

Notes and comments from May 2024 trip to Southwest University (SWU)

Liza Bolton, Department of Statistics, liza.bolton@auckland.ac.nz

Flights

(SWU) Destination airport: Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport

Cost ~\$1,500 in early April 2024 for a ~mid-may flight. Booked through Orbit (of course) and flying on China Southern (CZ) with stopovers in Guangzhou.

Checking in and bag drop for China Southern at Auckland International took a while as there were no digital screens. Took me about 40 minutes to get through the line.

Aim to arrive a few days before teaching starts to get used to the time difference, meet the team and get settled in.

As my teaching ended on a Thursday, even though the timing was scheduled to go to Sunday, it was no problem to book flights for Friday.

Sophie & Lynn (AEMG team @ SWU) helped organise pick-up and drop-off from the airport.

Stopover: I liked Guangzhou as a stopover, it wasn't too busy when I was there and had lots of food options, including familiar establishments like McDonalds and Starbucks. A good time to play with the Alipay and WeChat mini programs for ordering food and translation, etc.

Flight changes: The Chinese domestic flights ended up changing for both legs of my travel 1–2 weeks before the departure date. I don't know how common this is, but make sure you're looking out for email updates from your Orbit Travel specialist.

Dinner and breakfast were provided on the Auckland–Guangzhou flights, and another small meal on the only 2 hour Guangzhou–Chongqing flight.

Visas

Fill in the visa application form online: <https://consular.mfa.gov.cn/VISA/>

- F type visa, expert with approved invitation letter

You will need your passport and a photo that has a white background. A physical copy wasn't required in the end, they took a picture when I was there at visit 1 and also my fingerprints.

Cost of Visas will be reimbursed (point 9, on the [Travel Expenses Procedures](#) page, at time of writing), but not travel to enable this.


I needed to make 2 trips to the Chinese Consulate Visa Office in Ellerslie. Note the difference between pick-up and drop-off hours. At time of writing, 10–12 is drop-off time and 2–4 is pick up

time. I dropped off on a Monday and was told to come pick up on the Friday. I was given a paper with a barcode to bring back. The online portal didn't update that I'd dropped off my passport, but pick-up did go smoothly. Payment was made via credit card when picking it up. No appointment was necessary.

Address: 630 Great South RD, Ellerslie, Auckland.

Contact: 09-5713080

Email: chinaconsulate.akl@gmail.com

 **Feedback point:** As a future equity consideration, I think it is unfortunate that this travel is not covered. This is necessary travel to enable this work and could be cost/access prohibitive for some people.

Safe travel

Consider supplying your whānau with a 'signal word' or phrase in case there are contacted by scammers while you are away, claiming to be you needing money while overseas, etc. With my family, I gave them a phrase that I would respond to in a specific way so they could know it is me. Nothing like this happened while I was away, but was good peace of mind for my folks.

Safe travel registration (govt)

Register your travel with [SafeTravel NZ](#). If you hold a passport with another country, you may wish to also register with similar services (e.g., [Registration of Canadians Abroad](#))

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including New Zealand Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates-General around the world, use the registration information to

- *send information to registrants in an emergency (e.g. natural disaster, terrorist attack, civil unrest).*
- *contact registrants to provide consular assistance (e.g. if there are concerns for your safety, or to return a lost passport).*
- *send information such as new travel advisories relevant to New Zealanders travelling and residing overseas.*

University of Auckland Risk Office

Travel Safety Briefing: You can email the Risk Office to give you a briefing. More information on the Intranet [here](#). Took ~10 days to respond, but they apologised for the delay so I would assume they'd intend to get back to folks sooner.

Vaccinations and health

I had a really good experience with the team at [Worldwise in Newmarket](#). They are specifically travel doctors, and my own GP clinic recommended them over coming into my usual clinic.

The primary goal was to get the appropriate vaccinations, but in my case, Dr. Andy also provided really useful information about avoiding traveller's diarrhoea, general cultural differences to be aware of, personal safety considerations, etc.

- Recommended: Hepatitis A, Typhoid and Rabies were the main ones, and my doctor also recommended Meningitis when considering the accommodation options. I already had Hep B and Diphtheria vaccinations and so didn't need to get those.
- Book your consultation *at least* 21 days before your trip, I needed 3 appointments, the first 7 days later, and the last 14 days later.
- Reimbursement through Concur. **'Meals/Incidentals'**
 - As at 2024-04-12: "10. The University will reimburse the costs of vaccinations prior to travel to particular countries where they are required for University travel and recommended by the University's travel management company (TMC) or a registered medical practitioner" from [Travel Expenses Procedure](#).

