

Experience Report Fundação Gentulio Vargas-EAESP

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University: FGV

FGV is located in the heart of São Paulo, about one minute away from Avenida Paulista. This region is considered one of the safest of SP and is home to a large number of banks and restaurants. The university consists of two adjoining skyscrapers, a campus in the traditional sense is not really present. FGV has around 2500 students and each semester also about 100-150 exchange students. This link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JA3xVSZqYrl> gives you a virtual tour of the university building. The school offers a buddy system, which is well suited to enter in contact with Brazilian students outside of the masters program. Also, the university has a large number of ambitious sports teams (tennis, volleyball, football, table tennis, basketball, handball, etc.). FGV has the CRI Office on the 6th floor, which help international students with all the administrative tasks and the staff is there to assist you with almost any doubt you have. There is even a free doctor on campus in case of smaller illnesses or emergencies.

About São Paulo

São Paulo is the largest city in the southern hemisphere has about two to three times as many inhabitants as Switzerland. The city and the country might seem a little confusing at first, but you will get used to it very quickly. Two of the most important things in Brazil are: your mobile phone number and your CPF. The mobile number can be resolved quickly IF you have a CPF, with a passport it is like everything in Brazil a little more complicated. I personally used VIVO prepaid my entire stay, a subscription way more expensive and you do not need anything but a little bit of internet. As you will see Brazil is the country of WhatsApp – even companies are on WhatsApp. The best recommendation I got is to get my CPF (Brazilian tax number) in the consulate in Switzerland in Zurich, instead of a day you will spend a couple of minutes getting your number. The tax number is a must, and often required to book travels or buy concert tickets. Get an apartment close to FGV, so you can walk to school and you can avoid the traffic. Some of the neighborhoods close by are Jardim Paulista, Bela Vista and Consolação. In my opinion, a post in the Facebook group of FGV is the best way to find an apartment. Just write that you are looking for an apartment and many people will answer you.

Unfortunately, it has to be said that you don't get very far with English in Brazil outside the university. Only about 5% of the Brazilian population speak English. It is therefore advisable to work out a basic vocabulary or to take the Portuguese 1 course at the HSG before leaving. To get around in the city, you should definitely use Google Maps and Uber/99, and if possible avoid taxis, as they are more expensive and less trustworthy. Be careful on the streets, don't walk around with the phone in your hands and be careful in general – people will try to take advantage of you, especially if it is clearly visible that you are a foreigner.

Courses

The GV is considered one of the best, if not the best, university for business administration in South America. Accordingly, almost all students are from the upper classes of Brazil (FGV is a private university and thus quite expensive if you are not an exchange student). The courses are offered in Portuguese and English. For the Portuguese subjects a language test must be completed. Basically, it can be said that the requirements of the English courses are below the level of the HSG and it is easier to achieve good grades. Unfortunately, we can not comment on the Portuguese subjects. Further the way of teaching is similar to high school – smaller classes and more class interaction. The final examinations account for most only 30-40% of the work. An important note: Universities in Brazil have a compulsory attendance, which in part even enters the grade. Certain professors also rate the oral participation.

Applied Research Methodology, mandatory

Maybe not the best course I have taken during my stay, but it is mandatory. Try to use the guidelines of the professor to get a kickstart in your master thesis.

Strategy in International Perspective, mandatory

Good and entertaining professor. You learn about strategy and its frameworks.

Global Management Practice, mandatory

Interesting course that also teaches you a bit about the way business is different in Brazil.

Consumer Behavior and Research

Fun teacher and a good marketing class, especially if you want to learn more about Brazil.

Collaborative Innovation:

Interesting course and a good teacher, it will give you insights how big companies can drive innovation.

Data Science & Business Decision

If you like development conferences and enjoy watching someone code for two hours without good explanation, this is your course. Have fun. If you actually want to learn how to code you are better off taking an online course-

Early Stage Investment: Angel Investors, Accelerators, and venture capital.

Fun and experienced teacher. I'd highly recommend this course, I did learn a lot about the industry and things that helped me with my own start up.

Marketing Analytics

Fun course with a simulation that allows you to test the things you learned. The professor is a good teacher and has worked with big companies.

Social

In terms of nightlife, the Brazilians and São Paulo have a lot to offer. There is almost always the opportunity to attend parties and enjoy clubs. The University of FGV also organizes five to six parties during the semester (all highly recommended).

Brazilians are usually social and know how to throw cool parties. It is a little difficult to get in contact with locals, joining one of the sports teams is a great way to meet some Brazilians.