

# The St. Mary's Student's Guide to Fudan University

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# Don't Panic

Hi there! You are reading this because you have made the decision to go to Fudan University for your study abroad trip! First off, let us congratulate you on being brave enough and smart enough to want to visit Shanghai. Go you!

Now, you are probably wondering why I felt the need to make this guide. Well, I was once just like you – a lone, independent traveling student, struggling in the ways of studying abroad in a foreign land. And when I arrived at Fudan, I realized immediately that there are things that no one tells you before coming, things that only someone who has been to Fudan would know. They are the kind of things that pre-departure meetings don't cover, because they are silly and seem simple and easy in America, but are hard in a different culture and different language. So, in order to make things a tad less stressful for you, I have written this to help guide you through your first month or so at Fudan University. Good luck!

NOTE: This guide is written with the assumption that you have already applied and been accepted to the program; I will not be covering the application process.

- 1) Don't register first – find your dorm room before you do anything else!
  - a. On my first day at Fudan, I got out of the car near the foreign student dorms and proceeded to head in the exact wrong direction from where I should have – away from the dormitories. It may seem counter-intuitive to request a room before even registering with the college that you've arrived, but that's how it goes. You want to find this gate (which is through North Gate on-campus to your direct right from where the taxi drops you off at WuDong Lu [武东路]):



If you see a lot of tall, painted blue buildings that look like apartments you are in the right place. Enter the tallest blue building of the pack. In the main lobby there will be people who can check you in.

- 2) Know your room number before you come.
  - a. Fudan will send you a form about two months ahead of time with your visa application form and your acceptance letter to Fudan. In this package of forms will be contact information for the Foreign Affairs Office. Email them to ask about your room number (or ask the SMCM IE Office to help you). Alternatively, if you arrive in China and can get to a working phone, you can call (86) 21 5566 4152 and ask for Lucy (she speaks English!). But don't wait until the last minute; it will save you a lot of headache. Email them as soon as you can after receiving your acceptance package. The room number will be in X-xxxA format, like 8-701A. The first number (8) is your dorm *building*. St. Mary's students traditionally stay in the seven-story sub-buildings behind the tallest main International Student Building. There are no elevators in these buildings, so if you are on the seventh floor like I was, be prepared for some mandatory cardio workout every day! The second set of numbers is the floor you are on (7), which suite (01), and which particular room inside the suite (A).
- 3) Be aware that most of the full-time staff in the international student dorm buildings will not speak English well, if at all. Checking in is not that hard, mostly just filling out forms and signing them. Basic Chinese reading skills will get you through. If you are really struggling grab another foreign student who's obviously communicating better than you – the first day it is almost certain that you will run into someone who can help. That is also the quickest way to make a friend on-campus, so don't be shy!
- 4) Bring enough money to pay for all the bills that crop up on the first day.
  - a. There's a 500 RMB deposit on the room, 60 RMB for books once you sign up for classes, 100 RMB for hot water in the shower, and 300 RMB for insurance per semester. The taxi ride from Pudong will also cost about 250 RMB. Most of the people you give this money to will not speak English, so be ready to listen for Chinese numbers (and oftentimes for the word *kuai* [块] rather than *yuan* [元]).
- 5) Okay, now you've paid. What are all these cards that they keep giving you!?
  - a. This one is your room key. Hold it against the black sensor on your door until the light blips and makes a fun sound. Then the door is unlocked and voila! You're in.
  - b. Only on the first day will the staff allow you to just walk right through the main international students' gate – after you've been given a room key you are required to show it to the guard every time you enter the gate, and after midnight you need to sign

in. So keep a close watch on your room key – you’ll need it to get into the foreign students’ dorm section.



- c. This one is for hot water. On the wall of the shower there will be a little electronic sensor edge you can drop the card right into. Leave the card in for as long as you want hot water, and you should see the numbers decrease as you use it.



