

National Dong Hwa University inbound international student report

Name: Andrea Sramku

Host institution: National Dong Hwa University (NDHU)

Home institution: Univerzita Hradec Králové (UHK)

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Contact host: Ellen Li (issa@gms.ndhu.edu.tw)

Contact home: Monika Hebková (monika.hebkova@uhk.cz)

Introduction: This year I've gotten the great honor of studying at National Dong Hwa University as an inbound exchange student for the summer semester of 2019. This experience has given me a lot of valuable knowledge, especially about the Chinese language and also it taught me a lot about the way of life of the local people. My stay here also gave me a lot of friends I will remember for the rest of my life. Here is the brief recollection of my experiences during my stay at the NDHU

Arrival: Before I arrived to Taiwan I have been paired with a volunteer that helped me with a lot of things. Such as helping me find my way from the Taoyuan airport to the NDHU campus. Her name was Tia and thanks to her getting to NDHU was made very easy.

The way to NDHU campus is actually quite simple. One simply has to take a train straight from one of the terminals of the Taoyuan airport and then take a direct train to Hualien train station. From there there was a NDHU bus that took every arriving student to their assigned dormitories.

NDHU campus: The NDHU campus is located in Hualien and is one of the most beautiful campuses in Taiwan. The University is nestled between the Coastal and Central Mountain Range. The campus is also full of greenery and it truly makes for a spectacular sight. One of my favorite areas of the campus would have to be the lake located next to the main administration building and the restaurant attached to it. It really made for a great sight.

The dormitories that NDHU offers are quite nice. They are spacious and are equipped with all the amenities a student might need. There are five dormitories in total. Each dormitory is equipped with

a kitchen with refrigerators for storage and also a microwave oven and a ricecooker. Naturally each dormitory also features a laundry room with enough washing machines and tumble driers. There really is enough for everyone.

What to pack: Inbound exchange students should also consider what to pack on their journey to Taiwan. The weather in Taiwan is very humid, the humidity can often times reach 75-80% and not to mention the weather in Taiwan can get extremely hot. Because of this I would recommend to pack lighter clothes, more suited for hot weather. I'd also recommended bringing a raincoat or an umbrella with you as it can rain quite often and sometimes the rain doesn't stop for a full week. There's a lot of insects that bite in Taiwan, so I would recommend packing an insect repellent. The rest of the essentials such as shower gels, shampoos, conditioners etc. can be bought in a department store just outside the campus. You can also buy things such as fans, mattresses and pillow in there as well.

Finances: The UHK has provided me with a scholarship in overall amount of 89,756NTD. This amount of finances is what I'd consider to be a sufficient for one semester of studying at the NDHU. I should also note that my accommodation has been paid for by my home university the UHK, so if one were to study at NDHU coming from a different institution I'd recommend looking up the rent and the fees associated with their they at the NDHU. The only fees I was required to pay was the deposit fee of 2,200 NTD and then my electricity which totalled at around 990 NTD. Also a deposit of 1,500NTD is required to rent a bike which is almost essential for getting around the campus easily. I also opted to pay for my plane ticket out of my own financial reserves to make it easier for my scholarship to last. I find that this amount of money allowed me to travel quite a bit. During my stay I have visited Hualien city many times, which is a very beautiful city with a quite awe inspiring night market. I was also able to visit the Taroko Gorge National Park and the beautiful capital of Taiwan – Taipei. For those students that are interested the NDHU also organizes a lot of field trips, namely the trip to the Taroko Gorge National Park, which is very beautiful.

Studies: This semester I have opted to take part in 3 courses. During my time at the NDHU I studied under the department of Tourism, Recreation and Leisure studies. Most of my classes were thus more focused on Tourism and cultural studies. In the end I have opted to take a Fundamental Chinese class, German class, English for Business class and last but not least I have decided to sign up for Backgrounds to Western Literature class. My NDHU volunteer Tia helped me helped me navigate the course selection on my first day and made sure I got to pick classes that were the best suited

for me. I will now go over the list of courses I was attending and try to present what they were all about and my overall impression of them.

Fundamental Chinese: This class is pretty self explanatory as it is designed to teach students the basic of the Chinese language. The class was held by a very friendly teacher Mr. Yang, who always made sure we understood everything and helped us when we were having a hard time learning the Chinese grammar and vocabulary. This class was held in 3 hour sessions and mostly consisted of oral exercises and quizzes in the app Quizzlet. There were two exams for this course, one midterm and one final exam. Both exams consisted of a written test consisting of a writing part and a listening part. The second part of these exams was a short oral exam. We also had to buy a textbook and a student's book for this class. Both of these have cost me around 1,100NTD. Overall I'd say this class is the most important for one's stay in Taiwan as one learns the basics of the language here, which in turn allows one to have an easier time communicating with the locals.

German: This class is very simile to the fundamental Chinese class in the way that it is also designed to teach students the basics of german grammar, vocabulary and conversation. This class was taught by a german teacher Mr. Porche, which was the best part of the class in my opinion and it helped to motivate me to want to learn the language as best as I could. This class was also held in 3 hour sessions, but no textbook was required. Instead we had to pay only 80NTD for copied handouts which made up all of our study materials. This class covered a wide array of topics. We started with simple introductions and then made our way to German geography, cousine and we also touched upon the German culture. The class was concluded by a oral exams from all the topics that were discussed in previous classes.

English for business: This class was much different from the other ones. It was mostly focus on business and marketing. It also explained some concepts found in the business world. In this class students work in teams on various projects. These projects usually consist of presentations about a certain product or a company. The final exam takes on a form a group project during which students create a commercial for a certain product or service. This movie is then shown in front of the entire class and is then graded by the teacher. This class is all about teamwork and building a bond with your teammates. Out of all of my classes I think I enjoyed this one the most.

Backgrounds to western literature: As the name suggests the purpose of this class is to introduce students to the amazing world that is the western literature. This class covers a wide range of topics. The class could be dividend into two segments. The first segment is mostly focused on the Old

Testament found in the Bible. Many known stories are analyzed and compared in this classes, starting with the creation of the world and ending with the birth of Jesus Christ. The second segment focuses more on the New Testament of the Bible. The class also focuses on the literary work of Dante Alighieri and his magnum opus, *Inferno*. This class featured the most tests, in addition to a written midterm and final exam there were also lots of smaller quizzes, mostly consisting of multiple choice questions.

Conclusion: In conclusion I'd just like to say that I'm extremely thankful for this experience and I would like to give my thanks to both the teams at both UHK(Univerzita Hradec Králové) and the NDHU (National Dong Hwa University) For making this whole trip possible for me and I would also like to thank UHK for the financial backing that I have received. This exchange trip has given me a lot of fond memories of Taiwan and I'm hoping that maybe someday I will be able to visit this beautiful little country again.