

Experience Report – Exchange Semester at Fudan University, Shanghai

Summer Semester 2026

1. Introduction and Preparation

During the summer semester of 2026, I had the opportunity to spend an exchange semester at Fudan University in Shanghai. My exchange period lasted from 1 March 2026 until 14 July 2026. I arrived in Shanghai three days before the start of the courses, which gave me enough time to settle in, complete the necessary administrative procedures and familiarize myself with the university campus.

Before the beginning of the semester, Fudan University's School of Economics (SOE) organized an orientation session for exchange students. During this session, I had the opportunity to meet other exchange students from partner universities and receive important information about studying and living in Shanghai. The university introduced us to essential applications needed for daily life in China, public transportation options, campus facilities and available support services.

After arrival, several administrative procedures had to be completed. I first registered at the Foreign Student Office, where I also purchased the required local health insurance provided by the university. Afterwards, I applied for my student card, which is an essential part of everyday life at Fudan. Unlike in many German universities, the student card is used not only for university identification but also for accessing campus buildings and paying for meals in university cafeterias.

Overall, the preparation and arrival process was well organized. The International Office of the School of Economics was always available for questions and provided support whenever assistance was needed. This was especially helpful during the first weeks, when many administrative tasks had to be handled.

2. First Impressions of Shanghai and Campus Life

The Fudan campus is almost like a small city. The dormitories, lecture halls, libraries, sports facilities and swimming pool are all located within the campus. Additionally, there is a subway station directly connected to the university, making it convenient to explore different parts of Shanghai. This location was a major advantage, as it allowed me not only to focus on my studies but also to experience the culture and lifestyle of one of China's largest cities.

One thing that surprised me was the weather during my stay. March to June is generally the rainy season in Shanghai, and I experienced significantly more rain than expected. June-July is actually called the 梅雨 season in Shanghai, which means plum rain season. Rain is always expected during this time. Nevertheless, the weather did not

negatively affect my experience. Shanghai is a city with a lot to offer, including museums, historical streets, modern architecture, restaurants and cultural activities. Exploring local neighbourhoods and museums allowed me to experience different aspects of Chinese culture beyond what can be learned from books or lectures.

3. Accommodation and Daily Life

During my exchange semester, I lived in the Fudan University dormitory. The dormitory did not include a shared kitchen, which was different from the typical student accommodation experience in Germany. However, this was not a major disadvantage because there were many affordable dining options available on campus, including university cafeterias and restaurants nearby.



Figure 1. Lunch at North Canteen



Figure 2. The daily bike route to SOE

Living directly on campus was a very convenient experience. It allowed me to participate easily in university activities, meet other students and experience the campus atmosphere. The first week was slightly challenging because the Fudan campus is very large, and it took some time to become familiar with the different buildings and facilities. However, after some time, navigating the campus became easy.

For future exchange students, I'd recommend downloading a bike rental app such as Hellobike or Meituan Bike before arriving — the Fudan campus is large, and bikes are by far the most convenient way to get around. As an example, the walk from the student dorm to the School of Economics (SOE) takes about 20 minutes, but only around 7 minutes by bike. A semester bike rental package is also significantly cheaper than paying per ride, so it's worth setting up early.

4. Academic Experience at Fudan University

During my exchange semester, I selected four courses related to finance and business:

- Venture Capital, IPO and Merger and Acquisition
- Money and Banking
- Analysis of Financial Statements and Valuation
- International Finance

Overall, I found the courses at Fudan highly valuable because they combined theoretical knowledge with practical examples, especially from the Chinese business environment. One aspect that particularly impressed me was that professors frequently incorporated Chinese companies and current market developments into their lectures.

Venture Capital, IPO and Merger and Acquisition

This was one of the most interesting courses during my exchange. The course covered topics related to venture capital investment, IPO processes and mergers and acquisitions. A major advantage was the connection between academic concepts and real-world examples.

As part of the course, we had the opportunity to visit Chinese technology companies such as ByteDance and Tencent. These visits provided valuable insights into how large Chinese companies operate and how business models develop in China. For example, learning about ByteDance's livestreaming business gave me a deeper understanding of areas of the Chinese digital economy that are less visible from a European perspective.

The course also included discussions about emerging industries, especially artificial intelligence companies. We analysed the rapid development of AI-related businesses and discussed whether current valuations could represent a potential AI market bubble.

Money and Banking

The Money and Banking course provided a deeper understanding of economic and financial mechanisms. We studied different economic indicators, financial market developments and monetary theories.

One particularly interesting part was the research paper assignment, where we analysed the impact of geopolitical events, such as the Iran war, on financial markets. I appreciated that the course incorporated current global events, showing how financial theories can be applied to real-world situations.