- d. Those are the two cards that are the most important on your first day. The other card will be your electricity card, but you shouldn't need to bother with that unless you run your electricity out and have to add more money on the card. During my time there I never once ran out of electricity. As long as you aren't constantly running heat/AC

even when you don't need it, and if you don't leave lights on when you're not in the room, you should be fine.

- e. There is also an optional laundry card. You won't be given this on the first day, but you can go to the basement of building four and pay 60 RMB for one (the lady puts 60 RMB on the card for you). There are laundry machines on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> floors of the tall main International Student Building – the building you registered in.
- 6) Now that you have all these millions of cards and have gotten into your room properly, I can guess that the first thing you want now that you are in China is to get on the internet and tell other people about the fact that you are in China! In order to do that, follow these steps:
- a. First, you have to turn on the electricity in your room by flipping a switch, all the way on the left. The switch itself should be in a top corner of your room somewhere – mine was hidden behind the door when opened, so it was hard to find at first.



- b. Now that your electricity is up and running, you'll need an Ethernet cord. If you didn't think to bring one or couldn't fit it in your luggage, the main blue International Student's Building has a little convenience store (called "We 2", for some reason?) in its lobby. If you walk in from the main doors, it's in the back right corner. You can buy Ethernet cords there.
- c. While you are there buying your Ethernet cord, you should also buy an internet card. Right on the checkout counter in the We 2 mart there is a list of options for purchasing

internet cards. You can pay for one night only, or pay for as much as six months at a time. Just tell the cashier “*shang wang ka* (上网卡)” and point to the price you want.



Most things in China operate on pay-as-you-go systems: internet and cell phone cards are extremely similar. The picture above shows an internet card after you've opened it. And in order to get internet...

- d. You can ignore all the stuff on the top left half of the card. You won't need that. Concentrate instead on the bottom half. (NOTE: I only know how to do this on Windows. If you have a Mac you'll have to figure out most of this for yourself.) After you've plugged in your Ethernet to the jack behind your desk, right click on the internet icon on the bottom-right corner of your desktop. Choose "Set up new connection or network," then "connect to the internet," then "Broadband." It will ask you for a username and password. The username is the long number (starting with a lowercase letter), and the password is the shorter set of eight numbers on the bottom half of the internet card. You can name the connection whatever you want, and voila! You should be connected to the internet. Oftentimes, every time you try to get onto the internet, it will prompt you to connect and re-enter your password, but you can choose to save your password and username settings, so it's not too bad.

## 7) Time to Register!

- a. After setting up all of this, you will still have not technically registered with the university. In order to do this, you need to leave the international dormitories and head for the tallest building on campus - you can literally see it from anywhere on campus.

It's about a 20 minute walk from the dorms. (Turn right from the main gate of the international dorm section, left at any point so that you are out of the dorm alleys, walk until you get to the more main road with all the little shops on it, and take the first left. At that point you can't miss it; it's like twenty stories.) You want to walk in on the side closest to the big field of grass – that's the East Sub-building part of Guanghua (光华楼), where most of registration takes place. See how tall it is? I was standing halfway across the field for this picture, and barely caught half of it.



- b. When you get to 光华楼 you'll want to go to the fourth floor. There are signs telling you in what order to register and you'll want to bring your entire Fudan packet with you along with your dorm information. Make sure you know how to write your Chinese name, and if the one they are calling you is different from the one you are called in class in America, you can change it. Fudan tends to be pretty random with its name distribution; some people got to keep their names from their American Chinese class, and some people were given new ones and had to ask to change them to the name they were used to. Once again, it's a fifty-fifty chance that the person registering you will speak English. More registering people do, but generally only the younger ones.

However, since you will be surrounded by international students, *someone* can help you. Make more friends!

- c. Keep in mind that after you register, they will direct you to take your placement test for classes. You do not necessarily need to immediately head to your placement test. Merely show up at the room number they give any time during the regular registration time and take it. Your scheduled time is not a requirement; more a guideline. You can even show up the next day if you'd like, or if you don't have enough time after registering on the first day.

