

Experience Report Asia Term 2015- Aug-Dec

Topic: Preparation before arriving in Singapore

Before you leave Switzerland and you head for Singapore you should be sure to consider some things.

First of all be sure that you filled out and handed in all the paper stuff which is required by the University of Sankt Gallen and the Singapore Management University. Concerning the requirement of the HSG you will receive a hand out with all the stuff you need to do before departure. So just follow those steps and you should be fine. Most importantly don't miss any deadline! So my advice is to do all the stuff before the exam period otherwise you will maybe forget it. Moreover, the Singapore Management University (SMU) will send you thousands of e-mails. The most important is that you make the online enrolment for the SMU and that you pay the application fee. If you forget this also the HSG can not help you. So be sure to do this. A lot of those mails are really unnecessary and a waste of time. But once in a while there are very important e-mails coming from SMU. So be sure to check every e-mail quickly so you don't forget any deadlines.

Besides making the application for SMU you need to get the Student Pass. It is really a straight forward process. You will receive an e-mail from SMU with a link. This link will bring you to the application system of the Singapore immigration office. You need to fill out this application online, pay a fee and finally be sure to reserve an appointment time with the immigration office in Singapore. Because after having filled out this online application for the Student Pass you need to collect it in Singapore yourself at the time you made your appointment. I recommend that you make that appointment just after lunch like 1 p.m. Because at that time there are not as many people queuing. I had friends who went in the afternoon and they had to wait for 5 hours to collect their Student pass. Moreover, I suggest that you make your appointment 1 day after your arrival in Singapore. Because whiteout this pass you can return to Switzerland and you can forget about your exchange semester. So be really sure to get this pass as quickly as possible.

Before leaving I recommend that you make an appointment with a real estate agent. And if possible already rent an apartment. Once you arrive in Singapore you will be very tired and you have a lot of other things to worry about than searching a flat. Moreover, it is not convenient if you have to first move into a hotel or hostel and then later once you got your flat move all your stuff to the apartment. Therefore, if you don't already want to rent a place be sure to set up a meeting with a real estate agent before you leave Switzerland. It will save you cost and time.

Furthermore, be sure to stop all your contracts. If you have a car you can send back the plates and stop the car insurance payment. In addition, interrupt your cell phone contract. It is free if you have a contract with Swisscom. Just present your acceptance letter for SMU. And of course don't forget your apartment in Sankt Gallen.

Also print out your address in Singapore. Because some locations are not easy to find. From the airport I suggest that you take the metro. The subway is very fast (40 minutes to the city center). Once you

arrived at the subway station you can take a taxi. For those guys who want more comfort just directly take a taxi. The taxis in Singapore are not expensive. Especially if you travel together you can easily split the fare.

Last but not least you should book your flight early otherwise the prices will skyrocket. I recommend the direct flight from Zurich to Singapore with the A380 of Singapore Airlines. It is a little more expensive than the rout Zurich- Doha- Singapore with Qatar Airlines. The non-stop flight with Singapore Airlines is much more convenient. It takes about 13 hours to get to Singapore.

Courses:

Business Study Mission to Malaysia: Recommendation 7/10

During the semester you have some classes concerning the country of Malaysia. The course covers different aspects of the country. This part I didn't find interesting. However, the trip to Malaysia is very interesting. You will visit many different companies. And especially for those who are interested in the Islamic Halal market this course is good. The workload is medium. There is no final exam. You just have to write some papers and presentations.

Business Development: Recommendation: mandatory

This course is mandatory for all HSG students. It will take place in the first week of the semester. You have to make a pitch presentation and some papers. The different ASEAN states will be discussed and some analytical frameworks will be presented. This course is very helpful to get an overview over the different Asian countries. Be sure that before you leave Switzerland you have made contact with your group members. And it is advisable to finish your presentation which you will have to present on the first day of the course, in Switzerland. Because as you can imagine, once you are in Singapore you have a lot of other issues to solve. The workload is medium compared to a course in Sankt Gallen.

Strategic Management in China: Recommendation 10/10

This course is all about China. The emphasis really lies on the China insights. It's not so much about theoretical frameworks. The focus lies on a hand on approach. If you want to do business in China or later want to work in China this is the course you want to choose. You have to write two group papers and make a presentation of 20 minutes about a MNE which does business in China. Finally, there is a 2-hour exam at the end of the semester. The workload is not big. It is a good course for getting good grades.

Foreign Chinese Investment Law: Recommendation 8/10

This course is just during the first half of the semester. But these six weeks are really intense. You have to read a book about 600 pages and have 2 assignments and a 3-hour final test at the end. It is a really interesting course. It covers Chinese corporate, tax, PE, VC and M+A law. For the law and economics

students it is really a great course. But you can just accredit it as a Reko. You should be familiar with VC, PE and M+A if you want to choose this course. Otherwise you will have a hard time.

Consulting: Recommendation: mandatory

This course is the most time consuming. You will be split into groups of 4 or 5. In each group there will be a local student. There are many interesting topics you can work on. Be sure to really choose a topic which interests you. Because you will spend a lot of time on this assignment. You will have a mid-term presentation and the final presentation. Moreover, you have to attend all classes during the semester. These are the issues which are graded: class participation, class attendance, slide design and individual presentation style. This course will really show you if you are a team player or not. It is absolutely necessary that you develop a good atmosphere within the group. If you are not able to work as a group, you will fail. And the most important thing is that even though you might encounter problems within the group don't show this to the outside. Even if one team member is not working as expected by the others try to solve the problem internally. There is the possibility to ask the professors for help. But you will hurt the grades of the whole group if you do so.