Analysis of Financial Statements and Valuation

This course was very practical because we regularly analysed newly released financial statements from companies. Instead of only learning theoretical valuation methods, we

worked with recent financial reports from companies such as Nvidia, Tesla, Alibaba and the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. We also had class presentations and discussions on our financial insights on the financial statements we analysed.

It was especially interesting to have the opportunity to analyse Alibaba and HKSE's financial statement at class. HKSE had a record profit for the last financial year, by analysing deeper into we, we found out that one of the major reasons is its strategic importance of being the channel between Mainland's stocks and Stocks from abroad.

International Finance

The International Finance course focused on topics such as exchange rates and their impact on financial markets. We also examined the Asian Financial Crisis, which was a topic I had previously known little about but found highly relevant for understanding global financial developments.

The course helped me better understand the importance of Asian financial markets and the role they play in the international economy.

5. Extracurricular Activities and Cultural Exchange

Besides my academic experience, participating in extracurricular activities was one of the most valuable parts of my exchange semester. Fudan University offers a wide range of student societies, providing excellent opportunities for students to meet people from different backgrounds and become more involved in campus life.

The support from the DAAD ISAP scholarship was very helpful during my exchange. Besides supporting my daily living expenses, it also enabled me to participate in extracurricular activities and explore Shanghai and its surroundings through short trips. This additional support made it easier to fully engage in the exchange experience beyond the classroom.

One activity I particularly enjoyed was joining the martial arts society at Fudan. I had practiced martial arts when I was younger but had not continued since middle school. Joining this society allowed me to rediscover this interest and experience a different aspect of Chinese culture. The society organized regular weekly training sessions, which was not only a good opportunity to stay physically active but also a great way to meet local students and integrate into university life.

I also joined the pottery society, where I learned a new skill that I had always been interested in. The society was particularly impressive because it organized activities beyond the campus, including trips to Jingdezhen, a city famous for its traditional

Chinese porcelain production and craftsmanship. This experience allowed me to connect a personal hobby with Chinese cultural heritage.

Besides these societies, Fudan offers many other student activities, including hiking, tennis, frisbee and singing societies. The variety of activities shows the diversity of student life at Fudan and makes it relatively easy for exchange students to find opportunities matching their interests.

Another valuable experience was participating in language nights organized by the international student community. These events brought together students from different countries and provided a relaxed environment to exchange cultures, practice languages and make international friends. Since Fudan has one of the largest international student communities in China, it was a particularly good place to meet people from many different cultural backgrounds.

Through these activities, I was able to build friendships with both local Chinese students and international students. This was one of the most enriching aspects of the exchange, as I could experience China not only as a visitor but also through interactions with people who live and study there.



Figure 3. During pottery class

6. Exploring China Beyond Shanghai

During my exchange semester, I also used the opportunity to travel within China. Thanks to China's extensive high-speed railway network, many destinations can be reached conveniently from Shanghai, making travelling during weekends or short breaks relatively easy.

I visited Jingdezhen, Suzhou, Hangzhou and Huangshan, all of which offered very different experiences compared with Shanghai.

While Shanghai represents the modern, international and fast-paced side of China, these cities provided a deeper insight into China's historical and cultural heritage.

Suzhou impressed me with its traditional gardens and classical Chinese architecture. Hangzhou, especially the area around West Lake, showed the combination of natural landscapes and cultural history. Huangshan offered a completely different experience with its famous mountain scenery and traditional Chinese landscapes. Visiting Jingdezhen was particularly meaningful because of my participation in the pottery

society, as the city is internationally known for its porcelain production and traditional craftsmanship.



Figure 4. Hangzhou



Figure 5. Huangshan



Figure 6. Shanghai

These trips helped me understand China beyond the image of a modern metropolis. They showed me the diversity of Chinese culture and the different lifestyles that exist across the country.

7. Personal Reflection and Conclusion

Looking back, my exchange semester at Fudan University was an extremely valuable experience both academically and personally.

From an academic perspective, I gained insights into Chinese financial markets, companies and innovation ecosystems that would have been difficult to obtain through courses in Germany alone. The combination of theoretical knowledge, practical company examples and discussions of current developments made the courses highly relevant and engaging.

Personally, the exchange allowed me to experience China from a new perspective. Living in Shanghai as a student provided a much deeper understanding of everyday life, social interactions and the development of modern China.

One of the greatest benefits of the exchange was the opportunity to connect with people from many different backgrounds. Through courses, student societies and international events, I met students from China and many other countries. These experiences broadened my worldview and strengthened my ability to adapt to different cultural environments.

I would highly recommend the exchange program at Fudan University to future students from the University of Göttingen. The university offers excellent academic opportunities, a vibrant campus life and a unique chance to experience one of the world's most dynamic cities. For students interested in finance, business, international economics or simply gaining a deeper understanding of China, Fudan provides an outstanding environment for personal and academic growth.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to the University of Göttingen, Fudan University and the DAAD for enabling this unforgettable experience.