

Duke Exchange Summary- Fall 2015 Term 1&2

My experience was a little different than most students that go on the exchange program as I flew with my dear wife and a 6 weeks old baby, so I can only tell the story from my perspective.

That being said, doing the exchange program was one of the best decisions I made, this sheet will not cover everything, so if you have any additional questions (and you will) please feel more than welcome to contact me (contact info below).

Duke University is located at Durham North Carolina. We arrived at the end of August 2015, the weather was similar to the weather in Israel along the semester.

Durham is nothing like the big cities you know in the USA, it's more like a huge suburb. Although it has malls and restaurants it is far from being a vivid city, so if you expect NYC rethink Duke. Moreover, I loved Durham and its unique character

Pre travel arrangements:

- J-1 Visa- it's a bit of a pain, make sure to get it over with as soon as you can.
- Immunizations- it is better to get it over with before you arrive but it is also possible to do it in the university (that's what I did)
- Send all proper forms to the student's coordinator at Duke as soon as you have them.

General comment: Make the time to list of the pre travel requirements and follow the exact instructions given by Duke, you don't want to miss this opportunity on a count of logistics.

Housing: The preferred housing option by students in the area is apartment's complex, a big building with all the amenities you need (GYM, pool, BBQ area, Doorman,etc.).

Because you'll be coming for no longer than 4 months, I would suggest to look at this two options, which offer short term furnished:

1. 605 West- <http://www.605westapartments.com/>
2. Forest apartment- <http://www.theforestapartments.com/>

Of course there're other possibilities like sublease and short term rental, I found that going to 605 west is my best bet.

Very important tip- After registration (prior to arrival) you will receive access to a forum called "Duke List" it's similar to Yad2 in Israel only it serves the Duke students alone, you can find housing solutions, used furniture and everything else you might need.

Transportation- As I was with my wife and a baby we had to have a car.

Most of the student in the exchange program didn't have a car, Uber is very popular and every student is entitled of free transportation with the local buses (not very developed but useable)

If you want to rent\lease a car for your time there, don't waste your time and go to First Choice leasing <http://firstchoiceleasing.net/>

Which offer the best rates and serve only scholars and students at Duke, very recommended.

Budget: As an MBA you probably know that budget is very subjective issue, we spent around \$4,500 per month and on top of that we had the one time payments like flight tickets, health insurance, Duke fees, etc. If you come by yourself the budget could be as low as half of what we spent but it's all depend on you.

Courses: The professors at Duke are something that I've never seen in my life, every course I took was well prepared and very interactive and interesting.

I took a lot of innovation courses, but you can do no wrong with the courses selection.

Jewish life: My wife and I keep Shabbat and Kosher, but even if you're not connected at all to Judaism, I strongly suggest to visit the Jewish community at Beth-El <http://betheldurham.org/>

The community is a mix of orthodox and conservative Jews (many Duke Professors and alumni), it's always a great way to meet the local business and opportunities, for us the community was a second home. I strongly suggest to visit.

Entertainment- Durham offers a limited fun options. Duke basketball team is a main attraction, there're a few museums and huge shopping centers in Raleigh. Just follow the rest of the exchange students from your program and you'll have fun.

General tips:

- Get to know the Israelis from the full time program
- Mingle with the full time students, it's very easy to stay at the comfort zone with the other exchange.

- Try and get job interviews, your chances of actually getting an offer are not great but you'll enjoy the ride (one employer flew me to Denver for last round of interviews all paid) and if you do end up getting an offer it's a game changer.
- Make connections wherever you go, print your business card you never know who you'll meet.
- Look at the extra curriculum activities, Duke Offers so many things unrelated to school.
- Leave your "Israeli manners" at home, more doors will be open this way.
- Travel as much as you can, North Carolina is amazing, if you like nature you're in for a treat.

In conclusion, you made the right choice going to Duke, people told me it could be a life changing experience and it really was.

I would be more than happy to help,

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ALL THE BEST AND GOOD LUCK.