

## Personal Information

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Degree Program at TAU: MSc in Management of Technology and Information

Host University: University of Texas in Austin

Exchange term: Spring 2017

## Exchange Experience

### The State and City

Texas is the second largest state in US by both area and population, when you go you will find that everything is big in Texas. It located in the South-Central region of the United States. Its nickname is 'The Long Star State'. The Texan residents are very proud of their state, and you can feel it everywhere you go.



Austin is the capital of Texas. It is the 11<sup>th</sup> most populated in the US, and the 4<sup>th</sup> most populated in Texas, after Houston, Dallas, and San-Antonio. Austin is a great and a safe city to live in. The locals describe it as a party city, because there is always a party at somewhere.

Two of the most popular and iconic places known to Austin are Sixth St. and Rainey St. These areas are known for their festive nightlife regardless of the day. The slogan for Austin is 'Keep Austin Weird', which adopted by the Austin Independent Business Alliance to promote small businesses in city. There are music concerts and festivals along all year, the highlight being a musical festival held every March called South by Southwest. You can find more information about the city in the following link: <https://www.austintexas.org/visit/>



### **University and its Business School**

UT is one of the largest State Universities in US, and the flagship school of Texas System. UT is home to more than 51,000 students. The UT moto is 'What starts here change the world', and its slogan and hand signal is 'Hook 'em Horns' – you'll find it at sporting events, during the playing of the school song "The Eyes of Texas".



McCombs is one of the twenty best business schools in US. McCombs is the first school of Accounting in the US in all degree's levels. It was surprising to discover that, to achieve CPA license in US, you have to study five years and pass four external exams, so usually the students study both BA and MPA (Master of Professional Administration). Upon completion of the academic portion of the program the student will need to fulfill 2,000 hours of working as an Accountant, this is much easier than the path to becoming an Accountant in Israel.

The Department of Information, Risk, and Operation Management (IROM) has outstanding programs. It has one of the top three programs in Information Systems in the US. McCombs is also known for the excellent programs in Finance and Marketing. McCombs is the place to

study. I had a great time studying there, and I recommend that you don't hesitate to choose it as your first option.



I must admit that the courses in McCombs are overwhelming that requires adaptation. However, the academic level in McCombs is like the Business Schools in Israel.

### **Social activities**

There are two routine activities in McCombs: the first is having free coffee (Starbucks) with some food for the earlier students every Tuesday at 9 am. The second is a social meeting in a bar (every time is a different bar) which called "Think n' Drink" every Thursday. There are also activities for International students, however, those activities meant mainly for undergraduate students. Some of the Jewish students gather together and arrange Israeli activities such as "Chuchuka morning" or religious activities such as a Passover Seder dinner.

The Passover Seder night was at Hillel Place. This dinner was for all the MBA students, Jewish and non-Jewish, and if you are used to having a spiritual event on this day you may be disappointed.

### **Exchange Application**

The first step to complete an application is to claim an EID from UT. The application for exchange student must contain documents as follows:

1. Current Resume.
2. Photo.
3. Official University Transcript (undergraduate and grades of your current program) – foreign transcripts must be submitted in their original language along with an official English translation.
4. Immigration and Financial Support Form with required financial support documentation (CFR – Certification of Financial Responsibility).
5. Passport ID page.
6. English Proficiency Form – send it to Hila, she will return it to you signed.

You are required to register and attend the Reciprocal Exchange Immigration Briefing and Check-In (IBC) before registering for classes. Additionally, you need to prepare your medical clearance documentation that includes Immunization records and TB test. Israel is one of the countries, which its students does not require a TB test. However, you must schedule an appointment at UHS (University Health Services) to clear this requirement when you arrive in Austin (512-471-4995).

You will not be allowed to register for classes until you have completed these requirements.

### **Courses**

The full MBA students have to take five courses every semester, but as exchange student, you must take three to five courses, and you can combine ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. Almost every class you have to prepare for (reading cases, articles, websites and so on). I took four classes, but my advice is taking only three because as mentioned above the courses are overwhelming.

As an MSc student in Information Technology and Management, I didn't have a choice but to take at least two in this field. The two other classes were ESL classes to further enhance my English skills.

#### **Strategies for networked economy (MIS381N)**

This class is an hour and half twice a week (Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30-14:00). You will need to prepare ahead for each class by reading study cases, papers, articles, and some news reports. This class is about dynamics of IT evolution and platform-mediated networks and how they create value or creatively destroy value, and there is a discussion in each class, so a participation is mandatory. There is a Harvard's Coursepack, which you must buy and of course, to read, because the class is centered around these cases. My advice is to share the cost of the Coursepack with your group.

The assignments for this class are a midterm exam, a project with a presentation, and analyzing two study cases in groups of five students. The first half of the semester is very demanding, but the second half is less stressful.