Item	\$	Currency	Timing
Consultation	120	NZD	April 2024
Hep A/ Typhoid	185	NZD	April 2024
Rabies	90 x 3 = 180	NZD	April/May 2024
Meningitis	140	NZD	April 2024
Vaccine only appointments (service fee)	30 x 2 = 60	NZD	April/May 2024

Jet lag medicine

Travel doctor suggested I ask my GP about melatonin to help with jet lag. My GP said the research for younger people is pretty spotty, and as I knew from Canada it didn't do much for me, she prescribed me a super short course of Zopiclone instead.

The 4 hours difference wasn't actually too bad as long as I kept getting up somewhat early in China, and I had a long weekend to acclimatise on the way back. The harder part is if you have late classes in China / getting back to getting up early in NZ.

Air quality

Have enough N95 masks for your daily travel needs. Check air quality, e.g., [Chongqing air quality index dashboard](#) or [IQAir Chongqing](#).

Reimbursed through Concur under Travel Expenses -> 'Meals/Incidentals'. I purchased mine from [Surgical Supplies Ltd.](#) Total was 40 for \$58.65 with shipping and GST.

I was pleasantly surprised by how good the air was on campus — you are basically up a mountain in a forest!

Travel kits / on location

Taken largely from the previous 'collective wisdom' doc:

Recommended:

- N95 or equivalent masks (poor air quality + disease prevention while travelling)
- Hand sanitiser (for public bathrooms, soap not usually provided)
- Tissue pocket packs
- Electrolytes / rehydration powder
- Loperamide (Imodium, - “loose motion”)
- Ondansetron (for vomiting, I didn’t end up picking any up)
- Difflam throat spray
- Bug spray (I did get a few itchy bites, but not too bad with my spray. Not currently in a bad mosquito born illness area, but this may change as climate changes)
- Sun screen
- Water purification tablets: Might not be needed, easy to buy 5L water bottles at most convenience stores.
- Pharmacy helper recommended: vitamin C and probiotics which I did take and I felt great...though willing to believe it was more placebo than anything.
- Plane recommendation: saline solution for your nose, one or two hydration sachets

There is a hospital 5 minutes from campus. Embarrassingly, I did fall down some stairs and the AEMG team did want to make sure I got checked out at the nearby hospital. — there was just some bruising, but the doctor gave us a script for some antiseptic and antibacterial, plus a Chinese medicine spray to help with the pain/bruising. Sophie (AEMG) was able to use her ID to get me seen and translate for us, and paid for it.

Gifting

Philipp Skavantzios helpfully forewarned the SWU teaching team about the following:

“When I went last year to teach at NEFU my colleagues and me left empty handed and been given so many nice presents from university staff and AEMG and we had no gifts to reciprocate. Because of this I went to the UoA campus store and got some pens, bags, UoA kiwis, etc as well as some other NZ memorabilia from a gift shop in the city.”

Joei, our Group Services Coordinator helped me put in an order at the Campus store (paid directly):

ATLANTIS PEN / SKU: 003102	
3 @ \$8.70	\$26.09
Disc: 28.986% (\$4.35)	\$45.00
BAMBOO PEN / SKU: 003101	
10 @ \$3.91	\$39.13
CLOCK TOWER CARD / SKU: 3001	
5 @ \$3.04	\$15.22

TOTAL (18 items)	\$80.43
<hr/>	
TOTAL SAVINGS	\$13.04
<hr/>	
TO PAY	\$80.43

I didn’t find the gifting culture as strong at SWU, but I am very glad I had a few bits and bobs for prizes and gifts to people in the department/AEMG. I would totally recommend chucking a few bags of the Whitaker’s Chocolate fun-size bars into your suitcase.

Accommodation

Provided for us (i.e., not something to budget) at the foreign expert accommodation building/hotel named Ziteng Yuan (Wisteria Hotel).



Figure 1 Looking towards entry door, bathroom on the right. Bed in the bottom right is a spare single bed in the living room. It is right under the living room heat pump which is handy for a hot day.



