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My University of Michigan experience

The University of Michigan (UoM) is located in Ann Arbor, a college town in the state of Michigan.

The Visa

In order to be allowed to study in USA one must obtain a F1 visa. That visa can be obtained from the US embassy in Tel-Aviv in the same procedure of the tourist visa.

The F1 visa is followed by I-20 form, which contains details regarding your school and semester period. You can enter the US 30 days prior to the I-20 start date and stay in the US up to 60 days after its end date. Be advised, if you'll depart from the US after your I-20 end date, you wouldn't be able to enter again, even in the 60 days' period ("Grace Period").

The Campus

University of Michigan has 2 campuses in Ann Arbor, Central and North Campus. Ross is in Central Campus in a building which has been built recently and has a great learning environment, including private study rooms and places to study all over. Central Campus is located in the heart of Ann Arbor and North campus is about 10-15 minutes driving from it.

Housing

Ann Arbor has plenty of housing options. Finding housing for four months (one semester) is difficult, but possible. The city contains many apartment buildings for students, including Landmark, Zaragon Palace, Zaragon West, Arbor Blu, Varsity, University Towers and Woodbury Gardens. When I checked in April, no building agreed for short lease beside Woodbury Gardens, but checking again in July resulted in signing a four-month lease with University Towers, which is 5 minutes walking from Ross and from other great places. Another available options are AirBnB and Co-Oop (Living in a community with many other people).

Living expenses

Rent in Ann Arbor is approximately 1000\$, depending on the number of roommates, Food is relatively cheap – only a few minutes drive to get to Target, Trader Joe’s or Meijer for groceries. In Addition, many places offer meals in great prices every day.

Lastly, in many classes you’ll be asked to buy books, however, buying them isn’t always necessary. Check it as the class proceeds.

Classes

The semester is divided into 2 terms, A and B. Most of the term classes are 1.50/2.25 credits. The classes’ grading is mostly based on group projects, assignments and/or class participation and are on scale of Excellent (A+, A), Good (A-), Pass (B+, B), Low Pass (B-, C+, C, C-) and Fail (D and so on).

You have to take at least 9 credits in your semester in the University of Michigan and no more than 18.

Transportation and Traveling

Transportation as a student in Ann Arbor is pretty easy. You have a couple of option:

- 1) Blue Bus, which anyone can ride for free.
- 2) AATA buses (operated by AirRide), which you can ride for free using your M-Card (the student id).
- 3) ZipCar – Car sharing. You can join the service for ~7\$ per month and then pay on a use basis.
- 4) Uber and Lyft are pretty common in Ann Arbor area. And highly recommended!

I used Michigan Flyer in order to get from Ann Arbor to Detroit Metro Airport and vice versa. Ride costs 12\$ and the bus is very comfortable. Uber ride will cost approximately 40\$.

Social Life

University of Michigan has more than 1,000 clubs and most of them are open for exchange students.

There are also many activities during the semester and I recommend attending as much as you can and joining the clubs that you find interesting.

Ann Arbor is full of places to hang out during all day and night. You can choose the undergraduate atmosphere in South University, which includes places like the Blue leprechaun, the Brown Jug, BTB Cantina and Rick's or the graduate atmosphere in Main St., including Rush, Habana, Mash and Live. Another good places are Score Keepers and Hop Cat.

Major part of the University of Michigan experience are the football game-days. American tradition is tailgating before football games, including food, drinks and music. During game-days, you can see a lot of people in the streets and music is sound from every corner. There is a special tailgating for MBA students, called “The Bus”, which is also recommended. Michigan Stadium has a capacity of more than 115,000 people and being one of them is a unique experience. I recommend buying the season tickets for all the football games. Even if you’re not planning on attending all of the games, you can always sell your tickets to someone, since there are no individual tickets for official sale.

Additional Information

Ross building contains a gym, which cost 150\$ per semester. In addition, there are large recreation centers, including free full equipped gym for students, called CCRB and NCRB. Another option is the gym in your apartment building, if you live in one.

There is a big Jewish community, connected by Hillel Jewish Center and Jewish Resource Center. Every Friday night you can go, meet and connect with other Jewish students over free dinner.

As a resident of the State of Michigan, you're eligible for getting a Michigan State Id. I recommend getting that because you can use it everywhere, including in airports, and it's much easier for someone who checks your id. Plus, it's a great souvenir.