#### **Data analytics & Dynamic pricing (MIS382)**

I haven't taken such class for a long time, it was outstanding class, and I enjoyed it a lot. This class is also twice a week (Mondays & Wednesdays 14:30-16:30), and the attendance is mandatory, the Professor manages it by an application. This class' focus is the use of cutting edge data analytic techniques to understand, and inform strategic decision making with the primary focus upon formulation of dynamic pricing policies.

Be aware, this class is considered as one of the hardest in the MBA program. The materials weren't difficult, on the contrary, the Professor was very clear and will assist you in the course assignments, however the two exams (not cumulative) were difficult because they

are timed exams. It is completely different than our MBA exams. My advice is practicing time management.

The tasks for this course are an assignment every two weeks in groups of three students. The total assignments were five – that was the fun part. Don't be concerned, the average score is 92, and you might get an assistance from the Professor during office hours. Be concerned about the exams! As mentioned, you are going to enjoy this class although it might ruin your Saturday nights.

### **Housing**

Because I observed the Sabbath, I looked for an apartment at West-Campus which was closed to Chabad House and Hillel organization. There are a lot of apartment complexes in the neighborhood, and I chose to live at Crest at Pearl which managed by ACC (American Campus Communities). The complex is about 10 minutes walking to McCombs. The apartments are fully furnished with washing machine and dryer. Most students who live there are undergraduate students and every weekend there are parties with loud music and alcohol, so if you are looking for a quiet place, this is not the place to be. I didn't have a choice but to live there.

I have attached an Excel file with other housing options. This file was sent to future MBA students. Furthermore, I attached a few links for off-campus that can help you in housing finding.

1. <http://www.simplyinternational.com/> private company that assists international students secure housing near campus, find roommates and prepare for their arrival.
2. [UT West Campus Sublease Facebook Group](#) UT students post information if they are leaving their apartment before the lease has ended.
3. [Exchange Student Facebook group](#) Current exchange students and incoming exchange students can share advice about housing options.
4. <https://www.americancampus.com/student-apartments/tx/austin/crest-at-pearl> private dormitories that Crest is one of their properties. Crest located within walking distance of the UT campus and offer double (shared) and some single (private) rooms.



Texas MBA Housing  
Sublets 2017.xlsx &

Please contact Hila Rachmani for the document: [hilara@tauex.tau.ac.il](mailto:hilara@tauex.tau.ac.il)

## **Visa**

The process is very easy and clear. UT issues DS-2019 form in order to apply for a J-1 Student Visa. For the MBA students, DS-2019 form is express mailed directly to their home.

Once the DS-2019 has been issued, you will receive an automatic email about your SEVIS number. After you receive the DS-2019, you need to complete the Electronic Visa Application, pay SEVIS fee, and schedule an appointment in the American Embassy in Tel-Aviv. To enter the US you will need the followings documents:

1. Passport valid six months into the future.
2. J-1 Visa stamp in your passport.
3. DS-2019 form.

## **Transportation**

UT students may ride Capital Metro buses free by presenting a valid UT photo ID upon entering the bus. You will be issued an ID at the ID center (FAC building) when you arrive in Austin.

Austin city decided not to allow the Uber Company to operate in the city. There are two or three popular rideshare applications such as Lyft, Uber, and Ride Austin, all are very convenient.

## **Health insurance**

All J-1 Exchange students are required to have health insurance for the duration of their time at UT. The cost of the insurance provided by UT is approximately \$1,000 per semester. You will be charged automatically for the insurance on your bill once you have registered for classes.

## **Living expenses**

Living expenses can vary from \$1,100 to \$2,000 per month depending on where you choose to live, and how much you are willing to compromise. You can find an apartment with roommates in West Campus from \$900 to \$1,200. Utilities cost from \$50 to \$80 at most. Groceries, transportation, and entertainment with alcohol depends on you.

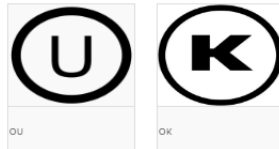
## **Food**

I observe Kosher food, so I can't recommend restaurants, fast food etc. All I can say that is very hard to keep Kosher in Austin because there aren't any Kosher restaurants, coffee shops. There is a small Kosher department in HEB store on Village Center, and Kosher bakery in Randalls on Balcones. However, there are a lot of Kosher products at every store – see the symbols of Texas as follows:

## TEXAS



Besides these symbols, there are common symbols that you will see at stores:



I open an account on Randalls website and order products (also dairy products). This was the easiest way to buy Kosher food, and the shipment is free to your door if you buy above \$50. Good luck with that.

### Night Life

There are two options, the Sixth street and Rainey street. Sixth street divided by two there is Sixth Street and Dirty Sixth Street, it's called dirty because it is dirty. The streets are lined with various bars. Every Saturday the city closes the street for all those who visit to enjoy themselves.

### Miscellaneous

I attached a 'welcome guide' that would help you, and will cover the stuff that I haven't mentioned above.



welcome.guide.pdf



## Photos

### Austin 360 Bridge





### Kayaking at the Colorado River



### Austin Capitol





**Bullock Museum**





## Nightlife



UT