Figure 2 Living room, complete with an ash tray despite the no smoking sign.



Figure 3 Combined washer/dryer, clothes hanger (in addition to closet in hall), microwave and sink. (No iron.)



Figure 4 Beds tend to be on the firmer side.

All visitors are required to do a check-in process. Most hotels will help with this, but if you are visiting friends/family or renting a house or something, you might need to go to the police station. I provided my passport at reception, with the help of Lynn who had picked me up, and it was done speedily.

There were several other teachers from Australia who were there at the same time I was. Ask the AEMG team to introduce you. I was able to learn a lot of useful tips from the people who'd been there a week or two longer than me.

One of the other foreign teachers noticed that there wasn't a recognisable smoke alarm system (there may be one that we didn't know how to spot, though) and no emergency stairs other than the main stairwell. She was on the top floor, one above me, and this was legitimately causing her some anxiety during her stay — if this is something you'd also lose sleep over, it might be worth clarifying or asking AEMG about specific room options.

Amenities

I had a spacious apartment with a washing machine, a large living room, a separate bedroom with a large bed (maybe queen? at least a double). The bathroom had a shower, pedestal toilet and hairdryer and came equipped with body wash, shampoo, toothpaste and soap, plus a comb, toothbrushes and a shower cap. I don't think laundry detergent was provided, but I could purchase some from a store on campus with the funds loaded on my campus card. All bedding and towels were provided.

There was no iron or ironing board available (so think about the fabrics you're packing), but hanging shirts in the back of the shower to steam de-wrinkle them a bit worked okay. Plus, maybe rumpled academic is a chic aesthetic...

From Ben Stevenson: If your room does not have a **mattress** and you are accustomed to one, you may need to ask for one or a different room. Mine bed was definitely quite firm, but I slept really well.

AC/heat pump: My apartment had 2, one in the living area and one in the bedroom. They worked really well and made sleeping very comfortable.

There was a **WiFi** router specifically for my room that had decent WiFi most of the time. I was able to do Zoom calls, etc., exactly as I would at home. I could not get my VPN to work with it, though, but could on campus (see VPN section).

Desk: The hotel desk wasn't the most comfortable for working at as the drawers extend a bit low (not much room for legs) and the chair is a stool. Perfectly fine for short stints, if you need a good ergonomic set-up, you will want to ask about and use staff offices in the computer science building. I found working on the couch fairly comfortable, and there was a second bed in my living room so I took the comforter off that for a lap blanket.

The accommodation was generally very **quiet**, though you could hear people in other rooms if windows were open (someone seemed to snooze their very loud alarm several times some mornings). Very little to no traffic/street noise, but actually a pretty loud 'dawn chorus' of birdlife. It is next to the kindergarten, so sometimes you will hear their outdoor activities, but these are within school hours.

Your room is tidied only when you request it by hanging the 'make up room' sign on the door, and this usually happens after 9 AM ish in the morning.

I'm a little sensitive to **smells**, sometime not even if they're 'bad' just if they're unfamiliar, so having some Olbus oil and putting it on a hand towel to put in the bedroom helped me the first night. The rooms are supposed to be non-smoking, but there was a bit of a pong as there is a lot of tobacco use generally, which I found a bit challenging, olfactorily.

Alternatives

Russell Millar recommends the [Haiyu Hotspring Hotel](#) (重庆海宇温泉大酒店(西南大学店)). It was fully booked at the time I checked.

There is another hotel at Gate 5 (within the SWU campus), but I don't know much else about it.


Useful contacts

UoA

Name	Role	Note	Profile
Jiamou Liu	Associate Professor, Computer Science	Organises on behalf of STATS and CompSci, has research partnership at SWU. Speaks Chinese (Mandarin)	https://profiles.auckland.ac.nz/jiamou-liu
Lee Hsieh	International Manager, International Office	Very helpful with Visa info	https://profiles.auckland.ac.nz/l-hsieh
Peter Papagiannis	Alumni Relations Manager, Alumni Relations and Development	No official link, but travels to China a lot for work and has great advice. Non-NZ passport (Canadian)	https://profiles.auckland.ac.nz/peter-papagiannis

