Experience Report at FGV-EAESP

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1. Application Phase

Firstly, you need to go through the process of doing the online application for the TUM SOMex program. When applying read the prerequisites carefully and make sure you have all documents in the needed length and structure. Besides the application process is very simple. Once you get accepted at FGV, you will have to wait for some months to hear something from them.

I went in the summer term 2019, so I was accepted in the exchange around February 2018. I received the first Email from the FGV around the end of October of 2018. So my advice, do not worry if they do not contact you immediately, they will tell you all relevant information regarding classes, etc.

Although you have to take care of several aspects before you receive the first email from them with the first advices like the Visa and other important topics. At FGV I did not have to apply or send any further documents or whatsoever. If you get accepted by the TUM, you are accepted at FGV too.

2. Preparation

Visa

First of all, visit the following web page to be informed about the Brazilian consulate in Munich:

http://munique.itamaraty.gov.br/de/temporares_visum_iv_studenten_praktikanten.xml

Here you have an overview of all the documents you need to apply for the Visa and an email address to ask questions. My advice to you: start early to gather all the documents you need. In my case, I had to go to Spain to take care of certain documents, like the birth certificate. In the case of the birth certificate with “Apostille” you simply go ask for it saying you need it with an Apostille and they will directly give it to you.

Something important is the passport needing to be valid at least 6 months and the length of the exchange. My advice, you can renew it up to 1 year before the expiration date, so if you are not sure for how long you will stay after the exchange, renew it so that you don’t have any problems or time constraints in Brazil. Many students stay after the exchange is over to travel around South America, so it is for your benefit to have a valid passport.

Regarding the proof of a study place at FGV, you have to pick it up at the TUM. FGV will send this document to the TUM and then you can go pick it up. You will not be able to apply for the Visa unless you have it, so prepare everything so that you can and go directly to the consulate after the document arrives. In my experience, it arrived in the end of November and my flight was for the end of January, so it is better to start the Visa procedure soon.

The price for non-German students is 100 EUR and if you are a German student you do not have to pay anything for the Visa. This is the only difference in the procedure between a German and a foreign student.
Journey
After some time, you will receive the first Email from FGV. You will receive a website with some entry information (login and password) where you can find everything you need about your stay at FGV. On the upper tabs, you can find one which says accommodation. Another one says graduated (Master) or undergraduate (Bachelor). Depending on what program you are in, click on it. It will tell you whether you want the Spring or Winter program of each year (In my case it was spring 2019). Once you click there, you will find a list with the Syllabus of each course you can take during that Semester, including a schedule with the courses.
This website is very helpful since you have a lot of information in one place, facilitating the process of looking for important documents.

Furthermore, you should take care of the health issues. Firstly, make sure that your insurance company covers the minimum established by the FGV in medical costs. If it does not, you will need to find a new one because it is a prerequisite to be able to study at FGV. In addition, go the international vaccination center and get informed about the needed vaccines before you travel to Brazil. For me, it was obligatory to get the yellow fever shot. I also took the Hepatitis A because it was recommended by my doctor. In addition, once you are in Brazil you should watch out for the mosquitos, since they can transmit illnesses like Zika and Dengue, for which there are not vaccines for. So keep in mind to get informed about the health situation in Brazil before travelling and getting the necessary vaccines and medicines before travelling.

Recognition of credits
For the recognition of credits, it is best to do a Learning Agreement before Mobility. My advice is to fill it in as soon as you get the courses from the FGV. For this purpose, go to the link that has overview of the required documents for the recognition of credits. You can choose between 1:1 recognition or get the credits as the electives (at least for the Master students).
For the Master students:
You have to submit the “Syllabus” of the course which describes the content you will be doing, etc. Please make sure that in this document it is somewhere stated that it is a Master course. If it does not specify it, send an Email to the contact person at TUM to provide you with a template for proof of Master level. Afterwards, ask your contact person at FGV and ask them to fill in a document that the TUM will give you to proof the master level. My advice, if you want to take a course and you see that it is not clear whether it is a master course, ask the TUM for this Master proof template and send it to the contact person in FGV. This will speed up the process and will save you some time in the Learning Agreement recognition.
Once you come back from Brazil, you need wait for the transcript of records which will be send from the FGV to the TUM by Email. This can take some time too; in my case I finished my exams at FGV in the end of June and got the transcript of records by the end of August. In this link you can find all the needed information regarding

Keep in mind that for the FGV (non-European university) you need to send a document explaining the grading system of the university.

