

country: Mexico  
university abroad: ITESM  
beginning of lectures and end of exams abroad: 08/2019 until 12/2019  
study path at Viadrina: International Business Administration [ ] BA [X] MA



- **Preparation:**

I spent a semester abroad at the ITESM campus Puebla, Mexico from August 2019 until December 2019. The application process at the partner university was fast and easy and everything was online. EU citizens do not need to apply for a special Visa. On arrival at the airport in Mexico you need to present the invitation letter from ITESM and you have to fill in a short form. You receive a migratory card (required to be kept until leaving the country) and 180 days to stay in the country. ITESM requires a special insurance, about which they told me very shortly in advance, even though I asked them twice well in advance. The insurance has to cover very large sums and if you cannot contract such insurance in your own country, which was my case, they offer you their own insurance which, in my opinion, is very bad. There isn't really a buddy program as the ones I have seen at other Universities or at Viadrina. There were 2 students, which were supposed to be the tutors for all the exchange students.

- **Accommodation:**

There are no student dorms, but there are student houses for all universities. These houses are all in Cholula which is a village 20min away from campus. Another option is renting a room in a shared apartment. All these options were posted in the FB and Whatsapp groups that were created before the beginning of the semester. The university makes you aware of the options, but you have to contact the people yourself. Cholula is more expensive than Puebla, since it is a student town. Most of the student houses host big parties regularly so if you want a quiet and peaceful place you specify that and ask if there is a house where they don't organize parties all the time. Most of the students lived in Cholula. A room in Cholula with a private bathroom and a shared kitchen costs around 300€. The rooms in Puebla are cheaper. I would recommend living either in Cholula or around the university (where most of the options are anyway).

- **Studying at the university abroad**

Campus Puebla is very modern and offers many facilities. There is a gym, gardens with chairs and many study areas for both individual and group work, as well as areas with computers. The classrooms and classes are small. Classes consist of ten to thirty people. Attendance is not mandatory, however almost every class there is an in-class activity and if you are not there you receive 0 points and mostly there is no way to get the points another way even if you are skipping class because you are sick. You need 70/100 points to pass a course, which is not hard to get as long as you don't skip many classes. You are allowed to take courses from other faculties, as for instance I as a master student took all three of my S-Modules at ITESM. There are 2 mid-terms and one final exam and in-between you have to deliver various tasks, presentations, papers, etc. as homework in addition to the in-class activities. There is a Spanish language course, however I did not attend it. You are only allowed to change courses during the first 2 weeks, however the change takes a very long time and there is no guarantee that you will be accepted in the course you would like to make a change for. Therefore during the first 2-3 weeks I had to attend both the courses I wanted to drop and the ones I wanted to take/change for. In my opinion the courses are not hard, but the tasks are very time-consuming.

- **Day to day life and free time:**

Living costs depend a lot on your way of living. There are students that spent three-four times more than I did. Living in Cholula is more expensive than living in Puebla, both accommodation and food. I lived in Puebla and ate street food quite often, which is quite cheap. However such street food is harder to find in Cholula, as there are mostly restaurants where the food is more expensive. From Cholula there is no public transport to the University, so all of the students that lived there used Uber. I lived behind the campus and Uber costed between 2 and 3 €. One ride on the public transport costs around 40cents. There are many options for extracurricular activities in the campus. You can sign for various sports, art, music, dance, etc. classes. You can also visit the gym on campus. However, the tasks and homework take a lot of your free time. There are many small villages around Puebla which make for great 1-2 days weekend trips.

- **Conclusion:** worst and best experience

All in all I enjoyed my time in Mexico a lot. The culture is very rich, interesting and distinct. I would recommend to try and make friends among the Mexican students. I made Mexican friends and got invited to various family reunions, which is something very interesting to witness and it allows you to get to know the real Mexican culture. The food is very delicious and people in Puebla are extremely friendly. It did not feel as dangerous as I thought before going there, however one should be as cautious as possible. Load yourself with a lot of patience for the group works at the university as everything there happens "mañana".