

<b>Experience Report</b>	<b>Thai-German Double Degree Program in Logistics (TGDDP)</b>	 
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Country	Host-University	Field of study
Thailand	Chiang Mai University (CMU)	Industrial Engineering with specialization in Logistics
Name	Duration from ( <i>month/year</i> )	until ( <i>month/year</i> )
Jonas Pramono	August 2014	March 2015

## Application and Preparations

The application will be processed by the ILM (institute of logistic and material handling systems) at the faculty of engineering. The responsible contact person is Dr.Ing. Henning Strubelt. For an application the students have to hand in the following documents: Letter of motivation, CV, Proof of successful completion of the bachelor and proof of the required knowledge of the English language (e.g. TOEFL or IELTS). When the application was accepted the selected students have to apply for an educational non-Immigrant Visa before entering the country. Herby two options exist: Single Entry Visa (Costs: 45 EUR) and Multiple Entry Visa (Costs: 140 EUR). I chose the second option based on the recommendation of our responsible contact person from the CMU. If you plan to travel around Asia during that stay, I would also recommend the Multiple Entry Visa since it will save you money and paperwork for re-entries into the country.

## Arrival and Enrollment

When we (four students from OvGU selected for this program) arrived at the Chiang Mai Airport, we were picked up by CMU students and brought to the Engineering-Home (a dormitory for exchange professors), which is located right next to the Faculty of Engineering. Our advisor at CMU arranged a one week stay for us until we had found our own accommodation. In the first few days we were introduced to the classmates and the faculty staff. Therefore several dinners and meetings were arranged.

The enrollment process was quite simple because all courses for the Semester at the CMU were preselected due to the regulations of the double degree agreement. Besides the courses in the field of our study, we participated in a Thai-Language course, which was useful to get in touch and communicate with local people to some degree or while bargaining on the street markets.

## Study at CMU

All lectures were held in English within a group of 20 students. The method of teaching and the course structure were different than what we were used to at OvGU. Since it was a small class the professors interacted with students more and often assigned group work during the lectures. The duration of each lecture was 3 hours with a small break in-between. The final grade of the course was composed of the final exam (3 hour exam at the end of the semester), midterms (3 hour exam in the middle of the semester), class participation and in some courses projects or groupwork. The study environment during the lectures and with the Thai students was very casual and friendly. Overall one can say that the study effort was comparable with the one in Germany. The CMU has a very vivid campus life due

to the fact that it facilitates more than 30.000 students of which most of them live on the campus ground. For that reason the campus offers everything you need. From banks, numerous coffee shops and canteens to grocery stores and several sport facilities. Inside the campus the students are able to use the free electric-shuttle bus service offered by the CMU to get around. We experienced a very strong student culture and solidarity within each faculty shaped by numerous campus and faculty events, especially for the Bachelor degree students. For example we also participated in a “team-building” event, in which we ran up the Doi Suthep Mountain at 5 am in the morning together with our faculty.



**Picture 1: Dinner with the classmates**

## **Everyday Life**

Even though Chiang Mai is one of the biggest cities in Thailand, the everyday life is very relaxed. The city carries the nickname “rose of the north” due to its beautiful environmental surroundings. Surrounded by a ring of mountains, Chiang Mai has a rich and ancient seven hundred year history. Chiang Mai has a very distinctive culture, arts, festivals, and traditions as well as a thrilling mix of local, ethnic and expatriate communities from all over the world. For activities you can tour the old city, visit historic temples, go elephant riding, go nature trekking or visit a hill tribe village. Chiang Mai has also an elaborate coffee shop culture. Students and expats use those coffee shops to relax and study or work at the same time. The climate of Chiang Mai is controlled by tropical monsoons and falls into three main seasons. The weather, like in most of Thailand, is typically hot and humid with the temperatures in Chiang Mai are often close to or above to 30°C. From June to late October, you can expect frequent rain and thunder showers. For the rest of the year it is mainly sunny. The easiest way to get around the city in your everyday life is by renting a scooter (for around 60 EUR / month), since there is barely any public transportation provided by the city. Other alternatives are taxis, tuk-tuks or red cabs (small pickup trucks that function like a bus). The biggest obstacle in the everyday life would be the lack of English skills of the locals, especially in rural areas. For that reason I would recommend to learn some basic Thai (numbers, directions, food, etc.).

## **Traveling**

Thailand gives the perfect geographical position to travel around South East Asia. In addition to that the flights from Bangkok to the neighboring countries like Malaysia, Vietnam, and Laos etc. are relatively cheap, if you chose to fly with low-cost airlines. As part of a study trip, organized by our faculty at CMU, we also visited South Korea (Seoul and Busan), which was a very interesting experience. But Thailand itself has also beautiful travel destinations; for example one of its beautiful islands and areas in the south e.g. Krabi, Phuket, Koh PhiPhi, Koh Lanta, Koh Lipe. Those travel destinations are definitely more touristic than life in Chiang Mai. For that reason one has to consider higher prices for the everyday life during that time.

## **Conclusion**

Looking back, I can say that this double degree program was all in all a great experience in every aspect. By living and studying in Thailand, we not only got insight in a completely different academic world, but we also learned how to adapt to a different culture in a different environment. For that reason I personally recommend this program and would encourage anybody, who is interested, to apply for it.



**Picture 2: Doi Suthep nationalpark – 30 minutes away from Chiang Mai center**