A further important document is the confirmation of stay, which needs to be signed by the contact person at FGV. I did it when I was still in Brazil, to speed up the process.

**Language course**

FGV will send you a further Email asking you if you want to participate in the language course. The course takes place twice a week for 3 hours each time, so it is pretty intense course. It has a fee you have to pay around 300 EUR.

My experience with the course is positive. I was placed in the advance level and I personally learned a lot. This level had fewer people, so the course was more personal and intense. The low and medium level were more crowded. If you do not like bigger language courses (about 20 people), you will have to consider if that is worth for you.

Something positive I can tell you is that you get to be and know the other exchange students.

Besides that, you can also take private courses with a private teacher outside FGV. In the Facebook group of the FGV incoming exchange students 20xx you can find comments and recommendations of past students with their private teachers, in case you want to take that option.

**Search for accommodation**

I did my search for accommodation with the accommodation database provided by FGV. As I explained in **Journey**, there is a tab for accommodation in the website FGV provides you. Here you can find a list of Word documents with all houses that the FGV has preapproved as houses where you can rent a room. These are houses where other students had previously stayed, had a good experience and the FGV marks them as okay for you to stay. I just downloaded all and send an Email to the ones I was interested in. My biggest search was for a house that was in walking distance (5-30 minutes) from FGV. I highly recommend that since it saved you the cost and time of taking the subway and it is easier to go home at night when it is dangerous. Besides you should ask for pictures and a contract when the deal is finalized, so that you have a security that you will have the house when you get there.

I would say the best area to stay is Bela Vista (very close to university), where you can find nice accommodation.
3. Arrival

Welcome Event/support
About a week before the courses start, there is a welcome event that lasts a day where they explain you the most important information. It starts with a meeting with the contact person for exchange students at FGV, in which he will show you a presentation with general information.

Here he or she will mention the "Policia Federal", which is the federal police in Sao Paulo. You have to register there up to 90 days (I think) after your arrival, and it is very important and tedious procedure. You need this registration for FGV, so it is important you take care of it as soon as possible. For this purpose, you need to make an appointment at their website with a link that will be provided by FGV. This is quite challenging, since they do not have many slots left. FGV will contact you when they know that they released new slots, so you can log in and register for an appointment. Once you have it, you need to print it out and take it together with a set of documents. FGV will provide you with a list of documents needed, since they change from year to year. Make sure you take care of it and arrange the documents soon so you are ready to go to your appointment as soon as a slot opens up.

Important: Take the original documents you needed for the Visa application and others you might consider as important. You could have problems at the Policia Federal if you do not have them with you in Brazil.

This registration at the federal police is important for the following reason too: They will provide you with a document that states that you are registered in the city - When you leave the country and want to come back, the immigration control at the airport will ask you to show them the document. If not, you could have problems entering Brazil again.

Besides, the welcome event gives you general information about the courses, credits, schedule, where to find important places and some security measures. After this meeting with the coordinator, they will bring you to a big hall where some other coordinators and contact persons will welcome you and tell you a bit about university. There are some nice surprises during the event and it finishes with some snacks and drinks. The event is also a great opportunity to meet other exchange students and in general people of university.