AEMG

Building 25, Floor 12, Room

Name	Role	Note	Email
Sophie 	Main contact person for Data Science cooperation	Took us out for our tour day and helped make the experience easier — could call her on WeChat if I needed, etc.	sophie.zhao@aemg.edu.au
Lynn		Lynn picked me up from the airport because Sophie had a class. Her son Aaron is also learning English.	Just used WeChat
Luke	English Language teaching /IELTS prep	Luke is an Australian who has been working in China for almost a decade. He didn't have anything specifically to do with my work as his focus is IELTS,	

		but he was a friendly face that I bumped into in the foreign experts office / teaching space several times.	
--	--	---	--

Assessments & teaching

Co-teachers

My co teacher hadn't reached out to me before arriving, and I chickened out with contacting him, but wish I had. I worked with Dr. Jin(g) Qiu and he was great! Easy to speak English with and attended every class and made sure any tech troubles were sorted out. I heard from others in Animal Sciences that not all co-teachers are quite so fluent, so this may be more challenging in some cases.

Teaching

Teaching is usually conducted in sessions of 3 x 45-minute lecture blocks with bells that signal the start and end of the lectures. There are usually 10-minute breaks between the blocks, except for between blocks 2 and 3 in the morning (see my sample schedule at the end).

I had 32 teaching hours total over 3 weeks, with fewer lectures in my final week.

Student engagement

I was teaching a class of 3rd years, and about 30 showed up each class (I think there were slightly more than 40 enrolled). Students really did not like to raise their hands to ask questions or answer them, even with chocolate bribery. I used class engagement software Poll Everywhere to do anonymous writing tasks instead. They seemed more comfortable with this, and I would get pretty good engagement with 50 to 70% answering. They definitely used translator tools to help them, but I was okay with this. I also used the "Think, Pair Share" technique with this app, so they would have one minute to think quietly, two minutes to talk to their friend about their answer and two minutes to write their answer in [Poll Everywhere](#). I also asked students to make sure there was at least one computer between two so that they could work on R code in class. Walking around and just looking at screens to see who needed help was nosy but effective. Students wouldn't ask, but if I sat down and pointed something out to ask if they needed help with it, they'd usually engage with me.

I also did a few longer form activities where, in a group, they would fill out answers in a Microsoft Form based on their code and I would give chocolates for completion by a certain deadline.

By the end of teaching, they were getting a little less engaged, and I realised they had relied on ChatGPT a lot, which was very noticeable when the answers were overly generic and long. I am glad I was doing the anonymous writing check-ins, as I might not have realised the extent of the issue otherwise.

Cloud Campus

I used the AEMG provided Learning Management System Cloud Campus. I'd heard from some people that their co teacher had just shared the content on WeChat, but I think they are keen for us to use Cloud Campus more.

[Link](#)

You should get an email with login information and a tutorial video at some point. I didn't actually watch the tutorials, it seemed pretty straightforward. I didn't use any of the more advanced features, though. Perfectly good for organising into modules and uploading PDFs, HTML files, linking to Zoom recordings, etc.

Exams

My 2 versions of the final exam (with answers) were due June 1 for the Spring semester. I could set the time (I chose 2 hours) and conditions like having a help sheet, etc. All marking was done by the co-teacher so providing a grading scheme was also required. I'm not sure why they need two versions, Lisa thought maybe for if students fail, they can retake it.

Assignments

My co teacher suggested more smaller assignments, all due at the end of the semester. I had originally planned for two, but ended up doing one per week (3). The co-teacher does all the marking, so I also was asked to provide a marking scheme, just as I would with markers in NZ.

Classroom

I taught across three rooms in two adjacent buildings. All had working HDMI for me to connect my computer to, but sometimes you needed to ask the IT people (each building has a teacher's lounge with IT helpers in it) to switch the input. My co-teacher would just call our walk next door.



Useful apps

Alipay (zhī fù bǎo) is an 'everything' app and I really liked using it to order food and translate stuff.

Financial

Useful to have more than one in case a freeze is placed on one of the accounts. Can load a New Zealand credit card. Tip: You may wish to message your bank to alert them of upcoming travel so they don't flag all your China transactions as fraud of some sort.

Do you need cash? I didn't use very much cash at all, and most locals don't either. Good to have a little bit on hand, but you probably don't need more than 200 yuan safety money? Maybe a bit more if you plan to tour around more.

