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Degree Program at TAU: MBA

Host University: The University of Texas at Austin

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Exchange Experience

About the country and city

Talking about the United States in general is not relevant – needless to say – it is amazing! Texas in general is quite amazing as well. Endless places to travel and hike, great food (especially meat – not for vegetarians/vegans), great music. There is a certain thing people think about Texas that are less positive, while I can't attest to the entire of Texas, I can clearly say that Austin is **not** a part of that. As one student told me: "a blue dot in a sea of red" (when talking about US politics).

Austin itself is also one of the best cities, in my opinion, in the US. If you are looking to find jobs in the US, Austin is a great place to start. It has become the "silicon hills" (mirroring Silicon Valley), have offices of Google, Amazon, Dell, Microsoft, and recently, Apple announced it will build its largest campus outside of Silicon Valley. The city is great whether you are coming by yourself or with a family. It has great options for clubs, bars as well as great areas for children and families.

About the Host University

The University of Texas in Austin is quite large. You will spend most (if not all) of your time at McCombs. McCombs itself is spread over two buildings. The MBA courses are taking place only in the new building (which was completed about two years ago). Everything is brand new and top of the line. As for events and services, the school offers great gym services (such as two swimming pools, a climbing wall, squash courts and more). There are several social activities, the main one being the football season.

Courses and professors

The courses are based on the idea that the students are there to learn, and not to chase the grades. All of the professors are very "pro-students", and there are free discussions and a very warm feelings in class. There is "cold calling" where you are called upon with questions about the reading for class, so be prepared.

Accommodation

As I arrived with a family, we took a fully furnished apartment downtown through Airbnb, but I understand there are many options. I think that a car is a must! As everything is driving distance.

Visa

For us the visa process was quite simple. Just follow the directions on the US embassy's website. Once we got the documents from the university in Austin, we set up an interview date, and it was about a minute interview.

Transportation

In my opinion, a car is a must! The fuel there is very cheap (about 75 NIS for a full tank of gas). There is parking everywhere and if you want to travel and see Texas and around – you must have a car (it's only a 7 hour drive to New Orleans).

Insurance and Health Services

In general, the university forces you to get insurance through the university, which generally covers you for day-to-day issues. I would recommend to do travel insurance as well – as it covers everything, including, if needed, flying back home.

Living expenses

In general, living is quite cheap in Austin (and the rest of Texas is even cheaper). It is also much cheaper than other high profile cities across the US. Fuel is cheap. HEB (which is the "Shufersal" of Austin) is also very cheap. Going out is not as cheap as other things, but still cheaper than Tel-Aviv.

General experience

When we (my wife and I) heard that we were accepted to Austin, we were a bit skeptical at first, after all, it is still Texas and we did have some stigmas on Texas. After our experience, this is without a doubt the number one place you need to try and be accepted to.

Location wise, it is in the middle of the US and offers semi-easy access to both the west and east coast. It is close to Mexico (only a cheap 3 hour flight to Cancun!), 7 hour drive to New Orleans. Tons of hiking trails. Great park and river right in the middle of the city. Tons of bars and restaurants. Great activities for families (the JCC is highly recommended for children).

We will defiantly be coming back!