

## Exchange Student Report

### 1. Academics

I had the fortune of spending 3 months in India in one of the world top Business Schools (ranked 36<sup>th</sup> as of 2013 according to The Financial Times), the Indian School of Business. It has 2 campuses in India: one in the south, Hyderabad, and one in the north, Mohali. I did my first term in the Hyderabad campus, from January 6<sup>th</sup> to February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The campus is nice, spacious and modern, with top class facilities, like gyms, supermarkets, swimming pools, yoga centers, clinics, libraries, social areas, restaurants, bank agencies, university shops, cafes and many green areas. It is located in the outskirts of the city, therefore, there is a quiet and laid back environment far from the hectic life within Hyderabad. The Mohali campus is even newer as it was just opened in 2012, and similarly, the campus is located at the outskirts of a big city, Chandigarh.

ISB is a university with a bigger student body than NCCU. Around 500 students join the 1-year master program each year. The academic year is divided into 8 terms of 6 weeks duration. Most of the students are Indian nationals, but typically there is an average of 12 to 14 exchange students per term. Most of the exchange students come from either the USA or Europe. There is usually one exchange student coming from NCCU at least twice per academic year, according to what I was told.

The professors are very good. Most of them are Indians with international education, but there are some guest or visiting lecturers from other parts of the world, mostly from the USA. Each term at ISB consists of 5 weeks of class. Each week has 2 lectures of 2 hours each per subject. So in total, each subject has a total of 20 contact hours per term. You are entitled to take a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 4 subjects per term. Since each subject is worth 1 credit, this translates to 3 to 5 credits per term. Typically, each subject will have a mid-term and a final exam or a final project. Also, every subject will demand a set of short team-based assignments to be submitted weekly. Most of the assignments require solid Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint skills.

Upon the start of each term, students are required to select the subjects they are interested in taking and they are also encouraged to sample different classes

during the first 2 days of the term. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the term, the student has to make the final decision of enrolling his or her subjects for the term and no further changes are allowed after that. Each student will receive course packages of cases, articles and other material specially prepared for the course at the start of each term. Most of the lectures are case-oriented. As such, you are required to do some case reading and analysis of cases given in every course package prior to every lecture, when the cases are discussed. Class-participation and discussion is assessed and they are an important component of the final grade of the subject.

There are a lot of student clubs and student activities organized each term, so it is fun to take part of the student life as well.

Food quality and hygiene is good in the campuses, and there is also the option of ordering food from outside the campus.

## **2. Life and Culture**

India is a country with a rich, strong and diverse culture. There is a different history and influences in each region where you travel. Most of the Indians are very friendly and polite and they like to take the initiative in starting a conversation with you. The first typical question is where you are from, followed by what you are doing in India. After that, and depending on your own personality, a long conversation with a total stranger might follow.

Indians like to live a social life, especially the young students living in the ISB campuses. Therefore, you will be invited to many parties and social outings during your stay at ISB. Many of the parties include dancing at it is a very important component of the Indian culture. Most of the people, especially the ladies, like dancing until dawn.

Indian food is very delicious, and it is different from one region to another one throughout the country. And it is interesting to have the experience of eating with your hand (the right hand only, the left hand should never be used for eating, according to their culture). Personally, I like spicy food, so I had no issues with trying a bit of everything. If you are not into spicy food though, be careful as nearly everything is spicy there.

Most of the people are very spiritual in India, no matter what religion they belong to as spirituality is a very important aspect of Indian culture. So you will see many people having and paying respect of images of different gods and making early rituals of respect and devotion in the mornings. Temples and mosques are seen everywhere in the country, but you can also find many Christian churches, especially in South India.

I can say that India is fairly safe, though not as safe as Taiwan. So, take your precautions when going there by avoiding travelling by yourself to lonely places at night. Travelling by train or bus is safe and convenient (especially trains) as the prices are fairly low for long-distance. Travelling in India is strongly encouraged as it has beautiful and diverse landscapes wherever you go. Another good thing about India is that generally, the prices are lower than those in Taiwan. Everything costs about a half of what it costs in Taiwan.

Some negative aspects of Indian life are: the extreme poverty that can be seen in many parts of the country, the high pollution of air and water within the big cities, the hectic, noisy and chaotic life within all big cities and the bad food hygiene in many places. Another thing I didn't like is that, unlike Taiwan, sellers and taxi or rickshaw drivers are looking forward to rip off the tourists by over-charging their fees. So you have to be careful and learn how to bargain.

### **3. Notices for future students**

The Indian Visa is to be obtained from the India-Taipei Association. It can be obtained within 1 week after application provided the applicant presents a letter of invitation from the host university. More information can be found at: [http://www.india.org.tw/india\\_web\\_aspx/consular\\_visa.aspx](http://www.india.org.tw/india_web_aspx/consular_visa.aspx)

Around 10% of the whole population of India speaks English fluently. In the big cities, it is common to listen to people speaking English with the exception of many taxi drives and rickshaw (tuk-tuk) drivers within the cities. People in smaller villages hardly speak any English, so it is advisable to travel accompanied by someone who speaks the local language in order to avoid inconveniences.

Though Indian food is usually delicious, the hygiene with which is prepared is frequently different to that found in Taiwan. Therefore, caution must be taken

when buying food from little shops, especially those by the side of the road. It is advisable to bring medication against stomach diseases.

Travelling in India is generally safe and reliable. There is a choice of travelling by airplane, which can be expensive. Travelling by train is recommended. Indian trains have different traveler classes and usually 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class are very convenient and comfortable, and their prices are much lower compared to flying. Also, travelling in Indian trains is part of the experience of being in India. Travelling in 3<sup>rd</sup> and lower classes in Indian trains is not recommended as it can get very crowded, noisy and uncomfortable. There is also a range of long-range buses within the country, which offer some comfort. However, the Indian traffic is usually very heavy and there is a lot of honking. Therefore, being in a bus for hours and with all the honking can get exhausting.