



Exchange Summary: Duke University, Fuqua School of Business

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Degree Program at TAU: MBA, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Track

Host University: Duke University, Fuqua School of Business

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Exchange Experience

About the country and city

Durham, NC is a really nice, quiet city. It's incredibly green and very close to some great state parks. The overall pace of life is calm and relatively slow. It's an amazing setup for families, which was a huge advantage for me since I went on this exchange with my wife and our 5-month-old daughter. Living there gave us a very comfortable environment to balance life and studying, while still getting to explore the surrounding nature and connect with the new people we met.

About the host university

Duke's campus is beautiful, surrounded by forests. I also highly recommend the Sarah P. Duke Gardens, especially during early spring, when you can go see the cherry blossoms. Fuqua is famous for its "Team Fuqua" culture, and it isn't just a marketing slogan—the atmosphere is genuinely collaborative, not cutthroat at all. The staff is extremely attentive; they really care about the students, including the exchange students, and make sure everything is going smoothly. I want to mention Mrs. Leslie Allen from the IPO (International Programs Office), who is responsible for the exchange students. Leslie was very professional, responsive and friendly during the process, both before arriving in the US and throughout the exchange program. The campus itself offers phenomenal amenities, most notably the gyms and recreation centers (Wilson on West Campus, Brodie on East Campus), where you can exercise, swim and take group classes (I enjoyed the boxing sessions!).

Courses and professors

This was one of the main highlights for me. The academic level is exceptionally high. I found the coursework thought-provoking and highly stimulating. Many of the professors are industry leaders and share a lot from their own experiences. I especially liked the in-depth class discussions, where we discussed case studies and frameworks, after having read them prior to each class. The extreme diversity of the cohort is remarkable—you have people from every professional background and corner of the globe, which I just loved. Analyzing a case study and hearing how different people approach the exact same business problem in different ways contributed much to my personal growth and professional path. I took the following classes:

- New Ventures: Discover, Prof. Shep Moyle

My favorite class during my exchange. A practical hands-on entrepreneurship workshop, where you learn useful frameworks, get real-life advice based on Shep's decades of experience being an entrepreneur and leading a multi-billion company, meet guest entrepreneurs, and get to rapidly build a new venture with teammates. This class is very demanding, but it gives you a real taste of entrepreneurship, and Shep's guidance is invaluable.

- Entrepreneurial Strategy for Innovation-Based Ventures, Prof. Wesley Cohen

A more academic class, in which we were asked to read a case study and multiple articles before each class, then we had a very extensive discussion about the assigned material, and concluded with practical takeaways.

- Entrepreneurial Execution and Planning, Prof. Jon Fjeld

A complementary class to "Entrepreneurial Strategy", in which we focused on the planning and execution side of things within new ventures. Prof. Fjeld put a special focus on keeping things as realistic as possible, involving income statements and taking financials into account during every step of the way. This class mixed case studies leading to deep discussions, together with a handful of highly influential guests, including successful entrepreneurs and leaders within firms such as OpenAI.

- Leadership, Prof. Daisy Lovelace

First of all, I really enjoyed learning from Prof. Lovelace, and it was very clear she cared a lot about the topics we discussed, as well as the students in class. In this class, we took a deep dive into leadership concepts, allowing each student to reflect on their own leadership style and goals. We studied formal frameworks such as the "Six Domains of Leadership", developed at Fuqua, which we implemented during in-class simulations. I also really liked that we had interesting guest lecturers come talk to us, spanning corporate leaders, communication and PR leaders, and a world-renowned CEO coach.

- Value Chain Innovation in Business Processes, Prof. Bora Keskin

A quantitative class in which we explored advanced concepts of business operations, focusing on the effects of new technologies in value chains, such as AI, blockchain and IoT. Prof. Keskin is extremely nice and thoughtful, and he made sure classes were engaging, and discussions were rich. We used case studies with many operational details to learn about important concepts in operations, emphasizing the use of technology in this domain, and were able to put our knowledge to work in the final project, in which we analyzed a company of our choice.

Extracurricular Activities

Duke and Fuqua, as well as Durham itself, have a lot to offer. I highly recommend you make the effort and participate in extra-curricular activities, to take in the experience in full.

- Student Clubs and Organizations

There's a club for almost any interest. I personally went mostly to events organized by the following clubs: JBA (Jewish Business Association), Tech club and Private Equity club. I recommend following the upcoming events on Fuqua Connect and RSVPing to those you find interesting, surely you'll find many such events.

