

Study Abroad Experience Report

- I am happy for my experience report to be viewed by other students interested in studying abroad, as detailed in the guidelines (**please tick to confirm**) ✓

Name:	Patrick McEvoy
Degree Programme	MSc International Business
Host Institution(s) and country:	NCCU, Taipei, Taiwan
Academic Year of Exchange	2019-2020, Semester 2

When did you go on your exchange? (please tick)

- International Business Part B Semester 2
- Part I (full year)
- Part I (6+6)
- ✓ MSc International Management Semester 2

Please sum up your overall experience in a couple of sentences:

Overall this was a great experience living in Taipei for semester 2 as part of my degree and I would greatly encourage others to do the same. It gives you the opportunity to live in a region of the world you ordinarily would not be able to, experiencing a new culture and living with other students from around the world.

This report will delve into my overall experience completing a semester abroad in Taipei, Taiwan. I will break this down into several categories of useful information for those who are considering studying abroad at NCCU.

Arrival

NCCU gives you the option to sign up for their “buddy program” where you will be put into contact with local students already attending the university who can help you with your arrival and any other pieces of information you may require. I was paired with 2 local students who met me on my arrival in Taipei and were very helpful when setting me up with things I would need for the duration of my stay.

Firstly, you will need to buy an MRT card, these are 100NTD (£2.50) and can be used on all transport in Taiwan, not just Taipei, this is a card you will most likely use every day - not just for transport but also to use at any local 7/11.

Secondly, you will need to purchase a Taiwanese sim card, if you are a UK citizen, we are allowed 90 day visa free, so you are able to purchase an unlimited data sim card for 90 days in the airport. This is what I did but you can also extend this for any extra amount of days you will need this for during the rest of your stay.

Accommodation

The options for applying for accommodation are either applying to i-House in a single or double room or living in one of the dorms. I was fortunate to be given a single room in i-House.

The benefits of being given a room in i-House are the following:

- Clean and secure rooms
- Mini fridge and en-suite in all the rooms
- Location (5 minute walk from NCCU Campus)
- Social aspect, you get to meet students from all over the world

The negatives I found are the following:

- No alcohol is allowed in the accommodation whatsoever
- You need to leave the common areas at 11pm
- No guests are allowed
- Beds are not particularly comfortable (I recommend buying a mattress topper)
- Location (close to campus but outside of the main city)

I would recommend living in i-House overall due to the social aspect, all the new people you get to meet makes it worth it in my opinion and is generally the best option.

University Campus

The university campus itself is relatively small but will have everything you need. All of my classes were in a handful of buildings relatively easy to find, a map will be given to you, so you are able to locate all of these. There is also a campus gym which is very inexpensive, this will cost around 700NTD for the semester (less than £20.00).

There are also several societies you can take part in, similar to what you would be able to within Loughborough, such as football, tennis etc. These are also relatively inexpensive and fun to do.

Taiwan Travel

Due to Covid-19 I was unable to leave Taiwan to travel around other parts of Asia, however, this did give me the opportunity to travel all over Taiwan and the following places are ones that I highly recommend:

- Taroko National Park

This is an incredible scenic national park you are able to drive through, with different monuments and hikes you can see throughout.



- Jiufen

This is where the film spirited away is based on, a very old town you can walk through and experience, I highly recommend visiting the tea house.