- Alipay
 - Also useful for DiDi taxi and translation services
 - Some vendors (often smaller ones, perhaps?) would have trouble with my Alipay, sometime scanning they code worked better than me scanning theirs, but always good to pay first to make sure it works, and have some cash on hand.
- WeChat
- SAP Concur (for reimbursements)
 - Log in online with your UoA login, then you can get the SSO code or other login details if you go to Profile setting (click the little person in the top right) -> Concur Mobile Registration

Communication

- WeChat (also Financial)

Translation

- Alipay
 - If you scan restaurant menu QR codes in Alipay, you can often translate, pick and pay all in one place.

Navigation

Google products won't work unless on roaming or VPN

- Autonavi app: 高德地图 ([Google Play link](#))
- Apple Maps works in English, according to local folks.

Health and Safety

Travel Risk App (recommended on UoA intranet, [International medical and security travel assistance](#))

The Healix Travel Oracle App can be downloaded onto your smart phone from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The app features include:

- *Travel risk advice by country*

- *Real time alerts on breaking news globally*
- *A 'mayday alert' – one button to send an immediate call for help*
- *Storage of key traveller documents*

Register as a new user with the policy number for your company: UOA17478

<https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/auckland/students/forms-policies-and-guidelines/student-travel-guidelines/emergency-assistance-app-guide.pdf>

VPN

- Mixed reports on whether UoA VPN works — did not try it myself.
- I was using Express VPN and it (mostly) worked on the Campus WiFi but *not* on the hotel room WiFi.
 - Tip: Ask your AEMG buddy for one of the WiFi logins they have for foreign teachers.

On location

For anyone reading that is going to another University in China, only the **Toilets** section will be particularly important for you.

Tip: **Zebra crossings** aren't the same as in Aotearoa, they are more suggested crossing locations than places where cars HAVE to stop for you. Try to cross with a group — cars will stop when you walk in front of them but it was a little nerve wracking for me on busy roads.

Airport pick-up

I used WeChat to easily send my itinerary to the AEMG team. They had a hired driver with a very comfortable, spacious and clean vehicle. It was easy to communicate

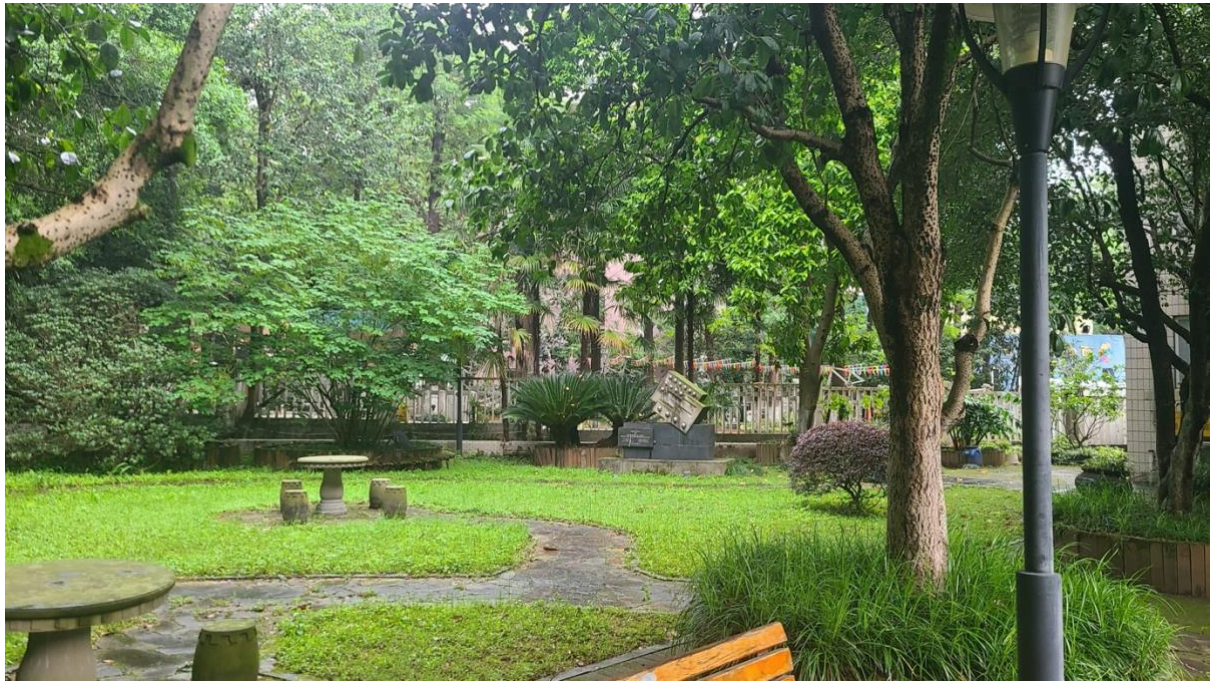


with the team and they had a AEMG bag (blue and orange) for me to look for at the arrivals area so it was easy to find them.