- Duke I&E (Innovation and Entrepreneurship) Center

The Duke I&E center is located within Fuqua, even though it is a part of "Big Duke" (this is how the people at Fuqua usually refer to non-Fuqua things at Duke). There are great events at Duke I&E, where you can learn more about entrepreneurship, digital marketing, personal brand, social media, and much more. I highly recommend the annual "Startup Showcase" competition, where you can go talk to Duke students who founded their own ventures, learn more about their journey, and end the night by attending their competition where prizes of over \$100k were given to selected teams.

- Fuqua Fridays

Be sure to check out "Fuqua Fridays". Almost every week after classes, they host a massive gathering with free food and drinks at Fox Center (within Fuqua). It's a great, low-friction way to mingle and spend time with your friends and classmates.

- Duke Hackathons

If you're into hackathons, Duke offers a wide range of such events. Some focus on health-care, some gaming, and others can be more about tech. I personally attended a vibe-coding hackathon organized by the Duke MEM (Master in Engineering Management) Vibe Coding Club, sponsored by Base44 and Tavily. This was a great opportunity to build something new while getting to know new people outside of Fuqua, who share a builder mindset as well.

- WATW - Wines Around the World

This is a really cool event organized every term by the Wine Club, where you get assigned to a team and hop from apartment to apartment within one of the main student complexes (usually Station Nine), tasting a different wine and playing games at each stop, before heading to Tavern for the after-party. The wine itself might not be high-end, but it's an amazing, high-energy way to hang out with a ton of people.

- Fuqua Vision shows

At the end of every term, the Fuqua Vision club hosts a screening in the main auditorium filled with funny comedy sketches and videos that the students write and film themselves. Everyone gathers to watch it, and it's one of the funniest, most highly recommended traditions at Fuqua.

- Duke Sports Events

Make sure you attend Duke's sporting events, especially the basketball games. Duke is known across the US for its phenomenal basketball team, and watching them play is super exciting.

- Jewish Community & Events (Chabad, Freeman Center, and JBA)

Jewish life is very developed within Duke and around Durham. In addition to the events organized by the JBA at Fuqua, you can visit the Freeman Center, where Rabbi Elana Friedman leads JLD (Jewish Life at Duke), as well as join the local Chabad, with Rabbi Zalman at Chapel Hill. Both of them organize many great events, including weekly Shabbat dinners and a ton of mingling events.

- **Parenting & Children's Activities**

Fuqua has a Partners Club and a Families Club, both host many events you can attend as a family with kids, ranging from casual meetups to going together to amusement parks. Additionally, the local Jewish for Good community center in Durham offers many activities for babies and kids, with other Israelis or members of the local Jewish community.

Career center

As an exchange student, you don't always get full access to the formal on-campus recruiting pipelines, but the Career Management Center (CMC) is still a great resource for resume reviews and networking tips.

Business and Network Development

Building a network at Fuqua is incredibly valuable, especially if you are looking to understand or enter the US market. Having the chance to discuss product-market fit and business strategy with such a diverse, high-caliber cohort is a major advantage of the program. To maximize your reach, it is highly recommended to be proactive: introduce yourself to professors early in the term, actively participate with your name tent up, and use platforms like Fuqua Connect or the Corq app to find and RSVP to networking events.

Accommodation

For MBA students at Fuqua, the absolute go-to area for housing is around 9th Street. Since Duke does not offer on-campus accommodation for graduate students, most of the MBA community resides in a few main complexes right next to each other: Berkshire Main (BMain), Berkshire Nine (B9), Station Nine (S9), 810 Ninth, and Avalon. Living in this pocket is highly recommended because it acts as the central hub for almost all social life, organized house parties, and casual meetups. The neighborhood itself is very comfortable, relatively quiet, and highly accessible, offering plenty of restaurants, cafes and grocery options within walking distance. If you are going on a short exchange program, the exchange coordinator is probably going to share an online excel sheet where people are offering sub-leases that you might find relevant.

Visa

You will likely be on a J-1 Exchange Visitor visa. The university handles the heavy lifting with the DS-2019 paperwork, but start the US Embassy process in Israel as early as possible to avoid unnecessary stress. It requires a lot of bureaucracy and punctuality on your end.

Transportation

You absolutely need a car. Durham and the nearby cities are spread out, and public transport makes you less flexible. We rented a car for the duration of the semester, and even though it wasn't cheap, it absolutely improved our time there, allowing us to check out new places, hang out with friends more freely, and explore other areas in beautiful North Carolina during the weekends.

Insurance and health services

Mandatory university health insurance is required. Luckily, I didn't have to use it even once, but I heard from others it functions extremely well.

