

Email: yoavklein@mail.tau.ac.il

Degree Program at TAU: MBA

Host University: The University of Texas at Austin

Exchange Term: Fall 2019 (August – December)

Exchange Experience

About The City

According to U.S. News & World Report's, Austin, Texas is the No. 1 place to live in America for 2019. After being in Austin, I know this is true. Austin is known for its outstanding food, great live music venues, and its general weirdness. It's rapidly rising in popularity as a place to live and visit, thanks to a fantastic culture and friendly locals.

Austin has a great balance between two characteristics. On the one hand, Austin is liberal and hippie. The slogan of the city is **Keep Austin Weird**, and the locals take pride in being weird. The slogan was originally intended to promote local businesses. The music scene in the city is very cool and there are live music festivals throughout the year. If you're lucky, when you land in town, you can listen to a live show at the airport. Austin definitely justifies its nickname - "The live music capital of the world."

On the other hand, Austin has evolved greatly in recent years and continues to evolve at a high rate. The high-tech industry is particularly prominent in the city, and with reputable technology companies with offices in the area, Austin is also known as the Silicon Hills.

About the Host University

The University of Texas at Austin (UT) has the nation's eighth-largest single-campus enrollment, with over 50,000 undergraduate and graduate students and over 24,000 faculty and staff. The McCombs School of Business' building is located on the southeast corner of the university and is closest to Downtown Austin. It is a beautiful new building with an enjoyable atmosphere, and they have a great student exchange program that includes orientation week and lots of sessions and activities.

There are many social activities at McCombs, including a Think & Drink event for all the MBAs every Thursday.

Courses and Professors

Exchange students can choose between three to five courses per semester. Most courses are three hours a week and are worth the equivalent of 2 YAS at TAU. In the first two weeks of study, students can try different courses and make changes, so the initial choice is not final.

I took 3 courses:

1. Behavioral Economics (BGS 388/MKT 382)(Dr. Julie R. Irwin):

The lecturer is very nice and the course is interesting.

Course Requirement Breakdown:

Midterm	25%
Group presentation	15%
Group Paper	20%
Short Papers (2)	12.5% each = 25% total
Participation	15%
Total	100%

2. Art And Sci Of Negotiation (383, MAN)(Doug Dierking)

There are two sessions a week. In the first session, you negotiate with classmates and in the second class you do in-depth analysis for negotiations.

Course Requirement Breakdown:

Exercise Preparation	10%
Exercise Performance	10%
Exam One	40%

Exam Two	40%
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3. Texas Venture Labs Practicum (John Sibley Butler)

The purpose of this course is to understand the start-up process for business enterprise and how to consult with them. It concentrates on the tools and understanding of how start-ups position themselves to create jobs and wealth. Students work with start-ups which have been admitted to the JBTVL Accelerator. The course's purpose is to understand how to "consult" with start-ups to increase their probability of success within the market and to understand the overall relationship between science and new venture development.

Accommodation

Student dorms are rarely available for exchange students, but it is worth checking.

Finding an apartment in Austin can be a complex and expensive procedure. The university does not help in finding accommodation and you should go to the websites and apps and search for an apartment. Short term rentals may be more expensive and remote searching is not ideal. You can consider renting an Airbnb apartment for the beginning period and looking for a permanent apartment upon arrival.

Before arriving, I rented an apartment for the entire period at Indie Apartments and I highly recommend the place.

Transportation

The buses in Austin are free for students and can be used to reach the university and various places in the city. In addition, Uber and Lift are relatively cheap and there are lots of e-scooters. I bought a bicycle and sold it before leaving and it was really nice to ride around town.

Insurance and Health Services

Health insurance is required to be done through the university. Insurance is very expensive (over \$ 1000) and it covers the entire school term. It is a little frustrating, because the health insurance can be bought cheaper in Israel, and I recommend checking whether the requirement of purchasing through the university can be waived.

Living Expenses

While not as expensive as New York, Austin is not a cheap city to live in. Massive immigration to the city in recent years, especially from California, has raised living standards and cost of living. That being said, like in any big city, you can live in almost any standard of living.

Food

Austin is very famous for its food and you can find all kinds of food. There are very diverse options, ranging from food trucks scattered throughout the city to gourmet restaurants. The most famous cuisine is Tex-Mex (from Texan and Mexican); it is an American regional cuisine that derives from the culinary creations of the Tejano people of Texas.

Some recommendations on places to eat:

1. [Veracruz All Natural Food Truck](https://maps.google.com/?cid=8028204683900683477) – great food truck with Tex-Mex food
<https://maps.google.com/?cid=8028204683900683477>
2. [Ramen Tatsu-Ya](https://maps.app.goo.gl/9um3dVFE5d9pMqip8) – Great ramen restaurant on the east side
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/9um3dVFE5d9pMqip8>
3. [Franklin Barbecue](https://maps.app.goo.gl/3NX1SLBodfdw8vBg7) - The most famous barbecue in Austin and perhaps all of Texas. There is a huge queue and it is advisable to go with friends and bring chairs, a cooler and beers to have fun spending time in line.
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/3NX1SLBodfdw8vBg7>

Night life

One thing to know about nightlife in Austin is that almost all places close at 2 a.m. You then must search to find open places.

There are two main streets to hang out in Austin: 6th Street and Rainey Street. Rainey Street is Austin's Main Street and is divided into three sections. It isn't big and it's full of bars and clubs with a nice student atmosphere.

East 6 is on the east and hippie side of town with a slightly older and hipster population, lots of live music, bars, breweries, etc. The central part of 6th Street is also called Dirty 6th. On weekends, the traffic is closed down and the street fills with parties and mess. A little more suitable for undergraduates in my opinion, but nice to visit occasionally. The last section of 6th Street is West 6th. It is a more industrial and calm area but also where you can find lots of nice entertainment venues and bars.

Tips

Finding a place to live may take some time, so I recommend using online resources like Facebook groups and apps long enough in advance to find the place that's right for you.

In the worst case scenario, you can rent an Airbnb apartment for a short period and then continue your apartment search after you arrive in Austin.

If you like sports, I highly recommend purchasing the big ticket the university offers. The university's sports teams are called the longhorns and it is very big deal in the city, especially the football team. The big-ticket grants admission to all the University's sporting events at a very significant discount and it is highly recommended.

Photos