8) Where to find your class schedule:

- a. After registering days are over and you have taken your placement tests, the professors will post a class schedule on the fourth floor of the East Sub-building in 光华楼. Online schedules are accessible, but only in academic buildings via Fudan internet. So be sure that on the first day you take a picture of your schedule or copy it down so you have it for later. Lower level classes take place in 光华楼, but upper level classes take place in the teacher buildings in a different part of campus.

9) My next set of tips is a lot less chronological; I'm mostly just going to slap down everything I learned about Fudan or wish I'd known beforehand in list format.

- a. HOW TO EAT/FOOD STIPEND: In order to get a food stipend, you have to have a bank card. Go to the Agricultural Bank of China bank outside West Gate early in the day (11am ish). Be prepared for, I am not kidding here, a four hour wait. Banks in China are notoriously ridiculously slow, I am not really sure why. During my experience a three hour wait was almost a certainty. Bring your homework and some snacks. As soon as you enter the bank, take a number from the little machine on the left. People do speak some English here, but it's very basic, so if you really need help someone will be able to figure it out with you.

Once you've gotten your bank card, take the number to Lucy in the international student office. She'll take down the number and then every month 1,100 RMB will be put on your card and you can go to the ATM and get cash. Be aware, however, that you will not walk out of Lucy's office with 1,100 RMB on your card. The stipend is deposited every month around the end of the month – so it could be as late as the 27<sup>th</sup> or so of September before you actually have access to your stipend. Come prepared to pay for your first month's amount of food yourself.

- b. ATM LOCATIONS/CREDIT CARDS: ATMS are located inside the main building of 光华楼 on the first floor (past the elevators and on the right). There are also ATMs nestled near the little garden by the dining hall closest to the international dormitories. All



ATMs have English options – you won't have to struggle to read the Chinese. Just look for a button that says "English," usually around the bottom left corner of the screen. American credit/debit cards should work at most major bank systems in China, if they are a large card company like Visa and MasterCard. You will be charged an international fee, however, for using an international card, so beware. It's usually like five bucks.

Chinese stores do not usually operate on cards, however. ATMs, the H&M store about 30 minutes away, and sometimes Wal-mart are basically the only places where international cards work. Bring RMB cash for purchases.

- c. BATHROOMS: In China, the most common form of toilet is a porcelain hole in the floor with full length stalls. Don't be snobby and expect to find Western toilets anywhere but the sub-building in 光华楼, basically. Just squat and deal with it. Also always bring Kleenex, because toilet paper is rarely provided!
- d. STUDENT CARD: In order to get your eCampus card, within the first week or so a schedule will be posted and you will have to go to Teacher Building #10. Bring your Fudan acceptance letter (or the number along the top right of the page), your passport, and dress pretty, because they'll be taking your picture! Double check which name they are putting on the card – the name Fudan assigned you, or the name you've been using all this time in Chinese classes. It will make it easier if the names match.

Your eCampus card can be filled by using RMB cash in order to eat in any on-campus dining hall – it doesn't come with money on it. You have to go to the dining hall and find a place where you can put money on it. In the one closest to 光华楼 there's a lady behind a counter on the second floor who will put money on it for you. There are machines for this in 光华楼 (and the bottom floor of the North Cafeteria), but you need a bank card for that, and can't use cash. You may then use your filled card to buy food from the cafeteria – when you've reached the end of the line and had the food put on your plate, the server will type in the weight of the food, and you touch the card to the electronic reader on the countertop. It will subtract the amount you owe, and you are on your way! There are also little nooks inside the cafeteria with on-the-go food and drinks are served, and your card works for those as well.

- e. VISA TIPS: Visa processing takes four days, and although the embassy website says they will do two-day processing, that is only in extenuating circumstances. Go online to print the visa application, and make sure you print all the forms required for a student visa. Bring a copy of the information page of your passport and a copy of your acceptance letter to Fudan, plus a copy of the stamped visa application form itself. Get

to the embassy early (it opens at 9:30 am), so you don't have to wait as long. Also make sure your passport (if you have one) is valid for at least six months after you will be returning from China – they will not give you a visa if you are cutting your passport's expiration date too close to your return date.