Living expenses

It's cheaper than New York or San Francisco, but it's still the US. Expect high costs for rent (around \$2500-3000/month, not including furniture and bills) and car-related expenses. Living costs are also significant. Budget more than you think you'll need.

Food

Durham has a surprisingly good food scene with a wide variety of options. For quick, day-to-day meals, you have staples like Starbucks and Chipotle, along with local spots like Alpaca for great Peruvian food. If you are looking for a classic, authentic American breakfast, Elmo's Diner is highly recommended. For a nicer night out, high-end restaurants like Juju and Vin Rouge are excellent choices. For some real Southern BBQ, I recommend The Original Q Shack. While on campus, the Brodhead Center is the main hub, offering a large variety of dining options under one roof. If you prefer to cook at home, grocery shopping is very convenient with both Whole Foods and Harris Teeter located nearby.

Night life

The social scene is very active and heavily revolves around a few established MBA traditions. Almost every Tuesday night, the Fuqua crowd gathers at a bar called the Tavern for "Tav Tuesdays," which is the perfect setup to grab a casual drink and mingle with your cohort. For a wilder, classic American college club experience, Shooters is the famous go-to destination. Beyond these mainstays, there are a bunch of other nightclubs and great bars scattered around, especially if you head out to explore downtown Durham.

Tips

1. **Speak up in class:** Participation is both valued and graded, and our unique Israeli perspective can truly enrich the discussion. Just be mindful of the local manners and discussion etiquette.
2. **Travel:** Use the weekends (and spring break) to explore North Carolina (Asheville, the Outer Banks) and the East Coast in general.
3. **Don't treat it just as a vacation:** The coursework demands respect and time, but the ROI on your effort is huge.
4. **Be respectful and open to new people and views:** Fuqua's community is truly global and diverse. Be respectful, and you can meet amazing people from all across the globe.

How did this exchange experience add value to your studies at Collier?

This exchange was honestly one of the best periods of my life—personally, academically, and professionally. It really pushed me to grow and opened up my horizons. Beyond just being a great time, it let me dive straight into American academic life and pick up practical insights into the US business world that you simply wouldn't be exposed to elsewhere.

The program gave me a much sharper read on global business dynamics and taught me how to effectively collaborate with a highly diverse group of people from completely different cultural and professional backgrounds. Plus, making so many friends from all over the globe was a huge win.

Finally, the environment itself was a huge factor. Unlike studying back home where most people commute, living right next to my fellow classmates and in such close proximity to the university created an incredibly strong sense of community at Fuqua. Experiencing that immersive student environment made the whole exchange fundamentally different in the best way possible, adding massive value to my MBA journey.

Photos



Figure 1: Arriving at Fuqua



Figure 2: Springtime at Fuqua



Figure 3: The iconic Duke Chapel

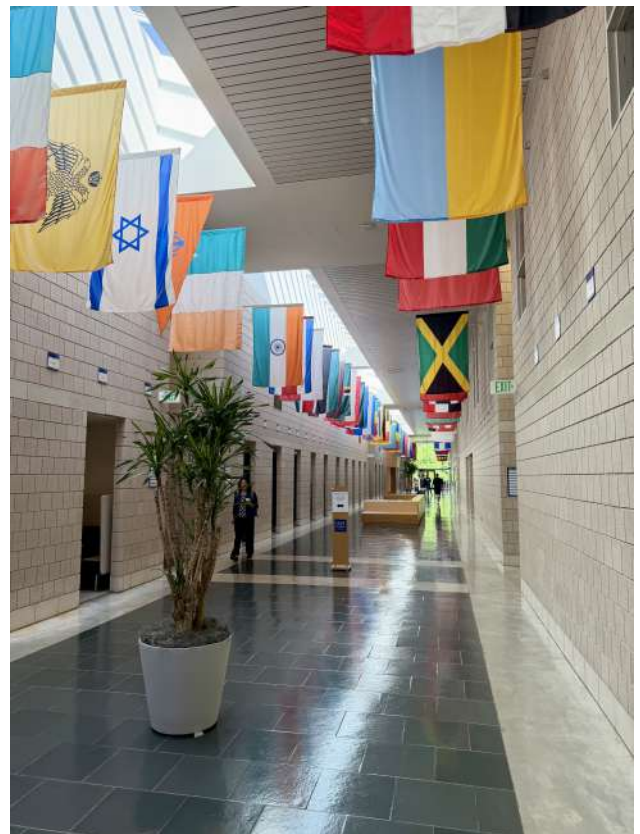


Figure 4: Fuqua's international corridor



Figure 5: Class in session



Figure 6: Duke Chapel climb



Figure 7: Blue Devils basketball game



Figure 8: Duke softball game