

Experience Report – Kasetsart University Bangkok

The Kasetsart University in Thailand is one of the most prestigious, largest and oldest public universities in Thailand. The university facilitates over 70,000 students spread across four different campus all over Thailand. The main campus, where all classes for international exchange students of the business administration and economics faculty will take place is Bangkhen campus. Trier University of Applied Sciences and the faculty of business administration of Kasetsart University have an exchange agreement for the international marketing program (KUBIM).

Application procedure

You can expect the semester to start in the first week of August. Once you are nominated for the exchange program you will be contacted by the Kasetsart University international college (KUIC). Due to the high number of exchange students the KUIC has to administer this can include a long waiting time of over one month. When the KUIC will provide you with a letter of acceptance along side other documents that will be relevant for obtaining the required visa. Once you receive all documents you can apply for a non-immigrant higher education visa at the royal Thai consulate general in Frankfurt. The visa application process is completely online so there is no need to travel to Frankfurt in person. The visa will be issued within three to four weeks via email. You must print the visa out and show it at the immigration checkpoint at the airport. Keep in mind that the visa is valid for only three months from the day of issuance. The visa can only be prolonged at the Immigration Division 1 in Bangkok. For the application process as well as for the visa application you need to provide proof of a valid health insurance that covers the entire duration of your stay in Thailand. As a rule of thumb the second semester will end mid-May.

Bangkhen campus

The main campus has an area of 135 ha. To get around the campus grounds the university offers three free shuttle bus lines. These busses do not follow a fixed schedule but can be tracked via the “KU Talai” app. Alongside the busses you can take the motorbike taxis available. Bangkhen campus is the largest campus of KU and is outstandingly convenient. It offers a multitude of restaurants and two Starbucks branches as well as five convenience stores. All major Thai banks have a branch on campus. There are five amazing canteens offering a generous choice of traditional Thai food, other Asian cuisines as well as western and halal food. Various street food vendors and night markets round up the culinary experience on campus. The campus facilities are very modern and generous and the educational infrastructure is outstanding. The campus has a few own museums two very large and resourceful libraries one of which is especially dedicated to the economics faculty. The classroom equipment is up to date and well maintained. The university also offers state of the art computer labs. The main campus is conveniently located in the Chatuchak district. This district offers a multitude of shopping malls, cinemas, markets and restaurants. Transportation is convenient ranging from commuter trains (SRT), underground (MRT) to the famous sky train network (BTS). The BTS will be your main mode of transportation to go from the university or the dormitory to the city centre. The university has its own BTS station called Kasetsart University station.

The KUBIM study program

You will be enrolled in the KUBIM program which is the international marketing program in the business administration faculty. Responsible for exchange students enrolled in this program is Dr. Paitoon and P'Ob. They can be reached via email at "kubim1837@gmail.com" and will respond even after office hours. You will receive a time table for before the semester begins with all courses offered in this study program. The course election is carried out by visiting all courses you are interested in and asking the professors to sign a form that you will receive a week before the lectures start. One Thai academic credit is equivalent to two ECTS. Usually, per course you will get three Thai credits – six ECTS. That means you need to enrol in five courses. It is mandatory to enrol in three KUBIM courses. That means you may enrol in two courses from a different faculty, for example the faculty of economics. I can especially highlight the "service marketing" course within the scope of the KUBIM program as well as the "economics of wealth management" course offered by the economics faculty. The highlight of these courses are the especially engaging professors and interesting project work. Also, I highly recommend taking the voluntary course "Thai language in everyday life". The over all English level in Thailand is very low and you will have a much more pleasant experience if you are able to order food in Thai. It will also be easier to find Thai friends if you know the basics of Thai culture and language.

Thai education

The Thai education system is very different to Germany. It is mandatory to wear a uniform during classes and examinations. The uniform can be bought for a bargain at the KU co-op store which is a five-minute walk away from the business faculty. Class attendance is mandatory in the most classes and will be checked regularly. Class attendance makes up five percent of the final grade and is the admission criteria to the examinations. It is usual to have both mid-term examinations as well as final exams in each subject that make up around 60 to 70 percent of the final grade. The rest is made up by term projects, presentations and homework. In conclusion it can be said that the degree of difficulty is comparable to Germany. However, the effort necessary to get a good grade is higher. Being a collectivistic society, Thai universities have a very strong emphasis on group projects and in class collaboration.

Dormitory

Once you get your letter of acceptance you can apply for a room in the international student dormitory called Krissana dormitory. The demand is high; therefore, it is advisable to apply for a room as soon as you receive all documents. You simply have to email the dormitory office at "iswk2010@hotmail.com" and they will provide you with all necessary documents you need to fill in and send back to them. The process takes less than a day and is very simple to complete. As soon as you arrive you need to pay advance rent and a safety deposit that will be returned to you when you move out. Rent is paid between the 10th and 20th of every month either in cash or via bank transfer. The rent for a single room is 6,000THB and the rent for a shared room with one roommate is 3,000THB. Additionally, you need to pay utility bills for water and electricity usage which depend on the amount you actually used. The utility bills usually stay below 300THB. The rooms are very large with a private bathroom. All rooms are equipped with air conditioners, a small fridge and a TV. On the ground floor you can find a study room with AC and washing machines and dryers. A big load of laundry will cost 110THB and a small load will be 90THB. Attached to each key is a magnetic security card ensuring that only people who

live on the same floor as you are able to enter, therefore security is very good. The dormitory is located very conveniently. It is just a five-minute walk from the BTS station Royal Forest Department. The university can be reached in less than 10 minutes by the free shuttle bus and walking to university takes just 25 minutes. Across the dormitory are a multitude of cheap restaurants and delicious street food stalls as well as two convenience stores which are opened 24/7.

Conclusion

In conclusion I can say studying in Thailand for two semesters was the best time of my life. Personally, I did not experience any negative events during my time in Thailand. I can highly recommend the exchange with Kasetsart University for everyone who has a genuine interest in Southeast Asia. You will have the unique chance to experience the most welcoming and hospitable culture and study at a major and well-known university in Asia.



Faculty of business administration



Faculty of economics