

2022-2023, Spring Semester
Monterrey, Mexico
Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (TEC)



APPLICATION

Unfortunately, I missed the regular application deadline, but luckily, there was an opportunity for late applications, so I submitted my application for the spring semester in September. Initially, I wasn't accepted, but there was a possibility that another student might cancel their mobility. Fortunately, this happened, so in November, I found out that I would be going to Mexico in a few months. Based on my experience, I recommend everyone to submit their applications on time if they don't want to spend months worrying about it. Also, even if the situation seems hopeless, it's worth trying, and with a bit of luck, anything can happen.

ARRIVAL

When I arrived in Monterrey at the airport, I was quite surprised because hardly anyone spoke English. So, it was somewhat challenging for me to find a taxi or exchange currency, but there were a few locals who tried to help with translation. It's advisable to arrive in Mexico with some cash on hand since not all places accept credit cards. From the airport to my accommodation, I took a taxi I found at the airport, but I highly recommend downloading Uber in advance. It is very easy to find a taxi using Uber, and it's quicker and safer.

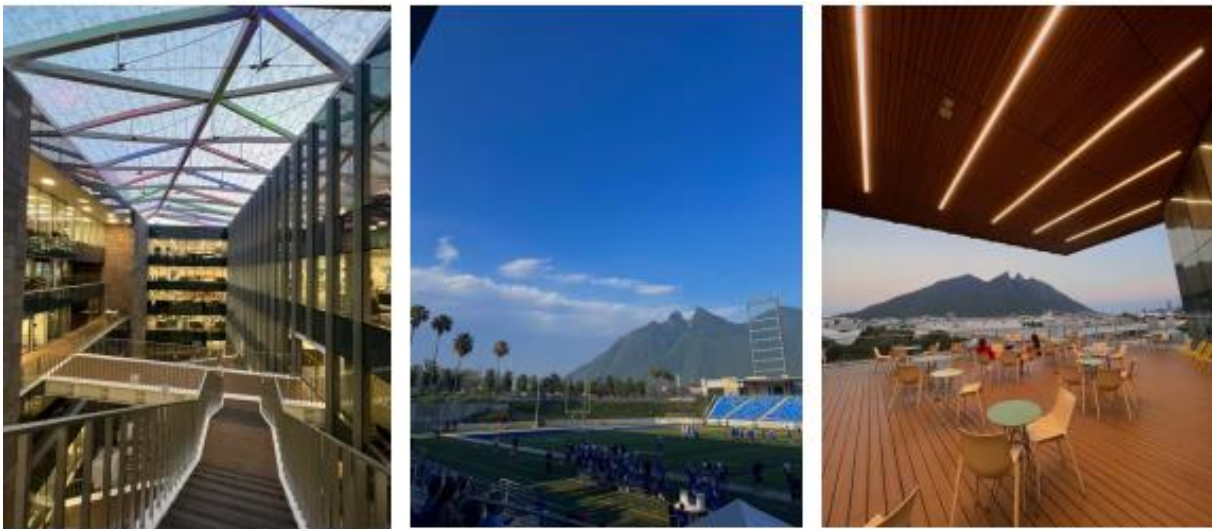
COURSE SELECTION, CLASSES, EXAMS

Course registration at TEC works a bit differently than back home, and the final course listings are usually posted in the weeks or days leading up to the start of the semester. I managed to enrol in my courses more or less as planned, but the university is very helpful, and changes can be made, maybe adding a sports class, even during the orientation week. Another thing that is quite different here is the educational model for the semester since they recently introduced the TEC21 system. The essence of this system is that the semester is divided into three periods of 5 weeks each. There are courses that run throughout the entire semester, but more common are courses that last for only one section, which is 5 weeks. During these five weeks, you intensely study the subject, and then you take an exam at the end of the fifth week. Typically, the first four weeks are for learning, group work, and presentations, and the fifth week is exam week. Classes are conducted in small groups, usually with around 20 students, creating a family-like atmosphere and interactivity.

CAMPUS

The campus is simply enormous, and there is hardly anything you can't find there. Of course, the classrooms are beautiful and well-equipped, and there are numerous communal study spaces and a massive library. Restaurants, cafes, shops, and banks are also located on the campus, so you practically don't need to leave the university grounds for anything. Often, I would have common meals with fellow exchange students at the university or just hang out in the park. There are plenty of sports facilities available too; you can use the university gym for free, but there's also a swimming pool, basketball, soccer, American football, tennis courts, and more.

The university has teams for all sports, so we went to cheer for our school in basketball or football matches. The fall semester is American football season, which is the most popular there, so for those of you going next semester, you are sure to have some exciting games.



ACCOMMODATION

As I mentioned earlier, I found out about my trip to Mexico rather late, so I booked my accommodation just two weeks before departure. I stayed at Garza Sada 1892, which I found with the help of Nomad Living. It was a bit unusual that I had to pay for the entire semester in one payment, but aside from that, everything went smoothly. We had to purchase our own blankets, pillows, and utensils. I'm very happy that I stayed at Garza Sada because I feel like I had managed to find the best place. Only students lived there, with plenty of exchange students, so I could be with my friends every day. We had a pool, a terrace set up for grilling, study rooms, and a gym. The place also has its own shuttle bus that takes you to the university, but you can also walk; it's about a 15-20-minute walk. There's a small store right at the entrance and two supermarkets within a 5-10-minute walk.

Of course, there are other options for accommodation as well. I heard good things about Torres Tec because many exchange students stayed there, and the university also has several dorms. Alternatively, you can find a good apartment around the university, but it's riskier if you don't know the area.



TRAVEL

Fortunately, I had the opportunity to visit many places within Mexico, but I'd like to share some tips on how to save a bit during your travels. Plane tickets are not necessarily expensive, but as summer approaches, prices tend to rise. For example, we took a bus to Mexico City, which wasn't necessarily short – it was a 10-hour journey – but you can get a 50% student discount with the TEC card from certain bus companies. Additionally, with your TEC card, you can visit many museums and attractions for free, such as Chichen-Itza, so it's always worth keeping your student ID with you.

I can recommend staying in hostels; some are of very high quality, and they often organize free group trips.