Timeline: Feb 13th Bogazici received the nomination. Application deadline at Bogazici was April 30th but I sent it out on April 11th. The acceptance letter came on June 13th. Beginning of semester at Bogazici Sept 12th.

Visa: The visa application process was simple thanks to the papers provided by FAU, the consulate had all the information they needed and processed the visa within a week at a cost of 45 Euros.

Housing: I decided to stay in the dorm due to its proximity to the university campus. The application process was also simple, one has to fill out a form and send it to superdorm, once accepted they will request the whole payment for the semester, which was in total 2250 Euros for the term (Sept – January) + 200 Euros deposit (that I received within a week after I left).

2. Arrival / Visa (flight, train)

The arrival was directly at Istanbul Ataturk Airport with no major problems. The authorities checked the visa and stamped it.

3. Accommodation (student residence hall, private apartment)

Superdorm (the only student residence option for exchange students at the Bogazici). As mentioned previously the total cost of my stay in superdorm was 2250 for a bit more than 4 months. This means that the monthly average cost of the room is more than 500 Euros.

For this price one can definitely find a very decent apartment in Istanbul. However, the availability of apartments near the university is rather limited and since the university is a little bit far from the areas like Besiktas or Taksim, where most internationals like to stay, commuting from these places can easily take up to 1 hour with some traffic jam.

The superdorm is a bit like a hotel, with security 24/7 and very strict control of visitors one cannot really feel free in this student residence. There is cleaning service in the apartments daily. Laundry service is 12TL per load, which is also quite expensive. There are many rules such as visitors are not permitted until later than 1AM and not before 9AM. No Alcohol and no open flames, etc. These all made me feel trapped and annoyed. I do not recommend the superdorm for your stay in Istanbul because I find it too expensive for what it offers and most importantly the lack of freedom was affecting me very much. The only upside though is that one can go to the university by foot, this is great because traffic jam in Istanbul is very bad and commuting can be quite stressful.

4. Study at the host university (Courses / Timetable)

The Bogazici university follows the American system since it is a former American College. One has to apply and be accepted to take the lectures, it can be quite difficult to take the classes you want depending on the demand. So be prepared to have to fight a lot in order to get the classes/ schedule you want.

One great advantage of this university is **that all classes are taught in English**, that means that you will be able to take almost all the classes offered to Turkish students because there is no language barrier. This is especially precious in Turkey since the language barrier is a constant challenge.

Bogazici is the No 1 university in Turkey, so expect very high competition from fellow students and high expectations from professors too. The classes are quite difficult and quite demanding most of the time. There is no special treatment for international students since all the classes are taught in English.

The university campus is also probably one of the most beautiful one would find in Istanbul. It is on top of the hill, with views over the Bosphorus. The campus is large and offers lots of green space. The university also offers a lot of possibilities for sports (swimming pool, gym, tennis court, track and field, etc) as well as cultural activities with the clubs (photography club, gastronomy club, music club, etc).

5. Support service at the host university (International Office, Department)

The university receives every semester more than 200, 300 students and there are only 3 or 4 people working in the international office, so do not expect them to be able to give you personalized support.

6. Language courses at the host university (charges or fees required)

There were Turkish courses offered to foreign students, but it is extremely difficult to enroll to them because there are not enough places to all the exchange students. Besides that the classes might also conflict with your normal lectures. So it is not guaranteed that you would be able to take the Turkish classes. No additional fees required are required though.

7. Facilities at the host university (library, computer pool, etc.)

The library has a great variety of books and also a great study place. But it is often difficult to find a free place, especially during exam periods. Generally speaking the university has very good facilities and there is free wifi in campus too.

8. Finances & Spare time activities (sight seeking, cost of living, bank, mobile phone, jobs)

Costs: like any other big city, it all depends on how you manage your money, since there are offers from the cheapest to the most expensive.

Cost of living is comparable to a German city. Rent ranges from 300-500 Euros a month. Eating out is cheaper than Germany, for about 10Euros one can have quite a good meal. (Canteen at Bogazici is very cheap, only 1,5Liras (about 0,5 Euro)).

Transportation: one should definitely get the transportation card (Istanbul card for students) because it gives you 50% off the normal rate, which is 2,2 Liras. It might seem little at first glance, but with all the transfers (one often needs to take 2-3 different means of transportation to reach the destination). Each trip may add up to 6-8 Liras very easily. So make sure you get the transportation card as soon as you can.

Mobile Phone: there is a rule in Turkey that foreign phones can only be used for up to 3 months, after this time, your phone gets blocked from receiving signals from a Turkish sim. So if you want to use your own phone in Turkey you should have it registered and pay a tax which is around 180 Liras. If not, you can either buy a cheap phone there or not get a local phone. However phone rates are very cheap in Turkey, so it might be handy to have a local line. To get a simcard it is 50Liras and the monthly plans are around 30 Liras, which gives you 1G of internet and something like 1000minutes/messages or so, it is really worth having.

As a foreign student in Turkey you are not allowed to have paid jobs.

9. Conclusion (best and worse experience)

My best experience was meeting some very few but amazing friends at the Bogazici/Istanbul. But my worst experience was also meeting many Turkish people/Bogazici fellow students who were not interested in helping you and in getting to know you as a person and your culture/ background, rather they just wanted to know if Bogazici was “better” or “worse” than your university. Bogazici students can be extremely competitive and behave in a very selfish way, this was extremely disappointing for me as I expected very hospitable people. But one should not forget, Bogazici students are not only the intellectual elite but very often also the economic elite of this city and country, so naturally they cannot represent the majority of the population, which thanks to my trips I had the pleasure to also meet very friendly and hospitable people in the rural area of Turkey.

Another very annoying experience was the application process of the Resident Permit (visa required to all foreigners living in Turkey). There are no clear rules on how/when/where one should apply. But generally speaking it goes like this: 1) you need to enter Turkey with a valid visa (student visa for most, sometimes tourist visa like for Austrians), but if you enter Turkey without any visa because you are not required, you would need to pay up to 300Liras in fine. 2) make an appointment at the police station to hand in the papers (link below); 3) go to the police station on your appointment day and hand in all the papers; 4) wait for your resident's permit to arrive.

10. Important contact persons and links

Official website of the Bogazici University, FAQ prepared by the Int'l Office, you will find important information here

<http://www.intl.boun.edu.tr/?q=node/20>

Very useful blog made by a person who used to work in the int'l office of Bogazici:
<http://boun101.blogspot.com/#!>

Some information may be outdated but it is still quite good to get a general impression.

Website of the police department to make appointment to apply for a resident's permit

http://e-randevu.iem.gov.tr/yabancilar/dil_sec.aspx

email address from the Bogazici International Office: erasmus-incoming@boun.edu.tr