You will need multiple passport sized photos of yourself, both for the visa application and for various other applications when you arrive in China. It is a good idea to bring six or so along with you to China.

- f. SHANGHAI REN: Since we are learning Beijing Mandarin at St. Mary's, there are some differences between our classroom Chinese and colloquial Shanghai Mandarin. Be aware that Shanghai ren most often use the “adj. 不 adj.” structure to ask a question, not 吗. You'll get used to it really quickly, but it can be confusing at first if you are listening for the 吗 at the end of sentence where there isn't one. 儿 is also rarely used in words like 一点儿, and Shanghai ren will chuckle if your accent is too Beijing. Don't be offended if they correct you to 一点; they aren't being rude or condescending.
- g. GATES: North Gate is the gate closest to the international student dorms. East Gate is the one closest to 光华楼 and the cafeteria. The Main Gate is the one closest to the Mao Zedong statue. The other gates are less important to know by name, because they let you out at less important places around Fudan, but obviously West Gate is roughly straight across from East Gate, as is South from North..
- h. SCAMS: The rule of thumb for scams in China (or anywhere, really) is that if someone you don't know is approaching you and offering you something, it is not free. Be wary of people in touristy areas handing out maps or flyers – you are expected to pay for them if you take them. Also be wary of young women coming up to you and striking up conversations in English, with the eventual offer to take you a tea ceremony. They will most likely take you to a tea ceremony, but it will be absurdly overpriced (hundreds of USD) and you will be expected to pay for it. If random men claiming to be taxi drivers approach you in airports or bus stations and offer to take you to their taxi, don't follow. Pick taxis yourself. Mostly, just use common sense and you will be fine.
- i. WAL-MART: If you exit East Gate, cross the street, and follow all along the street you will come to a large intersection and enormous plaza. This plaza is called Wujiaochang (五角场) and is a highly Westernized mall area. There are more Western options here (Wal-Mart, H&M, Burger King) if you are really feeling homesick. However, Wal-Mart is usually the more expensive option, especially because you can't haggle. Convenience stores along 武东路 also usually have most of what you need. Foreign credit cards are iffy; it is better to take cash for purchases even at 五角场. You can also find all sorts of

entertainment in this area: bowling, ice skating, IMAX, and KTV (KTV is karaoke, which is popular all over Asia. Try it out! Karaoke can be fun with friends – they give you a private room, some microphones, and all sorts of music, from K-pop to bad 80s rock). 五角场 gives you a weird sense of the Western merging with ritzy Chinese commercial business – Wal-Mart is side by side with Sephora and Häagen-Dazs, which is right next to all sorts of local Chinese stores.

- j. THE SUBWAY: Also at 五角场 is the nearest subway station. The subway system in Shanghai is wonderful – it's cheap and fast, and can get you pretty much anywhere in the city. Apply for a 20 RMB subway card:



It's the best decision, because you can refill it at the counter with cash and then just touch it to the subway turnstiles. Most of the time the sensor is good enough you don't even need to take it out of your wallet. It can be refilled in increments of 10 RMB, but not 5.

To get to the subway station at 五角场, you have to cross the street past Wal-Mart. Go all the way through the plaza, basically, and cross the enormous intersection. The subway entrance is the first thing you hit.

- k. THE LIBRARY: If you are like me and actually want a place to practice writing millions of characters over and over again that isn't your tiny dorm room, you may be interested in the library. If you leave 光华楼 from the complete opposite side of the East sub-building (as in, go all the way through the rest of the building and come out on the big cement area on the other side with the odd little statue of a man on a donkey), head towards the right (towards donkey statue), and when you hit the road turn left. Keep

going straight – this is where the on-campus school store is located. It has slightly more options than the We2 mart, and has lots of Fudan swag if you want to come back to America decked out in uni colors. This is also the gate that takes you to the humanities library. You have to exit the gate, cross the big ol’ crosswalk, and turn right into the little side road. The big building right in front of you as you cross the street is the library (it does say 图书馆 on it somewhere), and you will need your eCampus card to get in. Just knock your card against the turnstiles in the front and go on in. The reading/studying rooms are up the stairs, and signs telling you which rooms are which do have English.

