



NILS ALT

WHU OTTO BEISHEIM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, GERMANY
EXCHANGE STUDENT - SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY - SPRING 2022

Organization, Arrival, and Accommodation

I got to know about SQU as they have recently formed a mutual exchange partnership with WHU, which made it very easy for me to sign up for my exchange semester. I saw SQU and Oman as destinations, and it was a country no one had gone to before from my university, so I decided it was an excellent opportunity to try something new. After selecting SQU as the university for my exchange semester, I was contacted by Mr. Hamood from the International Cooperation Office. I chose the courses based on the website, filled out a document, and sent a copy of my passport. Afterward, Mr. Hamood took care of my registration, visa, and accommodation during the semester. Everything was handled easily, and I was welcomed at the airport by someone from SQU and arrived at my accommodation. The accommodation has male and female floors, the flats are large, and I had two nice flatmates from Germany for the first two months of my stay. The rest of the building was occupied mainly by international students, mostly from other Arab countries, studying for their whole degree at SQU. In my first university week, some volunteering students helped the exchange students with the E-Mail, IT-System, and course registration in correspondence with SQU staff. This first week was a bit confusing and complicated to register for all courses properly, but everything worked out fine with the very supportive students and SQU staff.

SQU, Academics, and Campus-Activities

The SQU campus is located in Muscat, close to the rest of the city, and is really big as various faculties are combined on one campus. It offers many places for relaxing outside, for example, a large garden area, a bowling alley, and a sports complex including a swimming pool. Furthermore, the campus offers a huge main library, and each college has its library with workplaces. The workload was different compared to German universities as there were two to three exams, smaller assignments, and group projects throughout the semester. Another big difference compared to German universities is the gender separation as males and females are seated on different sides of the classroom, enter through different doors, use other staircases and elevators, and have separate

eating facilities. The professors were very welcoming and willing to help solve problems throughout the group work. Also, the group work allowed me to get in touch with other students more easily. In addition to that, the International Cooperation Office organized an overnight trip to the desert, and a trip to Matrah Souq and the National Museum.

Off-campus activities and Leisure time

Oman is a lovely country with a lot of nature, perfect for outdoor activities. I spend all my weekends on trips throughout Oman. Sometimes, the international students organized them, and we visited a Wadi together. Occasionally, I arrange them myself, and many expats are willing to take you with them for outdoor activities. Like this, I spent most of my weekends diving, climbing, hiking, and visiting wadis and the desert. However, without a car, it is tough to get to many places as public transportation is not the best and is only available in Muscat, but most people have a car in Oman, and you will always have someone joining the trip who can drive or pick you up.

Intercultural Experience

It was fascinating to explore a new culture and meet people from Oman and many other Arab countries. All people were very open and willing to explain cultural and religious differences. I was even able to join a Friday prayer in the Grande Mosque in Muscat, which was a unique experience for me. I loved trying all the different meals and sweets facilitated by people inviting us for food at their place and making us try all other variations of Omani food. I learned a lot about Arab countries, the link between culture and religion, families in Arab countries, and the cultural and language differences between Arab countries. Furthermore, it was exciting to see the different living styles. Muscat is a modern city with all its features, but still, many people in the countryside of Oman live a traditional life as farmers or Bedouins. Overall, I am more than happy with my exchange semester. I had amazing days full of outdoor activities, made friends from all many Arab countries, tried a lot of new food, and learned a lot about culture and religion in a different part of the world.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

Nils Alt

WHU - Otto Beisheim School of Management

Exchange Student - Sultan Qaboos University - Spring 2022 nils.alt@whu.edu

Pictures:

