



Exchange Summary Report

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MEMOIRS OF AN EXCHANGE STUDENT AT ISB, INDIA

ISB Overview

The Indian School of Business popularly known as ISB evolved primarily from a need for establishing a distinctive, research driven and globally top-ranked private business school. Since its inception in 1996, the school continues to be the dream of some of the best minds from the corporate and academic world. Presently ISB has two campuses, one at Hyderabad in the state of Andhra Pradesh and the other at Mohali in the state of Punjab. The mohali campus began functional in the year 2012. The Hyderabad campus is spread over 260 acres whereas the Mohali campus occupies 70 acres. Both the campuses are self sustaining and environment friendly with lush green surroundings. As per the existing guidelines of ISB, the incoming exchange students are required to study at both the campuses if coming for 2 or more terms.

ISB provides several management programs satisfying the needs of different category of people. Apart from the regular 1 year post graduate diploma program in management (popularly known as PGP), it provides separate post graduate programs for senior executives, for people running family business, and a fellow program in management. Exchange program is part of regular PGP course, and entire syllabus of PGP program is divided into 8 terms for a period of 1 year. Course begins from May every year. First 4 terms are for core courses, and last 4 are dedicated to electives. Both the campuses provide more than 60 choices of electives and are open for incoming exchange students during last 4 terms starting from October. Students can choose for any term/terms during this period.



ISB Hyderabad



ISB Mohali

Visa Information

Being an Indian citizen originally, i did not need visa to go to India, and therefore this section is not very relevant to me. But exchange students get the email from ISB exchange co-ordinator in order to provide assistance for getting the Visa.

Accommodation

Student accommodation is available in 4 student villages in the Hyderabad Campus and 2 student villages in Mohali campus. Student villages are popularly known as SVs. Both campuses are lush green with all the facilities. One can choose between living in a quad room or studio apartment.

The quads have four rooms for four students with only one bathroom between two rooms. This means that two students share the bathroom. Apart from this there is a common living room cum kitchen area which is shared by all four students. The charges for the quad room are approx. (INR 23,000 NIS1300 per term).



Quad room



Common area in a quad

The studio apartment has a bedroom, living room cum kitchen, bathroom and a balcony for lavish single occupancy. The charges for studio apartment are Approx (INR 40,000 NIS2300 per term).

All accommodation is fully furnished (furniture, mattress, pillow, linen, closets, electrical appliances in the kitchen, cable TV and high speed internet) along with basic daily housekeeping services including laundry included in the room charges. Cooks are available on demand and at an additional cost. Tap water at both the campuses is purified and can be drunk directly. Additionally Mohali campus provides RO water purifiers in quads and studios. The accommodation at Mohali campus is new and better. The housekeeping staff is also more courteous and friendly at Mohali as compared to Hyderabad.

Living expenses

The cost of living in India is not as high as compared to Israel. Both the campuses have eating joints which serve variety of food including Indian and Continental. One good meal may cost anywhere between INR 150-400 (NIS 10-20). Naming few of the eating joints, Mohali has Sarover dining hall, Jujus cafe, and Cafe coffee day, while Hyderabad has Goel dining hall, subway, and cafe coffee day in the campus. Apart from housing, and meals, other living costs may include transport, eating off campus, and other outings, which are very frequent once you make friends.

ISB provides student ID cards once you get in touch with the authorities after arriving to the campus, and these cards work as your gate pass (guards check it each time you come inside the campus) as well as your credit card inside the campus. You can buy coffee, food, grocery etc. with this card, inside the campus. Card bill can be paid while clearing your final bill including accommodation etc.

Transportation

All facilities in the campus can be easily reached by foot. The public transportation system in India is not very easy to embark on. One of the most popular modes of transport in India is auto-rickshaw, which is convenient and economical way to visit nearby places outside the ISB campus. Auto-rickshaw is a three wheeler and can be used like a private taxi (more economical than a taxi). Cabs on call are also available and are safe and convenient. The average rate per kilometre is around INR 11 for auto-rickshaw and around INR 20-25 for cabs.



Auto-rickshaw

Courses

Like any other good college, ISB offers a plethora of courses. However, it depends on one's interest. Profile of the professor conducting the course and relevance of the course to one's profile and the host nation may be the additional factors that may be considered for short listing a course. All the professors receive the ratings based on previous year's courses they taught, and it helps selecting the courses based on professor ratings.

ISB exchange co-ordinator communicates well in-time with the incoming exchange students and sends the list of electives before each respective term. Courses are selected through a bidding system at ISB and exchange students are provided 1000 bidding points for each term. ISB reserves 5 seats in each course (also in each section if one course has more than one section due to high demand) for incoming exchange students, which makes it easy for the exchange students to get the desired courses. All the information on bidding is sent beforehand and bidding process is super easy. Bidding happens in 2 rounds, where one can select some courses in first round, then can attend test classes for them and in can make changes in the second round of bidding based on his/her experience in the test classes.

I attended 2 terms at ISB which were terms 5 and 6, where term 5 i spent in Mohali and 6 at Hyderabad.

My courses in term 5 were Advanced Corporate Finance (ADCF), Negotiations Analysis (NEGA) and Total Quality Management (TQM).

For term 6, my courses were Business Analytics and Data Mining (BADM), Investing in Private Equity (INPE) and Managing Strategic Partnerships (MGSP). I especially liked ADCF, NEGA and MGSP and found BADM to be very demanding and stressful.