Contact person
The first Email you receive from FGV will come from your exchange coordinator (contact person). In my case, he was very nice and was always ready to answer any question you might have. Since they know that you are far from home and in a foreign country, they make a big effort to help you with any problem. In my experience they were extremely nice and helpful with anything I had.
Accommodation
My house was located approximately 5 walking minutes from FGV. It was an “old” apartment but very well located and for a fair price (around 400 EUR). It was also located 2 minutes from Avenida Paulista, where you can find shops, pharmacies, restaurants, gyms, and basically anything you could need. My advice about accommodation is to search for something that is walking distance to university, but it is also perfectly find to live further away (Vila Madalena, Pinheiros). The only thing is that you would need to depend on the subway and Uber to go to university and get home. From my experience, the high majority of the exchange students lived close to FGV.

4. Studies

Course choice
The semester at FGV is divided in 2 modules. For each module you have several courses as a choice like Marketing, Finance, etc. The course catalogue is quite varied, so you will find courses of your taste.
In the first module (February to March 2019) I took the following courses:

Negotiation: Very good class but high maintenance. You will learn a lot and have interesting insights about what techniques to use when negotiating. It is high maintenance because you have to write weekly a 2 paged report about the previous class. In my experience, it was a bit tedious to write the reports, but once you wrote one or two you get the hang of it and they became easier. At the end of the course, you did not have to write an exam but a big project on a topic. Nevertheless, I would say it was one of my favorite classes at FGV and in my university experience in general.

Global Management Practice: Interesting course about business in an international context as well as an introduction in Brazilian history and customs. I liked the course and learned interesting insights about the management world. You have to do some projects during the module and a presentation. At the end of the course, you will not have an exam, but to write a project.

In the second module (April to June 2019) I did the following courses:

Transnational governance “the rules of the game”: This was a further intense course, since we had to deliver an extensive report by the end of the course (no exam). There were also some projects we had to write during the course. In general I would say that the course was interesting too, since you learned a lot about global corporations, NGOs and how they operate on different countries. I would say it’s a course that provides general important knowledge about what role and influence they have on society.
Marketing and Social Media: It was a nice course since we were learning a lot about how social media has changed marketing and the way it is done. When I did the course, we had to do groups of 2-3 people and prepare in total 2 big presentations of 30 minutes. The classes were basically the presentations of each group. By the end of the semester you will have an exam too.

Retailing in a multichannel environment: This is a marketing course which gives you an insight of how retailing is done by big companies. You will get to understand interesting techniques about, for example, the positioning of products in the supermarket. By the end of the semester, you will have to make a group presentation (30 minutes) about a topic and write an exam. In general, I think the course is interesting and would definitely take it again.

Keep in mind that FGV courses are different that the ones we have at TUM. In general, you have more to do during the semester, like presentations, group projects and so on, but the exam at the end of the semester normally counts around 30%. The course attendance is mandatory, and if you miss more than 2 classes you will get that course failed.

Teaching and Exams
The courses at FGV normally have around 30 people. The courses are very interactive and normally expect participation from your side, which will count into your oral/participation grade.
In general, the exams count about 30% of the grade. They will review most of the topics you did in class, which is not so difficult since you had to do presentations and other projects during the semester. Some courses had exams as a final requirement, but others had a big project you had to write. They would provide you the topic some days before and you could write it from your home and then submit it.

5. Student life/cultural experiences

Facilities
The university has a library were students can search for books and study. There are also some study rooms where you can meet and prepare presentations and group projects. In addition, it also has a cafeteria with Brazilian food and a small sushi place. This is located at the same place as a student lounge. In one of the main entrances, you can find a small library where to buy some books and also grab a coffee.
**Cost of living**

Sao Paulo is a quite expensive city, almost as much as Munich. There are cheap alternatives for food and so, but in general you should not expect to “save money”. The accommodation is expensive. I found one for 400 EUR, but it was one of the cheapest ones. All my friends paid between 400-700 EUR. Regarding food and other costs, it is hard to give an estimate since it strictly depends on the person’s habits. I would say between 800-1200 EUR per month for everything. Take into account that you have to take Uber very often there (when it is dark for instance), and even though it is cheap (2 EUR or so per short distance and up to 20 EUR) it does add up so some money in the end. I would say 200-300 EUR for food expenses, plus Uber around 90 EUR per month and then your extras like going out etc. For your phone, you can estimate to pay around 10 EUR per month. You can find several companies that offer prepaid options with Internet and phone calls. I used TIM as my provider, but most of the students used Vivo, which is supposed to have a better connection range around Brazil.