Campus

SWU has a beautiful campus! It is like being in a semi-tropical forest.

To access the campus, you have to get set up with the facial recognition at the gates. Lynn took me to get set up after arriving. You will need your passport.



AEMG also provided me with a campus card upon my arrival that I could use to eat in the Staff Canteen and other canteens, and buy snacks from a shop on campus. The Lago Como bakery and coffee shop outside Gate 2 and the Lawson convenience store at Gate 2 (but not at Gate 5, for some reason) also take this card. They put on 500 RMB for me and this served well over my 21 day stay.

The staff canteen is really cool and had lots of food options. Try the dough sticks with warm soy milk (for dipping) for breakfast. I didn't find anything too spicy, but I was eating vegetarian only, so perhaps the meat dishes had more of the famous Chongqing spice.

Walk on the right-hand side as a pedestrian, but this is pretty loosely adhered to on campus. All the cars are at limited speed and not many are allowed on campus. Honking often just means "I'm here behind you" not necessarily "I hate your guts get out of the way you reprehensible person", I think...

School bus: There is a shuttle bus available that drives around the campus. Some are green and look like a big golf cart, while others have a really cool red and gold traditional design. It is 1 RMB with your SWU Campus card and quite a lot of fun. At time of writing, Route 5 was the most useful for getting between the accommodation, building 8 (nearest stop to CompSci offices and teaching buildings), and Gate 2 (big shopping and food destination). **Put the arms down if you're the closest. If you're in the seats by the arms (entry exit side) you might have to wear the seatbelt. There aren't belts in other spots. If the driver talks to you or gestures at you, it is usually one of these things.**

Bring an umbrella.

There is a lot of plastic packaging here, so you may want to buy/bring your own Tupperware to get food from the canteen to take home, instead of getting the plastic.

Safety: I felt very safe on campus, even travelling home after the late class that ended at 9:55 PM. Travelling as a woman by myself, I still didn't choose to go downtown by myself at night but I felt safe with the group when we did our tour day/evening.

Useful locations

- The School of Computer Science is located in building 25, which is close to the teaching building 8 shuttle bus stop, and across from a lake with beautiful jacaranda trees (in stunning bloom in May!) and some small shops. It is about a 20-minute walk from the hotel, or ~5-minute shuttle, though you may have to wait for the shuttle for a while.

- Floor 12 has the AEMG team offices and Floor 13 has a big office area you can use (behind a pass-coded door), that is also sometimes used

for small group teaching/IELTS prep. You can offer office hours here, but students do not tend to take them up without a lot of cajoling from your co-teacher. You can get the passcode from the AEMG staff. There are two air conditioning units in the room that do an okay job of cooling the space, but may take some time.



- The AEMG team might be able to get an external screen for you to connect to in here also, if that would help you.
- Elevator wait: There can be a LONG wait for the elevators, with students lined up almost to the entrance doors at key people movements times (like right before classes). There are 4 elevators total, two that go to all floors near the main entrance, and two that go to either all odd/even floors towards the back. There are also stairs, but these are frequently dark and a smooth/slippy, plus smell like smoke despite all the no smoking signs directly above ashtray trash units.
- The teaching buildings I was in were 26 & 27 and they are maybe 5 minutes from building 25 (probably not quite, but give yourself extra time for stairs and slow lifts).
- The staff canteen is 2-3 minutes from the foreign experts' accommodation building. I think breakfast was ~6:30 to 8:30, lunch was 11:30 to 12:45 (it may have started earlier, not 100% sure), and dinner started around 4:30 PM and went to maybe 6:40 PM. The sign that had hours was about when you could charge your card, and I'm not 100% sure if it matched the service hours or not.
 - Trying to go outside the peak times for lunch and dinner was good for me; I sometimes found the crowds and bustle a bit overwhelming and I was constantly feeling in the way and also not being decisive enough in pushing up to the counter. Ask the AEMG staff member who gets you settled to give you a quick tour. There was another canteen a little further away that was very popular with the other foreign teachers who were there during my stay, you may want to ask about that also.