Life at ISB is very busy due to numerous activities, events and demanding courses, therefore I suggest not taking more than 3 courses per term in order to enjoy life besides academics. 2 courses each term would be ideal.

Recreation

There are recreation centres on both the ISB campus, which includes swimming pool, gymnasium, room for yoga and aerobics, a basketball court, a football/cricket ground, squash, badminton, volleyball and tennis courts. Coaches are available for professional assistance. The fitness centre is equipped with state of the art fitness machines. Yoga may be a good thing to take up as there are generally regular classes for the same.

Both campuses offer many recreational, hobby and educational clubs which are a fun to explore and centres for mutual learning. These include- music and dance club, art club, wine tasting club, sports club, finance club, operations club, entrepreneurship club, consulting club etc.

Hyderabad is a historical city and has lot of potential for sightseeing. There are many museums and fort in and around Hyderabad. Mohali also has places like Chandigarh and Amritsar nearby to explore.

Apart from this there are many parties in ISB itself which are hosted by ISB or by students and are a fun to attend. All the facilities and events at the ISB campus are also open to spouses and kids of the students as well. Spouses generally have a fun time at the ISB campus and there is a spouses club which organises many interesting activities in the campus and keeps them occupied creatively and socially.

I attended the many interesting events during my stay at both the campuses such as theme parties, alumni get togethers, interacting with industry experts through panel discussions, seminars, company presentations (as a regular part of pre-placement process at ISB) and off course private parties thrown by students. ISB Hyderabad campus is often alive due to conduct of special events from different organisations, both academic and general. It provides ample opportunities not only for networking but also an exposure to the Indian culture especially for exchange students.

Both campuses organize an alumni calling event every year for 2-3 days, where alumni come with family from different part of the country as well as world to attend. Accommodation is arranged for them by ISB. During this time many interesting and fun activities are organized apart from networking opportunities with alums for current students. I was fortunate to be able to participate in such events at both the campuses as the dates have fallen during my stay there. There was special dance performance by exchange students guided by local student at one of such event.

Following is the photograph of the performance mentioned above:



General experience

Even though I am an Indian, I had a fantastic time and memorable experience as an exchange student at the Indian School of Business. Even though I am an Indian, but for all practical purposes at the ISB campus, my status was that of an exchange student and I was treated as such. Both the campuses are absolutely beautiful, green and serene.

The students at the ISB and Indians in general are very warm & extremely friendly and go out of their way to help exchange students. While at Mohali campus, during the Deepawali (Indian Hindu festival of Lights) holidays most of the exchange students including me visited the Golden Temple at Amritsar and the Wagah Border (India Pakistan border), which is at 4-5 hrs distance from Mohali, and we all were hosted by one of the ISB student whose parents were staying at Amritsar. We all celebrated Deepawali with them and were overwhelmed with the hospitality we received from the family.

Tips

The exchange students are provided with two buddies who are Indian students. The Buddies come to receive you at the airport if discussed before with them. They are instrumental in initial orientation and completion of arrival formalities. The buddies are the best guides and friends and one should not hesitate to take their help.

Take lot of guidance from fellow Indian students as and when required. It is a good idea to go out with your buddies initially to get familiarised with the surroundings.

Both Hyderabad and Mohali offer good culinary experience. However due caution is required to select the places of eating. Hyderabad is famous for Biryani (rice cooked with chicken/lamb). For places to visit, apart from the mentioned places in the beginning, i personally recommend going to Wagah border while you are at Mohali campus.

Foreign students are required to register at the local police station in Hyderabad and Mohali short after they arrive, but enquire about all the formalities related to registration and deregistration before hand as it differs for each country. Being an Indian i was away from all these formalities, but have seen few of the exchange students struggling with the same at the last moment. Also mention in your visa application they you would be visiting 2 campuses in case you plan to study at both the campuses.

Studio accommodation is luxurious, but my advice is to stay at Quad rather than at a studio as you can make a lot of friends there and can be always updated with campus activities.

Be cautious while travelling alone during the late night especially in auto-rickshaws. Prefer to go out in groups and use cabs from reputed companies like Mega cabs, Meru cabs etc. when alone.

Your primary point of contact in ISB would be the exchange co-ordinators at each campus. Do not hesitate to reach to them for anything.

Try to participate in most of the events and make lots of friends, use all the facilities to make most out of your stay there and remember that do not take more than 3 courses each term if you want to enjoy your exchange experience.

Do a lot of networking with people coming from different companies during different events if you consider working with India in future.

Grey Areas

ISB organizes campus recruitment drives where it invites companies for recruiting the students. Almost all big companies come to ISB and conduct 3-4 days recruitment process for selecting students. This way most of ISB students have jobs before even passing out.

The exchange students from Tel Aviv University are not allowed to participate in the campus selection/recruitment which was a disappointment. ISB has the reciprocating policies with their exchange partners and provides only career guidance to the TAU students as part of it, while students from some other business schools such as Wharton can participate in placements. I would recommend that all necessary measures from TAU may be taken to facilitate the participation of its exchange students in the campus selection for a truly global experience.

This is more glaring as most of the exchange students are allowed to participate in the campus selection.

Additionally as part of exchange policies at TAU, incoming exchange students are provided the alum status (as confirmed by emails exchanged between ISB exchange co-ordinator and TAU exchange co-ordinator), and therefore going with the reciprocating basis, ISB should provide alum status to students from Tel Aviv University. But even after multiple reminders ISB did not provide alum status as well as access to alum portal (all alums and current students get the access to it).