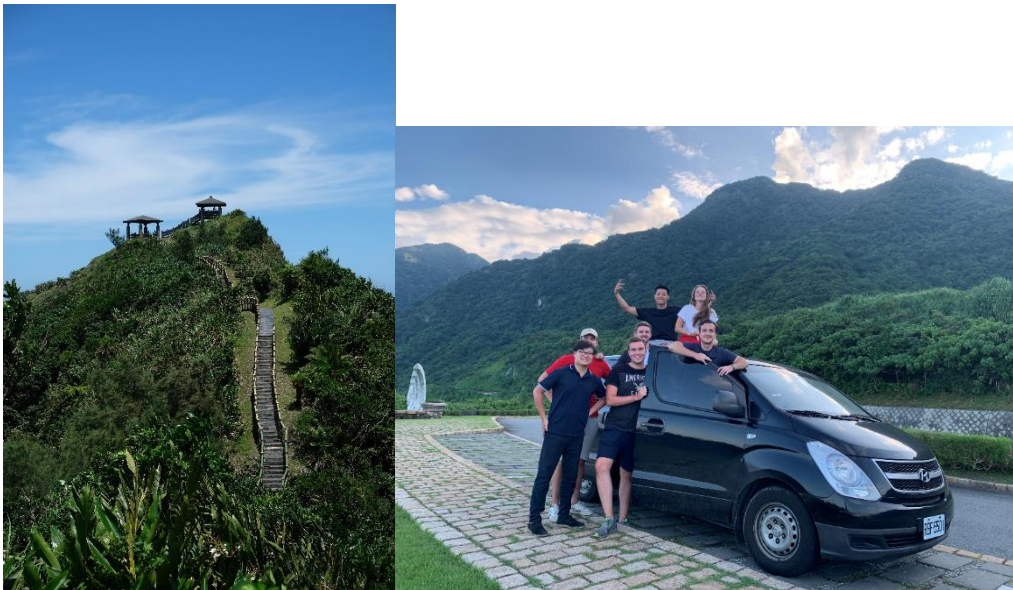


- Kenting

This is the southern-most point of Taiwan, where many students will visit on Spring break, this is more of a beach trip for the weekend rather than seeing any sights.

- Green Island

A small island off the coast of Taipei – a short ferry ride away. This island has a lot to see but can be driven around on scooters in around 1 hour. At night if you go to the white beach you can see the Milky way. You can travel by train and take the ferry over or do what I did and make it into a road trip.



- Penghu Island

This is another island off the coast of Taipei, but much bigger with more to see. I would recommend flying from Songshan airport as this is much faster and cheaper than taking other means of transport.



- Kaishoung

This is the second biggest city of Taiwan with plenty to do. There is a relatively good nightlife and plenty of food options. I recommend going to Cijin for the beach where there is a great beach bar, also around 1 hour outside of Kaishoung is a giant buddha museum I highly recommend visiting.