- Lots of food and shopping at Gate 2, including Lago Como that did pretty good coffee and bread/pastries. Try the giant chocolate loaf/bun. Head left on the same side as the Uni, basically next door and accepts the campus card.



Toilets (mostly important for the sit-to-pee crowd)

The hotel toilets are pedestal pan toilets, the type we use in New Zealand. Airports will have a mixture of pedestal pan and squatting toilets, but most of the buildings I was in on campus only had squatting toilets.

They aren't too bad to get used to, though I will admit to never fully getting over the anxiety that something would go wrong right before class...

You need to bring two important things everywhere: a pocket pack of tissues and hand sanitiser. I'd recommend that you watch a YouTube video or similar on the toilets to learn more about technique, etc., etc. If you've been to Japan, it is similar. Use the wastepaper baskets provided for *all* paper and sanitary products.

Seminar

Some/most (?) people are asked to give a seminar. I didn't end up being asked to do one, it depends a bit on the time of the semester.

From Sophie: *For the seminar, it is for students as we want students could know more about UoA, so they could plan to study in UoA at early time. We can talk about the details as you arrived, and much appreciated for your support.*

Miscellaneous health

- Don't get **dehydrated**! This can especially be a risk if you're avoiding using the squatting toilets as much possible.
- **Accessibility:** The teaching building I was in did not appear to have any access other than stairs. If you have mobility concerns, please flag them early in the process for organising rooms as infrastructure here is not currently widely designed for accessibility. This also included most toilets I saw on campus, I don't think they'd be navigable for most wheelchair or other assistive tech users.
- **Water:** I drank a lot of tea/hot water from the teacher's lounges and hot water machines on campus and didn't get any stomach issues, but I did buy 5L water bottles at the Lawson convenience store outside gate 5 for drinking water in my hotel room instead of drinking from the tap. The one time I ran out and drank boiled water I didn't love the taste, but that may have just been the kettle.
- **Snakes:** There may or may not be snakes in the gardens, and they may or may not be venomous. No one I talked to was sure, but best not to tromp through the greenery.

Touring

The AEMG team took five of the visiting teachers on a lovely day-long outing to see some of the sights in Chongqing. We saw pandas at the Zoo, attended a traditional performance and tea, had hot pot at the Raffles City Tower (with Sichuan Opera masks and kung fu noodles, no less!), saw the monorail go into a building, a famous temple and the night time light show. The AEMG team paid for our entrances and helped organise all the travel and planning — it was delightful.



Notes from an email from Jiamou Liu on 2024-03-13

Please find attached the teaching time table for our courses this semester. On the time tables you may find the days and locations of your classes. The teaching takes place in various levels of Building No 26 and No 27. Please note that for each session, either we teach for 3 weeks or 2 weeks (so that in total we cover 32 sessions across three weeks). SWU also offers us a (very spacious) office which is located at the School of CS level 12.

Our co-teachers for this semester are the following. They should be the first points of contact regarding the course, and typically they will meet with us before the course starts when you get there.

CS225: Huiwen Deng: huiwend@swu.edu.cn Yi Wang: echowang@swu.edu.cn

STATS201: Zhaofang Yang goodluck@swu.edu.cn Hong Zhang: zhangh@swu.edu.cn

CS351: Ya Li: jialuoluo99@163.com Quan Zou: qzou2014@swu.edu.cn

CS367: Yuanping Zhang: zvilla@swu.edu.cn Ying Wang: waying95@swu.edu.cn

STATS369: Jing Qiu jingqiu@swu.edu.cn

- Our accommodation is marked in purple, it is the foreign expert accommodation building/hotel named Ziteng Yuan (Wisteria Hotel).
- The CS building is circled in an orange box, which is located almost at the centre of the campus.
- The Teaching Building 26,27 are surrounded by blue and yellow boxes, respectively, beside the CS building.
- The walking routes from the accommodation to the classrooms are marked in dark red.
- The four main gates of the campus (No. 1,2,3,5) are on the western side of the campus, and are marked respectively in dark red.
- There is a large shopping mall (Wuyue Plaza) just outside of the campus, between No1 and No5 Gates. It is a newly built (opened in 2023) very large multi-storey complex on the other side of the road and you won't miss it. There are plenty of restaurants and shopping there.
- The subway station (Tiansheng) is located just outside of No2 Gate, and it may take you to the city centre of Chongqing (in about 1.5 hour). The campus is about 50km from the city centre, and about 35km from the international airport.



