



I am Cristian, from Brazil, and during the last summer I had a chance to visit Tsinghua University in China, from July 29th to August 12th, with a great team of colleagues from UTA.

Tsinghua is considered the best university in China in Engineering studies and all its magnitude is present everywhere: an immense campus with dozens of faculties, student residences, shopping facilities and lines of tourists taking pictures at the university gates. In fact, the campus itself was built in one of the old royal gardens of the Qing Dynasty, what makes walking around the campus a unique and magical experience.



*Tsinghua University Main Building*



*Tsinghua University Campus*

Before leaving to China, it was required to get a visa from the Visa Application Service Center in Helsinki. They do not require any appointment, just the documents stated in their website. Since July, they are working from Kamppi area, what makes it easier to people from Tampere to find it. The whole visa process duration was of approximately one week. As we were traveling in group, I realised that the applicable prices for the visa were different based in our passports, ranging from 60 to 180 euros. As an international student in Finland, my health insurance utilised here was also valid in China, therefore there was no need for new insurance.

With the visa in hands and the day coming, I started reading about average cost of living in Beijing and found out that it was much higher than in the rest of China and that credit/debit cards are not usually accepted, since they use WeChat Pay and other mobile payment systems most of the time. With that in mind, it was time to change money in Tampere, since exchange services in China requires a lot of time and bureaucracy, as we learned from our colleagues in the program, who needed to exchange money.

Accommodation and flights were provided by the university. We slept in one of the traditional dormitories of the university, what was really nice to really *live* like a normal student at Tsinghua. Each participant got an individual room with bathroom and air-conditioning (what is really important during Chinese Summer, with temperatures around 40°C, high humidity and pollution index). In addition, a card for the student restaurants was also provided, since these restaurants do not accept any cash or other payment formats.



*Student canteen at Tsinghua University*

The classes were held during the whole day for two weeks. Also, company visits, campus tour and a touristic visit to the Summer Palace were organised by the university. The centrality and public transport system in Beijing makes it easier to visit all the main venues in the region, like The Great Wall of China, the Olympic Park, Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven. The lectures and workshops were instructed by both teachers of Tsinghua and by Chinese professionals in product development, design and business administration. This way, we had that chance to also learn about *how is to work* in China, in addition to the educational system only.

After returning to Finland, me and my group discussed with those responsible for our program at UTA about the program and which course would correspond to what we did. We also elaborated a short report and presentation explaining our work in China and our outcomes.

As a professional, I believe I got a really deep experience regarding the other side of the world. From the product development perspective, it was possible to see how tailored solutions are necessary for eastern users. China is not only a different country, but a completely new way of perceiving life. During two weeks, I had to re-learn how to live and behave in a society that never stops.





*Workshop with our mentor, Sophie Liu*



*The Great Wall of China*