If you like to do sports, there is a nice gym close to FGV in Avenida Paulista called Smart Fit. The cost per month is around 20-25 EUR and has classes and nice installations.

**Safety**

A big concern everyone has when going to Brazil is safety. There are some ground rules you need to take into account, like for example not wearing jewelry, never walking home alone at night, not taking out your phone on the street and others. From my experience, if you follow these basic rules you will not have any problems. Just pay attention and you will not have any problems. It is recommended to always have some cash on you in case you are robbed, so that you can easily give it and get out quickly from the situation. If you are involved in such a situation, just give them what they want and do not try to fight them, since they can be armed.

When you arrive, it is recommended to take an Uber from the airport. They are not very expensive (from 15-30 EUR) and get you safe and easy to your new home. It is a better and safer alternative to taking the bus, which you can do once you get familiarized with the city.

A further measure you can take is to buy one of those funny bags you can hide under your clothes. This is pretty useful in situations like Carnival.

**Credit Card**

In my case, my bank did not have a service free of charge for withdrawing money abroad, so I had to open an account in an online bank that offered it. It is advisable to get a bank which does not charge you when withdrawing money, since the costs can be very high.

In Brazil you can pay basically everything with your card, but it is also advisable to have cash on you.
Cultural events

There are many cultural events you can do in São Paulo. Firstly, I would recommend join the various FGV Facebook groups to be up to date with the new events happening, like parties. São Paulo is a very big city with lots of fun plans to offer. Once you get used to the rhythm of the city, you will see how many things it has to offer and will enjoy it a lot.

There are many nice restaurants in São Paulo with a high variety of cuisines. You have to try the typical Brazilian food like Feijoada, pão de queijo. If you like meat, I highly recommend you go to a Rodizio. These are meat buffet restaurants where they bring you the meat to your table. The price can vary from 10 to 50 EUR.

São Paulo also has very nice sushi restaurants, where you can find a similar system to the meat Rodizio but for Sushi.

To finish this report, I would like to give a personal recommendation of the places to visit in Brazil during your stay.

As you might know, Brazil is a very big country with plenty of beautiful places to visit. Amongst them, Rio de Janeiro that should be visited if you are in Brazil.

In the Northeast you can find the well known city of Salvador de Bahia. This is also an amazing place to visit with a lot of history about the Portuguese colonization and the creation of the country. Do not forget to try the traditional food there, like a moqueca. You will get to see the differences between the north and south.

In addition, there are natural wonders that where you should definitely try to organize a trip to. Starting with the basics: The Iguazu Falls. An incredible waterfall where you can visit the Brazilian and Argentinian side. For this trip I would recommend 2-3 days to visit both sides. Personally, I think 2 days should be enough.

Another beautiful nature wonder is called “Lençois Maranhenses”. They are located in the North of Brazil, relatively close to São Luis. An option for travelling there is taking a plane to São Luis, travelling to Lençois by car or bus a staying there for a couple of nights. There are several towns where you can stay. I stayed in Barrerinhas and it had very good connections to the “bigger Lençois” where you got to see the big dunes. (see pictures below). Here you can rent a quad and drive along the dunes.

A further town close by is called Jericocoara, which is also a very nice place to stay with lots of opportunities to visit the dunes.

I did not make it to the Amazonas, but as far as I heard it is definitely a place worth staying at.
(Iguazu Falls- Argentinian Side)

(Lençóis Maranhenses)
(Lençóis Maranhenses)

(Rio de Janeiro)
Salvador de Bahia