Teaching schedule

This is an example schedule for my teaching.

year 2024 semester 1 week 12-14		STATS 369 May 13 - June 2							
	classes	times	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
AM	1	8:00-8:45			Room: 27-0304 Week 12-14				
	2	8:55-9:40			Week 12-13				
	3	10:00-10:45							
	4	10:55-11:40							
NOON	5	12:10-12:55							
	6	13:05-13:50							
PM	7	14:00-14:45	Room: 26-0302 Week 12-14			Room: 26-0302 Week 12-14			
	8	14:55-15:40							
	9	15:50-16:35							
	10	16:55-17:40							
NIGHT	11	17:50-18:35							
	12	19:20-20:05		Room: 26-0302 Week 12-13					
	13	20:15-21:00							
	14	21:10-21:55							

Unresolved / bigger picture / recommendations

- **Labs:** I'd like more time for planned computer labs for a course like STATS 369, perhaps using computer lab teaching rooms, even if most students have laptops.
- **Illness cover:** Unclear what happens if someone gets sick and can't teach for some of the program, does it have to be made up in some other way, is there a plan for teaching from NZ? What does the articulation deal say?
- **International emergencies:** It is not clear to me what happens in case of international conflict. Does the University have policies around remaining in a location if hostilities begin and the travel threat changes? This may be in the policies somewhere, but I had trouble identifying it.
- **Accessibility:** Is there planning/understanding around that most of the teaching spaces aren't suitable for instructors who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices?
- **Buddies:** People going for their first time should be paired with a fellow UoA-er if at all possible, at least for some overlapping period. If this is not possible, it would be good to confirm with AEMG if other instructors from Australia/NZ etc., are on site at the same time and could be introduced/buddied as early as possible.
- **Information and support:** I think there should be a handbook with information available to people when they consider undertaking this teaching.
 - Can more information about the Visa process and help be provided by the International Office? It is doable by yourself, and they did make themselves available for questions, but it would be nice to have a guide/write-up.
 - **Teaching expectations:** I only knew about the two versions of the exam from talking to people here. That information shouldn't be 'luck of the coffee date'. And while I appreciated how generous people were with their time to tell me more about their previous experiences (with much gratitude to Marie-Anne in Chemical Sciences, Lisa, Charlotte, Ben, Russell & Jing in Stats and Peter in Alumni), the fact that this information appeared to ONLY be available through chats and wasn't written up in an official way caused me concern.
 - For example, it is still not exactly clear to me what the co-teacher teaches for the rest of the course. I know other partner universities have before and after videos, and that wasn't part of this relationship. It was at the point where I was a little too embarrassed to ask my co-teacher, and it seems everyone else has been too, because no one else I talked to had a firm idea either.
 - Are they supposed to reach out to us? Us to them? Contact beforehand does or doesn't matter? Having some sense of the *norms* and expectation would be appreciated, especially as while my co-teacher spoke English very well, I had heard from foreign teachers in other departments that their co-teacher didn't speak English sufficiently to communicate about issues, or that it was hard to get in touch with them via email.

- More information about how/what to claim with regard to **expenses** would also be welcome. E.g., I was surprised vaccines were under 'Meals and Incidentals' when asking Finance.
- It should be clear what roles people have in relation to these trips and who to contact about what. Jiamou was very helpful to me, but I don't actually know what his role is. A 'Meet the Team' page would have helped. E.g., someone had said they were discussing a concern with Sebastian, and hadn't even known he was involved with the programme in that way.
- Everyone I talked to said they welcomed my questions, but it was getting to the point that I felt uncomfortable being a burden, especially when others had seemed comfortable with less information. Conversely, I also felt that it was going to be my fault if I didn't think of the right questions, as that seemed to be the only way to get further information.
- When people sign up for this teaching, it should be clear what the timeline is for getting additional information, like when we can expect dates to be confirmed and when the co-teacher will be assigned and introduced.