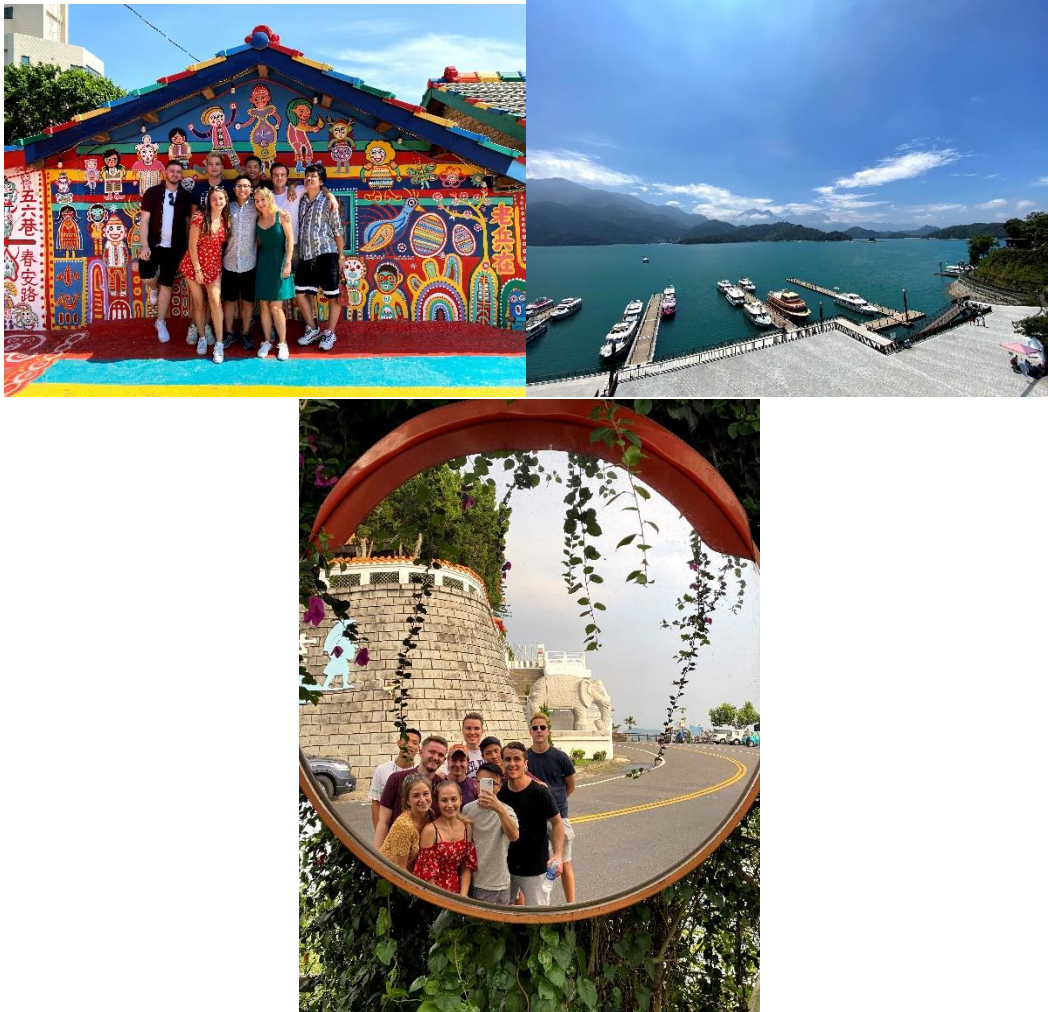
- Lambai Island (Turtle Island)

This is another island off the coast of Taipei and nicknamed Turtle Island because you are able to swim with turtles. This is also a very small island but worth the trip for this alone.



- Sun Moon Lake

This is a very scenic lake in the middle of Taiwan, around the lake are different monuments you are able to see, such as temples and historical sites. I also recommend visiting the indigenous theme park located nearby. In the nearby city is a Rainbow village and original bubble tea store you can visit too on your way back to Taipei.



Food

The food in Taipei and Taiwan in general is very good. Around the NCCU campus there aren't as many options as in the main part of Taipei around the 101 building. Next to the campus you did have two different pasta restaurants, Thai, fried chicken and dumpling places, there is even a McDonalds very close by.

In the main part of the city there are several options and you will never be short of places to go and eat, a list of places I would recommend are below:

- Twinkeyz Tacos
- Zoca Italian
- Mala Hotpot
- Any Japanese or Korean BBQ
- Night markets

Practical Advice

The following things are what I would advise to bring with you as it may make your experience in Taiwan a little easier overall:

- An international driving license – much easier to rent scooters and hire a car if you want to. I recommend renting scooters when travelling all around Taiwan as it is much more practical (and fun) to see all the places you would like to see. Other people I knew rented scooters for 1 month at a time in Taipei to get around if this is something you would also be inclined to do.
- Passport pictures – needed to join the gym and possible other places you would like to join
- Travel card that withdraws money – Taipei and Taiwan in general is a cash heavy place where most places do not accept card. It will make your time in Taiwan much easier if you have a travel card with you that doesn't charge you for withdrawing money abroad
- Splitwise – This is a very useful app where you are able to track who has paid for what. This makes it much fairer and easier to split costs when doing weekend trips or in general in Taipei, just add the cost on and split with the individuals you need to, splitwise will simplify all the repayments you need to.
- Haircuts – Something you may not think about but can be important! I would typically get my haircut at a barber called Alans, next to the NCCU campus, for around 300NTD (£8), everyone spoke English and did a great job.

Overall Experience

Overall this was an incredible experience I couldn't recommend highly enough to those considering studying in Taipei, immersing yourself in a new culture and new experiences here is something you will never forget.