- I. FUDAN’S ACADEMIC BUILDING INTERNET: Certain things, such as your class schedule or midterm grades, are only accessible on Fudan’s network within academic buildings like the library or 光华楼. To access this, hop on the “Fudan Internet” wifi, type your student ID number (the one on your eCampus card) as the username, and the last six digits of your passport number as the password.
  
- m. ENGLISH WEBSITE: <http://hibridge.sinaapp.com/node/list> is a work-in-progress English translation of Fudan’s main website. It has all sorts of useful general information about Fudan that is difficult to figure out without upper level Chinese, and it is user-driven specifically for foreign students. Check it out! You may even update it!
  
- n. CELL PHONES: Let’s face it – one of the hardest parts of the first few days in China is not immediately having a working cell phone. If you are a smart phone user like me, it can be tough to go without when you are used to your phone being an extension of your arm. However, there are a few tips to make the transition a little easier.
  - i. If you have an iPhone 4S or later, you are in luck. CHECK THIS!!!! These phones were made with international travel in mind, and can be unlocked so as to allow foreign SIM cards, which means you can use local Chinese cell phone rates instead of global rates. I have Verizon, and I know for each service provider it’s a little bit different (for instance, part of ATT&T’s marketing strategy is showcasing how easy it is to go international with an ATT&T iPhone). I recommend calling your provider and asking them about foreign travel. You may be surprised at your options! Also, for Verizon, you need to actually request for your phone to be unlocked for foreign SIM card use. Call the global Verizon number 800-711-8300, dial 2 when prompted, and ask them to unlock your phone’s phone number for foreign SIM card use. It’s free to do so.

- o. KEEPING IN TOUCH: Something that is much easier for modern students studying abroad is to keep in touch with their friends back home. The internet makes this much easier, and if you have a smart phone it's easier still. One of my favorite apps while in China was called WeChat – it's actually very popular amongst Chinese smart phone users, because it's free and easy to use! WeChat lets you send videos, text messages, sound bites, and live video feed from phone to phone or phone to computer using the internet. The only things you need are any kind of smart phone and a QR Code reader on your phone. It also works via your web browser on your computer, if you don't have a smart phone. Check out this site <http://www.wechat.com/en/download.html> to download it. WeChat is amazing for keeping in touch with American friends in China (just tell your friends from home to download it themselves) AND for staying connected with the new friends you'll make at Fudan when you return home. I highly recommend it.

This pretty much wraps up all the basics that I can think of to cover that are difficult to figure out on your own. Feel free to continue to update this guide by messaging corrections or additions to Professor Fu: [jfu@smcm.edu](mailto:jfu@smcm.edu)

I hope this guide will be helpful for you during your trip abroad, and I strongly recommend printing it out before you go to Fudan so will have something to consult (with visuals, which definitely help when you are struggling to make sense of a new area) when you first arrive. That way you won't have to fool around with the internet or your computer at first while you are still struggling to get acclimated.

Good luck! 再见!  
~Megan

## A Picture's Worth A Thousand Words!

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This is the remote control to your AC/heat! The red button turns it on and off. The arrows increase/decrease the temperature.



This is the main room of a sub-building suite. The picture was taken from the door of a dorm room.



**Mail box key. The box is located on the side of the entrance to the building.**



**East cafeteria - East Gate is to the right of this.**



**East Gate. East Cafeteria is to the left of the gate. You can see the corner of the building.**



**You can see how the international student dorm sub-buildings are blue, and the Chinese students' are beige.**





This is where 五角场 starts.



This picture was taken facing from the library towards West Gate. 光华楼 is visible from all over the place, as you can see.